



CREATIVE SPIRITS OPERATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE DELIVERY OF ALEKSOTAS DISTRICT OF KAUNAS CITY OPERATIVE PLAN

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION OF KAUNAS CITY (LITHUANIA)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Lithuania's second-largest city Kaunas has been granted the status of a UNESCO design city in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and has won the competition to become the city for the European Capital of Culture 2022. The potential of Kaunas sprang up during the interwar period as a modern, vibrant and dynamic cultural centre which is still reflected in the city's rich modern architectural heritage. Kaunas is also a historical city, established in 1408, with a large number of natural, historical and cultural sites in and around the city, and has regular events to preserve and promote its heritage. Kaunas experienced its greatest economic boom in the late 16th, early 17th century. It was also a provisional capital of Lithuania from 1919 to 1939 when all state institutions, embassies and consulates were operating here and over 12 thousand modernistic buildings designed by local architects were erected. Since the restoration of independence in 1990 the economic and transport links with Western Europe have improved substantially.

Presently Kaunas is a large centre of industry, trade and services in Lithuania. The most developed industries in Kaunas include: food and beverage industry, textile and light industry, chemical industry, publishing and processing, pharmaceuticals, metal industry, wood processing and furniture industry. Recently 47 information technology and electronics have become an important area of business activities in Kaunas. However, the population of Kaunas has shrunk substantially from around 380,000 in early 2000 to officially 297,000 in 2016 due to migration to Vilnius (the capital) or abroad. This shows that one of the main social challenges of the city is migration, especially that of students. 31,500 students study in the city, most of whom leave the city after graduation instead of continuing to live and work here.

Between 2016 and 2019, Kaunas participated in the URBACT Implementation Network 'Creative Spirits'. In this network nine cities from across Europe worked together to improve the implementation of strategies relating to the cultural and creative industries. This document, the Operational Implementation Framework (OIF), is the final local output produced by Kaunas. It is intended to provide a framework for future improvements to Kaunas' implementation capabilities. It describes the challenges faced during the implementation of Kaunas' strategy, Kaunas' approach to overcoming them, and the knowledge gained as a result.

It begins with an assessment of Kaunas' baseline position regarding the five challenges of implementation. It continues by outlining the implementation plan Kaunas developed from its strategy documents and worked to implement over the course of Creative Spirits. Next, it describes Kaunas' attempts to overcome each of the five implementation challenges during this process. Following this, it captures this process in a learning journal that was updated throughout the course of Creative Spirits. Finally, the Synthesis section draws the OIF to a close and makes recommendations for the future of implementation in Kaunas."

2. BASE LINE POSITION

Ensuring an integrated approach during the implementation of city strategies

Before 2014 Kaunas did not have a very successful procedure for ensuring the integrated approach during the implementation. Some actions described in Kaunas strategic plans used to stay in plans like actions, not implemented or implemented partly, because the local authority has always paid attention mostly on infrastructural issues and not on soft activities. And that was the reason why in many cases we have not had an integrated approach. All strategic documents had more superficial integrated approach than an in-depth one. The package of soft activities always used to be obligatory as a part of strategic document, but not mandatory in the implementation phase. Good implementation could not be achieved by good planning

alone. The right activities need to happen at the right time throughout the implementation process to keep things on track. Starting the new financial period for EU Structural Funds investments in Kaunas city under the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) Programme for 2014-2020 we had a jump in planning and implementation process inspired by State authorities to change the situation with the integrated approach following the requirements of the EU to share EU money within Lithuania. Starting from 2014, it has become mandatory for a city which applies for the investments under ITI programme for infrastructure in target areas to prepare and implement the strategy for soft activities as well that was called the strategy for local activity group (ULG). Unfortunately, from the point of state authorities, it was more a declaration and formality than a wish to make a real and visible changes. Creative Spirits project, as we believed, had to be the pilot project having synergy of different financial sources and money in the implementation of strategies for ULG.

Moving from strategy to action-plan

It must be emphasised, that before Creative Spirits, both strategic documents: the Strategic Activity Plan and Strategic Development Plan for Kaunas City Municipality have been approved by the City Council before but during the monitoring process of the implementation of strategic documents, we were used to find out that the system has not worked well. As well as according to the strategic action plan every year producing annual action (or implementation) plan within the Kaunas City Municipality, after the annual results we used to find out new and new made mistakes in the planning process (for instance - set up wrong objectives or indicators, or result indicators, etc.) and that was clear that within the process moving from strategy to action plan in Kaunas we needed more time and knowledge. And we have had the clear understanding that it must be changed to better producing a new Strategic Development Plan of Kaunas City for a new period starting from 2022, Strategic activity plan for Kaunas city municipality, as well as annual action plan for Kaunas city Municipal Administration.

Setting up efficient indicators and monitoring systems

Similar situation Kaunas has come across while solving another challenge – setting up the efficient indicators and monitoring systems to measure the performance. As Kaunas has already approved the system of indicators to monitor the implementation of strategic plans, every year we used to monitor the process of implementation and make the conclusions for the future. Unfortunately, sometimes the results could not allow to draw clear conclusions. And it was an indicator that the system is not working well and changes were necessary.

Search for innovative financial instruments

All strategic documents in Kaunas City have always foreseen funding for their implementation including ERDF as well as ESF, the Municipal budget, the State budget, European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), URBACT and other EU/EC programmes and platforms, private investment, but of course, innovative financial instruments are always very important and needed as we always have lack of public money. So, information about new innovative financial instruments was on high demand.

Involvement of local stakeholders to plan and implement improvement actions in the target area

Joining the Creative Spirits network, Kaunas sought to find ways how to implement their strategy with the focus on spreading the creative sector from the city centre to the outer districts of the city, to the target area of Kaunas, the Aleksotas district in particular in order to enhance the satisfaction of the quality of life of local citizens and prevent further emigration. The Aleksotas district faced challenges like the lack of place for community events; plenty of underused buildings occupying huge areas and low real estate prices. In the same time, the district was the most growing district in number of population in Kaunas city as well as the most potential for development of different activities as well as CCI. In addition, as most creative

activities took place in the city centre and appeared only in specific places in Aleksotas, currently there was no coherent creative and vibrant area in Aleksotas. Therefore, Aleksotas as such was not the most potential area with regards to CCI within the city. There were a lot of separate initiatives including CCI proposed by local artists, community, culture and educational sector, unfortunately the collaboration of all stakeholders has never been tried as a tool promoting new activities on CCI in Aleksotas district. Based on this experience, Kaunas started its participation in Creative Spirits with an interest in investigating how to tackle this challenge.

3. OUTLINE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Kaunas City bases its implementation plan “Encouraging Creative Entrepreneurship In Aleksotas District of Kaunas City” within the Creative Spirits network following the Integrated Territorial Development Programme (ITDP) of 2014-2020, the City’s Strategic Development Plan until 2022 according to which a shorter term City Strategic Activity Plans 2018-2020, 2019-2021 were approved, and also in line with the Culture Strategy of Kaunas City until 2027 “From Provisional Capital to Up-to-date Culture City!” with a slogan “From Temporary to Contemporary”.

The institution responsible for the implementation of the action plan is Kaunas City Municipal Administration including Aleksotas neighbourhood as its administrative unit and the associated stakeholders: ULG members, cultural and educational institutions, business and NGOs working in the district.

The implementation plan covers five initiatives (Mapping Aleksotas district, Mythological creative workshop for kids “What rustles in the greenery of Aleksotas?”, Capacity building of local community on CCI, Creative Environment Awareness, Aleksotas Autumn Festival) which ULG has decided are the most important for the investigation of the potential of CCI and encouragement and will allow learning how to use the URBACT methodology for successful cooperation of community and the local city administration.

Spring, summer 2018 - Aleksotas mapping activity organised two biking expeditions in Aleksotas. The results of Aleksotas mapping were presented to local society, new routes possible to develop in the future were discussed, and the map of Aleksotas.

June 2018, the ULG organised the outdoor family afternoon Mythological creative workshop “What rustles in the greenery of Aleksotas?” which has contributed to the implementation of one of the strategic directions of culture development in Kaunas City by the team of European Creative Culture Capital.

September 2018, Aleksotas Autumn Festival was organised. It was a real try to change the old traditional fest that was interesting practically only for elderly people and transform to a new event with a new sense of creativity. A piece of street art on the wall of the art factory Potiomkinas former Meat Factory in Kaunas, presently a hub of creative culture industries was created and presented as a gift to Aleksotas Autumn Fest and local community from Creative Spirits project.

October 2018, a training seminar-discussion with the lector Olegas Darčanovas, the director of Kaunas Creative Industries Centre, was organised in the creative hub Potiomkinas. The participants learnt general information about CCI, differences between CCI centres and co-working spaces, good examples of CCI communities in Lithuania and abroad, the models of public-private partnerships in CCI.

December 2018, the second training seminar was organised with the Italian professor of architecture Alessandro Biemonti on the anthropological aspects of design which lie at the core of most of CCI sectors.

The training seminar suggested a different perspective into the role of the designer, the limits of design, challenges to give a new life to city ruins and has brought hope that design and good taste in many fields of life and human creativity will slowly enter even the most abandoned industrial areas in Aleksotas as a feeling of longing for better culture and the quality of life.

4. RESPONSE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Challenge Nr. 1. Ensuring the integrated approach in the delivery of the strategy and their related actions

What this Challenge “looks like” in your city? How Kaunas tried to overcome this challenge?’, ‘What was the impact of this?’, and ‘What can Kaunas do next to improve its performance in this area?’.

Ensuring an integrated approach and style of working between all relevant municipal sectors (infrastructure, housing, social affairs, environment, economic affairs) was a priority challenge for Kaunas. In particular before 2014 Kaunas has not had a procedure for ensuring the real integrated approach during the implementation as it has been presented by URBACT, it was superficial. According to the efforts of state authorities to change situation in Lithuania and following the EU requirements to it sharing the EU money within the country, in the end of 2014 ITI Programme was approved for Kaunas by the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania to share EU money during the period of 2014-2020 in selected territories with the aim to develop them focusing on the integrated approach. One of the two territories chosen in Kaunas has been Aleksotas district. According to the requirements the strategy for these territories has been prepared embracing soft activities for local community, which had to contribute ensuring the integrated approach. The process of implementation has not been finished yet, and not all the items of the strategy are going well. But it must be admitted, that during the implementation it was a different approach in developing the abandoned territories and solving different problems there.

In general all earlier strategic documents in Kaunas missed a real partnership with all relevant organisations in the city and with the maximum feasible participation of citizens in the procedure their preparation. From this point of view our understanding of integrated approach was superficial and consisted of plenty of activities in strategic documents covering more or less all main sectors – social, economic, cultural and etc. and has been focused on the infrastructural changes. But this approach did not really solve problems locally, as the URBACT methodology has helped to discover. From this point of view, the institutional understanding of an ‘integrated approach’ in Kaunas was superficial, more declarative and formal. And the main reason of this was focusing on more infrastructural projects leaving aside soft environmental, social, cultural activities and without understanding that in such a way solving one problem instead of this one we would have several in the nearest future.

Creative Spirits inspired specialists of Kaunas team to look deeper at this problem in general from the different points of view and to understand the key points following the integrity principle in planning and implementation processes. We have even had a possibility to do this in practice while making the Implementation plan on CCI for Aleksotas district during the Creative Spirits project activities. Masterclass on the integrated approach during the Project, experience of project partners let us understand better strengths of the process and its necessity during implementation. This well learnt lesson will be used for further implementation of newly produced strategic documents. That will take time to ensure local politician to see the synergy of activities and less problems in the future solving them in the way of integrated approach.

Challenge Nr. 2. Maintaining involvement of local stakeholders and organising decision-making for delivery

What this Challenge “looks like” in your city? How Kaunas tried to overcome this challenge? What was the impact of this? What can Kaunas do next to improve its performance in this area?

A key challenge of Kaunas is however to develop a long-standing, reciprocal partnership with stakeholders based on a shared understanding of goals. Additionally, Kaunas needs to find the right measures to activate the local inhabitants as well as find and support “catalysts”, i.e. the most innovative and active people. Also, they need to make sure different factions within the community, often with conflicting points of view on how the area should be developed, come together to achieve a common aim.

The biggest problem for Kaunas in maintaining involvement of local stakeholders was that in majority cases we did not have a clear list of all acting stakeholders who were active in one or another one area of the city solving one or another problem. As the success of a decision directly depends on the involvement in the process as many stakeholders as possible, it is the guarantee of success. Unfortunately, not all Kaunas’ politicians as well as different groups of interest understand and recognise this very important factor in the very beginning of the process. We have come across and had to solve the same problems in Aleksotas district– the target area of the Project - while implementing project activities.

In the beginning Kaunas was keen on learning how to get the ULG fully functional and hands on. Although stakeholder engagement was rather a challenge in Kaunas the composition of the ULG has significantly improved during the phase 1 period. At the beginning crucial municipal sectors were not yet included and the same applied for organisations representing creative entrepreneurs, the real estate sector and the knowledge sector. By the end of phase 1, however, creative well-educated entrepreneurs have joined the ULG with the aim to be ambassadors between the Municipality and the district in which they operate.

In terms of maintaining involvement of local stakeholders and organising decision-making for delivery, must to be stressed out a real try to implement this challenge during the Project in Kaunas city. It was a challenge for Kaunas city municipality to consider who could and might be involved as a stakeholders implementing activities of the Project in Aleksotas district. A bigger challenge was to attract them to join the activities of the Project and keep them active during all the process. The list of possible stakeholders in Aleksotas district was long, but unfortunately not all active and important players in the target area were involved in the activities of the project. Majority of them did not see the real benefit of the project or themselves, or had no enough time for meetings and discussions, or was not grown up enough for changes or thinking out-of- box. Unfortunately, during the Project implementation period, we found out, that we could not ensure the involvement of all different stakeholders in ULG during all the process and must be said the Project in the middle a little bit lost the importance for the local community as it left interest only for some stakeholders. But must be said, that in general the best achievement during the journey, that Project gave a real opportunity to try to involve as many as possible stakeholders in Aleksotas inspiring them to solve for local community important local problems doing it bottom-up and looking for creative decisions by themselves instead of waiting for decisions of local authorities. And the results were higher than expected.

It should be mentioned, that after some activities arranged during the Project in Aleksotas many actions discussed during the Project among the ULG members but unfortunately not involved in the Implementation Plan were spread further and got accelerate and were implemented by other organizations in Aleksotas. An example could be the idea of Aleksotas story telling event which was brainstormed by the ULG but was successfully retaken, organised and implemented by the students of Vytautas Magnus University.

On the other hand, it must be said, that Kaunas has already paved some solid experience in the involvement of different stakeholders into joint working groups especially engaged in international events or projects of knowledge transfer. The initiative of Kaunas European Capital of Culture 2022 has united and embraced a number of departments at Kaunas City Municipal Administration, NGO and local artists to implement a great variety of cultural initiatives. The same structure concerns all projects (even infrastructural), that would be implemented in Kaunas.

The current political power in Kaunas is very much a 'get-things-done' team, and this has been very evident around the city in the number of development projects that are providing visual improvements within the city streets and neighbourhoods.

So, examples make sense that Kaunas must stay keeping on the possibility to involve all possible stakeholders in all its activities, not only in some that are of high importance for local authorities.

Challenge Nr. 3. Setting up efficient indicators and monitoring systems to measure performance

What this Challenge "looks like" in your city? How Kaunas tried to overcome this challenge? What was the impact of this? What can Kaunas do next to improve its performance in this area?

Municipality of Kaunas has had some experience based on Kaunas Development Strategy up to 2022 as well as Strategic Action Plan for every three years in setting up indicators dedicated for culture sector as well as CCI in order to measure the performance. The example of such indicators: the index of satisfaction of residents with the management of the cultural heritage of Kaunas City; index of civic satisfaction with cultural services; the change in the revenue of municipal cultural institutions received for paid services as compared to last year; revenues of municipal cultural institutions received for paid services, etc. During the journey we have discovered that such approach is not the most effective one due to the fact that the survey checking satisfaction and changes is not possible every year, other indicators are very hard to be measured, and the statistical reports are published only once per 2-3 years. Such delay and lack of measurement cause the lack of availability to current monitoring of the situation.

It is clear that some indicators must be changed to those that are easier to verify, and at the same time easier to be collected: the vacancy rate of available premises in the target area, nature / scope of activities of companies presented in target area, life span of the supported companies, number of applicants to the number of places for the workshops and other events and number of supported companies. Furthermore, it is clear that in the same way all the system of indicators must be checked in all strategic documents and it doesn't concern only CCI sector.

New indicators must be discussed among politicians and confirmed before integrating them into the existing system of indicators of the Strategic action plan as well as Strategic Development plan of Kaunas city. As the Division of Development Programme and Investment in Kaunas City Municipal Administration, the unit I have representing local authorities, is responsible for strategic planning, so, these indicators are in our scope to be changed in the nearest future and producing the new Strategic Development plan starting from 2022.

Creative Spirits project gave us an opportunity to try using these indicators for the Implementation plan. And this was a concrete practice during the journey, looks successful and logical to be updated or changed.

Challenge Nr. 4. Moving from strategy to action-plan

What this Challenge "looks like" in your city? How Kaunas tried to overcome this challenge? What was the impact of this? What can Kaunas do next to improve its performance in this area?

The Integrated Territorial Investment Programme is already considered to be an operational strategic plan. The city has a clear vision what projects will be implemented under this Programme in Aleksotas district. In the nearest future in Aleksotas will appear modern conversed infrastructure for business after conversion of previous military factory in Aleksotas, up to 2022 will be constructed modern Čiurlionis Concerts Palace

as well as developed infrastructure for public use in the Nemunas island, reconstructed streets, kinder gardens, gymnasiums, will be find new and additional functions for the Botanical Garden, the military heritage buildings of Kaunas Fortress leading both to infrastructural investments and soft projects. The challenge here was to translate objectives to concrete actions from the Programme and other strategic documents and the process cost to Municipality for more than 4 years.

In fact, the biggest problem in Kaunas is the focus of politicians on big infrastructural projects instead moving forward both hard and soft activities. In this case, many activities especially soft used to stay in documents more like formality, in many cases - not implemented or implemented partly. It must be mentioned, that this opinion has been changing in Kaunas for several years. Thanks to EU regulations, other official requirement as well as Creative Spirits for another one attitude and kicking-off to think and plan locals in a different and right way. Within the Creative Spirits project we have had a very concrete possibility to make an action plan tackling the CCI in Aleksotas that was a jump from strategy to action plan even a very small but in the same time very practical. Practise we have gained in Creative Spirits was useful first of all for ourselves producing annual action plan for Kaunas City Municipal Administration. As the annual plans every year are better and the results of the monitoring show that, it means that knowledge during Creative Spirits brought a positive input.

However, Kaunas also has some good practices translating objectives to concrete actions. Especially visible achievements implementing the challenge moving from strategy to action-plan are in Culture Strategy for Kaunas city. For instance the practice of the CreART Centres' in ARTCOM which is an incubator for creative entrepreneurs or the idea of the Sanciai Kiosk. The latter is a project involving transformation of a traditional kiosk into a new icon for community involvement in Šančiai, a dramatically changing post-industrial neighbourhood of Kaunas.

The Street art festival of Kaunas is also an outstanding practice of the city. Street art is becoming an increasingly popular form of art, and the city of Kaunas has also discovered that professional street artists can work on dilapidated buildings. Wall paintings are an interesting way to make the streets livelier and bring art within everyone's reach. During the festival professional artists are creating large size drawings on building walls, considering the life of the area and its community, issues and ideas. The educational part of the festival involves teaching, open discussions and helping inhabitants get acquainted with urban, architectural and street art topics.

As a further good practice, Kaunas Biennial, a biannual contemporary art event in Kaunas since 1997 which exhibits textile work. The Biennial is organized by the Lithuanian Artists 'Association together with Vilnius Art Academy Kaunas Faculty of Arts and Textile Artists' Guild.

Challenge Nr. 5. Enhancing funding of urban policies by exploring financial innovation

What this Challenge "looks like" in your city? How Kaunas tried to overcome this challenge? What was the impact of this? What can Kaunas do next to improve its performance in this area?

The challenge in this regard is to regularly evaluate, and if necessary redesign, the funding proposals to make them appropriate for interdisciplinary activities and to make a case based on economic ROI for investors. Year to year the public money are under the high request, so all other possible financial instruments discussed during the journey of Creative Spirits project – crowdfunding as well as social impact bonds are under the high interest and will be focused on to use them locally.

Within the Creative Spirits Project Kaunas has had the opportunity to follow the achievements implementing crowdfunding instrument for culture sector funding in practise by Italian colleagues from Ravenna. The crowdfunding as an innovative funding instrument is coming to Lithuania and is becoming

more and more popular every day, so, information we have heard during the Project was very in time and helped in capacity building of Kaunas team. Of course, before to start implementing this instrument in practice it is necessary to make a thorough investigation how it works, what key challenges and advantages are. So, the issue of the innovative financial instruments still remains in high demand to be studied, checked and tackled to be implemented in the nearest future.

4. LEARNING JOURNEY

Project implementation issues and what doesn't work well

The implementation practice has shown that despite the national bureaucratic obstacles which prevent Kaunas ULG members to take part in the international CSM and gain knowledge at sight, the implementation of local activities is going smoothly, the project team in Kaunas is happy with the well-chosen objectives which have already effected the achievement of successful results. Further ideas and projects are being brainstormed on empowering abandoned heritage with CCI practitioners.

However, the practice has also shown that a bigger budget, more time and efforts need to be foreseen for the broadcasting of project activities are necessary to plan for wider public awareness and greater response to future activities.

Learning from the partnership

Kaunas team has enjoyed an effective knowledge and best practice transfer with the rest of the Creative Spirits partners. We have found similarities with many of them and a lot of inspiring examples during all the case study visits and internship weeks.

In the beginning of the Project during the kick-off meeting in Lublin (autumn of 2017) we found out how Poland has revealed strong Polish culture in clear and sound strategic planning and its coherent transfer into the implementation plans related to the effective monitoring and control system, which was probably the greatest lesson learnt by Kaunas team on this aspect comparing to all other visits. Also we heard first time about participatory budgeting and its importance in the planning process as well as implementation. Understanding this importance in the planning process, we invited polish colleagues from Liublin to discuss the positive sides of this with politicians of Kaunas City Council as well as responsible persons of Kaunas city Municipal Administration during the case study meeting in Kaunas (December of 2017)

In the beginning of 2018 during the second six months, in Ibi, Spain, we loved the idea that industrial, historical, craft heritage are used for the inspiration of contemporary creativity reflecting present social interests and needs like photo-plainnairs, festivals, exhibitions, street art employing modern forms of art. We will also consider the idea of crowd-funding for small cultural community projects.

During the CSM in Ravenna, Italy, (spring 2018) we have learnt from the partner how important is a long standing culture of community interest and involvement into contemporary art happenings, good financing system of culture projects, pop-up platforms and other public culture sights which help maintaining healthy dialogue among artists and the interested audience, great contemporary art festivals in dance, street art, community theatre, urban environment development (green thoughts) and music both in historical heritage sights and Darcena industrial area which has recently been occupied by developing contemporary art islands. We have also learnt logical and clear strategy to organise the contest of idea from the partners in Ravenna and organised it in Kaunas accordingly. According to the next call for proposals to Creative Europe programme (Autumn 2019) Kaunas and Ravenna are going to submit an Application concerning the contemporary art on the European Context, the city of Novi Sad, in Serbia, which is the Capital of Culture in 2021, is going to join the project as well. It is considered that it would be a great added value for the project

as well as partners to have 2 cities working towards the European Capital of Culture and this would be an opportunity for exchanges, cross-fertilisation and capitalisation.

During the case study visit in Sofia, Bulgaria, (summer of 2018) we found it very useful the culture of open process of brainstorming strategic visions, very transparent coordination of this process when the hired external expert group organizes broadcasting of information to local citizens and organises effective discussion and exchange of ideas. In this methodology, the strategy and implementation plan is formed outsourcing the ideas from the target audience, which results greatest involvement of local people into implementation and participation of ideas and concludes with greater satisfaction of their expectations. We also admired the idea of the choice of the target area - the central park to transform it from a quiet green oasis in the capital city into the Hyde park which vibrates with contemporary creative thoughts and happening which attract all generations including children, family and youth – not only elderly people. And we were charmed to discover that such creative culture ideas like the afternoon with musical instruments in the park have been offered by local citizens.

During the internship week and case study meeting in Maribor, Slovenia, (autumn of 2018) we found the best practice example – the continuous bench stories project as very inspiring, connecting the past history of the city and the contemporary expression of art and unifying the local community of all generations and different tastes. Every bench in the target area is a unique work of art by a local artist telling a story of the past or present. The idea was passed on to the architects' society in Kaunas and was received with great interest. It may be carried out with the support of the fund Kaunas Accents initiated by Kaunas City Municipality. There is even a possibility to extend this project to the international cooperation of the young architects in Maribor and Kaunas.

Another great example which inspired Kaunas was newly renovated Puppet theatre of Maribor belonging to the local municipal administration. The theatre was skilfully established in the former building of ancient monastery following the best traditions of contemporary architecture giving the old to play the main part in the new garment. Likewise the creative activities in the theatre include much more than staging puppet performances, it involves many contemporary performing activities for children and youth. In this field we also have found the potential for cooperation between the Puppet Theatres in Kaunas and Maribor as both theatres are opened to International activities and are searching for new cooperation partners. Kaunas Puppet theatre is still under reconstruction, so there are a lot of common issues concerning the project implementation experience to be shared between the theatres. The administration of Kaunas Puppet Theatre has already contacted the administration of Maribor Puppet Theatre, and Kaunas team has been invited to visit Maribor during the Autumn Puppet Theatre festival in Maribor to discuss the possible areas of future collaboration as well as to share the experience of the reconstruction project. The municipal colleagues in Maribor were also interested in a detailed discussion with Kaunas and we had a very interesting experience exchange session on the practice of strategic interdisciplinary culture planning and effective administrative structure which allows taking decisions effectively.

During the last case study meeting of Project partners in Maribor (winter of 2019) visited areas such as GT22, Kibla Portal nowadays areas for contemporary art instead of previous industry premises inspired Kaunas to develop "Potiomkinas" – the target area of the project in Kaunas. Many ideas were taken into consideration and discussed among ULG members in Kaunas.

From Loule (autumn of 2018), we have brought back very strong impressions of the interesting performance of the puppet theatre, such approach and way of presenting as well as involving visitors to be a part of the performance is a possibility to propose such a practice to the Kaunas and future events in the city for 2022 and not only. Clear respect to local handicrafts especially to the oldest one was a good reminding to every partner that the oldest one is not necessarily the worst one. For sure – perfect and new forms of creative ideas presenting the Portuguese cuisine as well as deep traditions of locals in food making specialities in the form of contemporary music performance encourage inspiration through all senses. Strong impressions were also gained from the Loulé Design Lab that could be proposed to local initiatives in

Kaunas. The Loulé Design Lab has collected craftsmen working out the items of household from used paper or plastic or local natural materials like cork in contemporary design forms.

During the case study meeting in Waterford (autumn of 2018) we have greatly admired how Waterford is developing the O'Connell Street in the city centre as well as Waterford Cultural Quarter with attraction of contemporary pop-up events and festivals like African days to revive life and interest to spend time in the city centre. We also learnt a good approach towards management of abandoned building of cultural heritage allowing to rent them to creative culture industries. In this way interesting cafes and artists' studios appear prolonging life of valuable heritage. We visited a photo studio in such a building and a café-studio. Must be stressed out, that during the case study meeting in Kaunas (winter of 2017), two partners brought a clear vision that both Kaunas and Waterford are strongly linked to develop the street art of murals and there was born another co-project between Kaunas University of Technology and Innovative Creative Projects (partners from Kaunas), Waterford City and County Council (Lead partner), Waterford Walls as well as Street Art Foundation (project partner from the Netherlands) for exchanges of mural artists which will be funded from the Programme of Creative Europe project "Murals for Communities".

Learning from your own practices

Although the Municipality of Kaunas has had good experiences in involvement of different departments and stakeholders into joint working groups especially engaged in international events or projects of knowledge transfer, the inspiration from URBACT partners has also been greatly valuable in this field. The initiative of Kaunas European Capital of Culture 2022 has united and embraced a number of departments at Kaunas City Municipal Administration, NGO and local artists to implement a great variety of cultural initiatives. The same structure concerns all projects (even infrastructural), that would be implemented in Kaunas. However, Kaunas European Capital of Culture 2022 is a non-profit public enterprise with paid employees.

The project Creative Spirits also encouraged forming ULG group in the target district which embraces the representatives of Municipal Administration, Aleksotas Eldership, various communities, NGOs, culture and education institutions like Aleksotas Community Centre, Creative Hub Potiomkinas, Botanical Garden, Aviation museum, local library, secondary schools and a non-profit public enterprise "Kaunas fortress park" which enlarged the number of culture events and improved their quality due to a very intensive cooperation on the activities of the Creative Spirits and on sight learning from each other.

In June 2018, Kaunas ULG organised the outdoor family afternoon Mythological creative workshop "What rustles in the greenery of Aleksotas?" which has contributed to the implementation of one of the strategic directions of culture development in Kaunas City by the team of European Creative Culture Capital –namely creating the urban myth which involves exploration of existing narratives and transferring them to contemporary art forms. The workshop contributed to raising social awareness about the urban district and a wider integration of community into pleasant creative process which breaks ice and fences in communication of local people, allows experiencing joy of community creation and inspires other ideas.

The public event of creative mythological workshop for children, young adults and families invited younger population of local citizens to discover local narratives about mysterious creatures of the past which lived in the green area of Aleksotas, get involved in the creative crafts together with painting, floral artists, local librarians and get together with local community. The organised event involved preparation of a team of artists and culture volunteers who led different creative activities extending their organisation and communication capacities, building capacities and practical skills of culture entrepreneurship while learning from each other.



The ULG formed a team for organization the event of 3 people who brainstormed ideas for the event and made the structure of the contents, chose a suitable creative site/space for the event, invited a few young local citizens to become culture volunteers, invited some local artists to organise outdoor craft workshop, and finally made a really festival for local kids and their families. The event had a great success and has been repeated by others organizers arranging other events in Aleksotas as a very successful project. That enhanced the visibility of the Creative Spirits developed idea that has been taken from papers to reality.





Autumn festival in Aleksotas has become a good example of transferring ideas from papers (strategic documents) to real actions. The idea contest allowed to create a platform for expression of ideas and inclusion of a greater variety of artists to implement Aleksotas Autumn Festival. In earlier years it was marked with low financing, low interest of local citizens, rather a narrow approach to raising social awareness and a wider integration of society into creative process. In contrast, the idea contest has become a concrete effort to integrate different sectors in Aleksotas changing the life of local citizens to better, inspire people to think out of box, to make decisions in a way of creativity, to give a new format and sense to the old one.

We have organised the idea contest for Aleksotas autumn festival. It was a real try to change the old traditional fest that was interesting practically only for elderly people and transform to a new event with a new sense of creativity. We have not received many but a few very interesting ideas, the majority of which have been implemented during the festival as a part of agenda. During the festival the results of Aleksotas mapping have been presented to local society, new routes possible to develop in the future were discussed, and the map of Aleksotas. Moreover, a piece of street art on the wall of the art factory Potiomkinas former Meat Factory in Kaunas, presently a hub of creative culture industries was created and presented as a gift to Aleksotas Autumn Fest and local community from Creative Spirits project financed by URBACT programme. As a final accent of the festival, a performance of contemporary experimental music and colours was organised presenting to the guests both the history of the factory, street art as a new form of creativity inspiring local artists and local people to the new events in future in such open and unusual space as 'Potiomkinas'. Young musicians who transform musical sounds to visual projections have been invited and accelerating creative thinking out of the box. It has been a good example of integration of local authorities, local community, local artists, middle-aged, elderly and young people as well as artist and freelancers.



It has changed the approach of local people especially young artists that their ideas are not interesting to others and there is not possible to change anything to better. It was also important for the elderly group of enthusiasts who used to organise this festival for over 15 years in the same circle of people without attracting the audience of different ages especially the younger ones. Autumn festival has attracted a huge mass of people, foreign guests, artists, young people and children. This corresponds to the set up indicator in the Kaunas implementation plan.





In October, a training seminar-discussion with the lector Olegas Darčanas, the director of Kaunas Creative Industries Centre was organised by the ULG team in the creative hub Potiomkinas. The participants learnt general information about CCI, differences between CCI centres and co-working spaces, good examples of CCI communities in Lithuania and abroad, the models of public-private partnerships in CCI, about the steps of establishment of a CCI centre, the funds which support such establishments, requirements of the law for the functioning of CCI, about the local and international projects for CCI communities. The discussion also concerned the possibilities for local communities in Aleksotas to develop synergies to use the local creative hub Potiomkinas more effectively to cover their needs for workshops and cultural events. It was very interesting to find out that young citizens of Aleksotas see great potential in the development of the district. However, they also cherish expectations for more non-formal education and sports for children,

social and leisure services in the neighbourhood.



In December, the second training seminar with Italian professor of architecture Alessandro Biemonti took place in the creative hub Potiomkinas on the anthropological aspects of design which lie at the core of most of CCI sectors. Design is often perceived as a technical matter, a functional answer to a practical problem. Nowadays design is absolutely more than that. It is a cultural aspect, deeply involved with emotions and experiences, but also strongly related to technique. Design is today one of the most trendy disciplines for educational programs. Worldwide we are witnessing the enormous proliferation of design courses. Thousands of new design trained professionals are approaching the global labour market. The training seminar suggested a different perspective into the role of the designer, the limits of design, challenges to give a new life to city ruins and the emerging massive international interest about it. The seminar has brought hope that design and good taste in many fields of life and human creativity will slowly enter even the most abandoned industrial areas in Aleksotas as a feeling of longing for better culture and the quality of life.



5. SYNTHESIS

Summary of the experience in the context of the URBACT project

General experience of the project has been positive from the participants in Kaunas. It allowed to know better all the culture stakeholders in the target district and provided a possibility to attract new young artists into brainstorming, organisation and implementation of ideas. It is a great value now to see how they plan further projects together and how abandoned historical places like the forts of Kaunas fortress, the abandoned buildings of industrial heritage is being opened to contemporary artists and CCI. The Project inspired local artist, representatives of local community, entrepreneurs to find each other, to think “out-of-

box”, to develop ideas for further collaboration.

The best achievement during the journey was that Project gave a real opportunity to try to involve as many as possible stakeholders in Aleksotas inspiring them to solve for local community important local problems doing it bottom-up and looking for creative decisions by themselves instead of waiting for decisions of local authorities. And the results were higher than expected. Autumn festival in Aleksotas has been a good example of possible and successful integration of local authorities, local community, local artists, middle-aged, elderly and young people as well as artists and freelancers.

The Project and concrete examples of foreign partners on CCI inspired us just to try to implement some ideas in reality and instead of writing new strategies, go straight to activities. Creative Spirits has been a very good accelerator of CCI in Aleksotas.

During the Project journey we caught plenty of good ideas (Stories for People and Benches, Kibla 2022 and others) from the Project partners were discussed to be implemented in Kaunas City.

Regarding working methodologies, Masterclass setting up the indicators in strategic documents has changed the understanding and inspired to make crucial changes on local level. Knowledge how important is to translate objectives into concrete actions made slight movement forward in implementation process of ITI Programme and other strategic documents in Kaunas. However, it will take time to spread the information to the executives of the Municipal Administration and the heads of departments and divisions so that the knowledge is approved and applied in such a big organisation as Kaunas City Municipal Administration.

Professional seminars on CCI sector inspired local people that design and good taste in many fields of life and human creativity will slowly enter even the most abandoned industrial areas in Aleksotas as a feeling of longing for better culture and the quality of life.

Regarding good practise during the Project, Kaunas team considered URBACT guidelines on participative methodologies, implementation plans or OIF structure and guidance simple, clear and useful.

