

We Create Space

URBACT Transfer Network

Community-driven public space co-creation

NETWORK JOURNAL

No. 1, September 2026

URBACT



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Every URBACT network goes through an initial phase in which the main objective is not to produce immediate results, but to build a shared understanding of the challenge it intends to address. For We Create Space, this phase has been particularly important because transferring Ostrava's good practice does not simply concern an administrative tool or a micro-financing programme. It involves a different way of understanding the relationship between public administrations, citizens and public space.

FIRST TRANSNATIONAL MEETING OSTRAVA, FEBRUARY 2026

The first transnational meeting, hosted by Ostrava, marked the starting point of this journey. The partner cities had the opportunity to learn directly about Ostrava's good practice – the Tvoříme prostor grant programme – to understand how it evolved over time, and to observe how combining open calls, micro-grants, administrative support, and community engagement creates a stable instrument for urban innovation. More than a simple presentation of the Good practice, the meeting made it possible to understand the administrative culture that enabled the programme to develop and grow over the years. From that moment onwards, the network chose not to limit itself to studying the Ostrava model.





CITY VISITS FEBRUARY - MAY 2026

Between February and May 2026, city visits were organised in each partner city. Every administration opened up its territory to the network, presenting not only completed projects, but also local challenges, opportunities that had not yet been explored and the actors involved in developing future Testing actions.

The city visits represented one of the most significant elements of the Understand phase. Visiting a city means observing what rarely emerges from a presentation: the quality of its public spaces, the relationships between institutions and citizens, the presence of active communities, administrative difficulties, decision-making processes and the way each context interprets the very concept of participation.

This wealth of direct observations enabled the network to build a much richer body of shared knowledge than would have been possible through documents or online meetings alone.

More details about city visits can be found under this [link](#).

SECOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETING KOSZALIN, MAY 2026

The second transnational meeting, hosted by Koszalin, became the moment when this work was brought together.

The knowledge collected during the city visits was shared, compared and organised into a common reflection on the transferability of the Good practice.

Dialogue between the cities showed that none of them intends to reproduce the Ostrava model in its original form. Instead, each partner began identifying the elements most relevant to its own context, recognising that transfer always requires a process of adaptation and reinterpretation.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANSFERABILITY STUDY

The Transferability study is the main outcome of the network's first phase. More than a technical report, the document represents a shared map of transfer possibilities. Through an analysis of the six modules that make up the Good practice each city was able to identify the priorities on which to build its own local pathway.

With the completion of the Transferability Study, the network is now entering the Adapt phase. While the objective until now has been to understand, observe and learn, the coming months will focus on experimentation.

Each city will begin developing its own Testing Action, turning the knowledge acquired into concrete interventions designed together with the URBACT Local Groups and adapted to the specific characteristics of the local territory.

The full Study can be found [here](#).

FROM THE UNDERSTAND PHASE TO THE ADAPT PHASE

The transition from the Understand phase to the Adapt phase also marks an important change in the way the network works.

Questions will no longer concern only how the Good practice functions, but will become progressively more operational: which elements should be transferred, how they should be combined, which adaptations should be introduced and how citizens, associations and local administrations can be effectively involved.

It is precisely at this point that transfer ceases to be a theoretical exercise and becomes a process of shared innovation.



BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER THROUGH URBACT LOCAL GROUPS

Each city began establishing its own URBACT Local Group, involving public administrations, local organisations, citizens and stakeholders. These groups represent the place where European transfer meets local reality: a space for discussion in which ideas, knowledge and local needs are translated into possible future actions. Learn more [here](#).

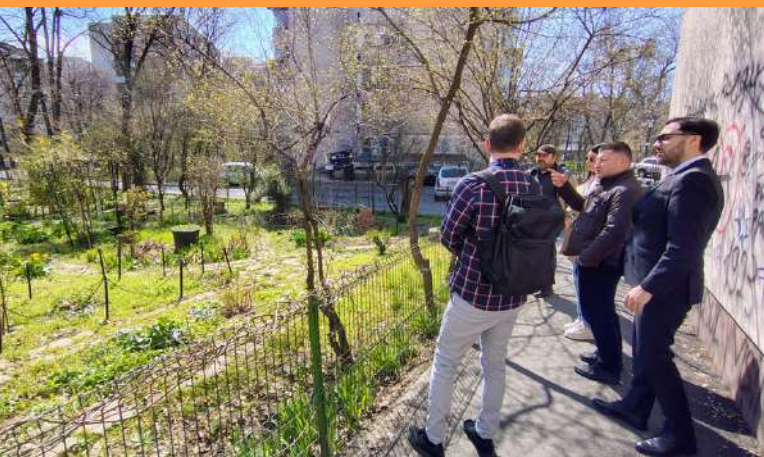


FIVE LESSONS FROM THE FIRST SIX MONTHS

The first months of the network were dedicated to listening, observation and mutual understanding. Through the transnational and online meetings, city visits and work carried out together with the partner cities, We Create Space began building shared knowledge that goes beyond the simple analysis of the Good practice. Every meeting, discussion and visit contributed to questioning some established assumptions about how cities learn, collaborate and experiment with new forms of urban transformation. These are some of the lessons emerging from this shared journey.

1 A GOOD PRACTICE IS NOT A MODEL TO BE COPIED

What makes Ostrava's experience effective is not only its system of Open Calls or micro-grants, but the way these tools have been developed over time, gradually adapting to the needs of the city and its local communities. For this reason, transfer does not mean faithfully reproducing what already exists. It means understanding its principles, identifying which elements are genuinely significant and reinterpreting them within a new context. Each city will therefore build its own version of We Create Space, different from those of the other partners and deeply rooted in its own local reality.



2 CITIES LEARN BY OBSERVING ONE ANOTHER

Much of the learning emerged while walking through cities, meeting administrators, associations, technical staff and citizens, observing public spaces and listening to the stories each territory chose to tell. The city visits transformed the network into a learning community. Visiting a city means temporarily entering its way of working, understanding its limitations and opportunities and observing how it addresses similar challenges using different tools. Every city has contributed to enriching the shared reflection, bringing approaches, skills and practices that have expanded the collective knowledge of the entire network.

PEOPLE COME BEFORE TOOLS

Open calls, micro-financing, administrative support, monitoring and space activation are fundamental components of the Good practice. However, the work carried out so far has made it clear that none of these tools can produce meaningful effects without a community capable of using them. The real resource of every city is not represented solely by its administrative procedures, but by the relationships it is able to build between the public administration, citizens, local organisations and territorial actors. Creating space means, first and foremost, creating trust. It means building the conditions in which different people can recognise themselves as part of the same transformation process.



4

EXPERIMENTING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SEARCHING THE PERFECT SOLUTION

Many urban projects are designed with the aim of avoiding mistakes. We Create Space follows a different logic. The future Testing actions are not conceived as final projects, but as opportunities for learning. Experimentation makes it possible to test what works, understand unexpected obstacles and progressively improve tools through direct experience. In this sense, the value of a Testing Action will depend on its capacity to generate new shared knowledge, useful both for the city implementing it and for the other network partners.

5

THE NETWORK HAS BECOME PART OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

At the beginning of the project, the main point of reference was the Good practice developed by Ostrava. Gradually, however, the network began to produce something new. The city visits, the Transferability study, the URBACT Local Groups, the methodological tools developed jointly and the continuous dialogue between cities are contributing to the construction of a collective body of knowledge that goes beyond the original experience.

Every city continues to learn from Ostrava, while Ostrava is also learning from the partner cities.

The Good practice is no longer a static model to be transferred, but a dynamic process that continues to evolve through the contribution of the entire network.

This is probably the most significant transformation of the first ten months of work.

SEVEN CITIES, SEVEN STARTING POINTS

OSTRAVA Czech Republic

From local experiment to European inspiration

Everything started here. Since 2017, Ostrava has progressively transformed a local grant programme into a collaborative model for activating public spaces through citizens, associations and informal groups.

Rather than exporting a finished solution, the city is now sharing the principles behind its success while continuing to learn from the experiences of the partner cities.

In We Create Space, even the Good practice itself continues to evolve.



MÉTROPOLE ROUEN NORMANDIE France

From participation to community-led action

Participation is already part of Rouen's institutional culture. The challenge is no longer simply listening to citizens, but creating the conditions for them to become active protagonists in shaping public spaces. Through We Create Space, the Métropole aims to strengthen operational tools capable of turning consultation into shared action across a diverse metropolitan territory made up of 71 municipalities.



BUCHAREST DISTRICT 6

Romania

From large regeneration projects to everyday placemaking

District 6 has invested significantly in parks, public spaces and urban regeneration. The next step is to complement these large-scale investments with smaller, community-driven initiatives capable of activating courtyards, neighbourhood spaces and everyday places. The network offers an opportunity to connect civic energy with practical and accessible tools for local action.

KOSZALIN

Poland

Building on experience, opening new possibilities

Koszalin already has experience in supporting local initiatives and community projects. Joining We Create Space means strengthening these experiences through a more structured methodology capable of connecting funding, public space activation and long-term community engagement. The city is exploring how relatively small interventions can become catalysts for broader urban transformation.



PESCARA

Italy

Connecting communities through public space

For Pescara, public space represents an opportunity to strengthen relationships between neighbourhoods, citizens and local institutions. The city is exploring how placemaking, temporary activations and collaborative governance can support a more inclusive and vibrant urban environment, combining physical improvements with a stronger sense of community ownership of public places.



NIŠ Serbia

Unlocking local potential

Niš brings to the network a city rich in cultural heritage, active organisations and underused urban spaces waiting to be reimaged. The challenge is to create a structured framework capable of supporting local initiatives, reducing administrative barriers and transforming spontaneous civic energy into long-term community projects.



GRANOLLERS Spain

Turning participation into experimentation

Granollers has a long tradition of citizen participation and collaborative governance. Through We Create Space, the city is focusing on a new challenge: moving from dialogue to experimentation. Testing actions will become an opportunity to transform ideas into concrete experiences, allowing both the administration and local communities to learn through practice before scaling up future policies.

Over the coming months, each partner will begin designing and testing its own Testing action, turning what has been learned into concrete interventions and exploring how the model can be reinterpreted within its own urban context.

VOICES FROM THE NETWORK



ONDŘEJ
Project manager
Czech Republic Ostrava

"We have spent years developing this programme."

Joining the network reminds us that a Good practice is never finished. Every new city helps us see our own work from a different perspective."



DANIELE
Lead Expert
Italy

"Cities learn by observing one another,

questioning their own habits, sharing doubts and experiences and building new possibilities together."



ADAM
Project manager
Poland Koszalin

"Communities often have ideas, energy and commitment."

Our ambition is to build a framework that makes these ideas easier to develop, support and sustain over time."



IVANA
Project manager
Serbia Niš

"Many people already care about their city."

The challenge is creating the right conditions for these initiatives to emerge, connect with one another and generate lasting impact."

LORENZO

Project manager
🇮🇹 Pescara



"Public space is more than physical infrastructure."

It is where relationships grow, neighbourhoods become stronger and local identities are built together."

BERTRAND

Director of urban planning and mayor projects department



AUDREY

Project manager
🇫🇷 Métropole Rouen Normandie



"Participation is already part of our everyday work."

Our challenge is taking the next step: helping citizens become active partners in transforming public spaces, not only contributors to consultation processes."

ANTONIA

Project coordinator
🇷🇴 Bucharest District 6



"Large regeneration projects can transform a city, but everyday spaces also deserve attention."

We want to create opportunities for local communities to improve the places they use every day."

AINA TELLA

Strategic planning and participation officer
🇪🇸 Granollers



"Participation has long been part of our local culture."

Through We Create Space, we want to experiment, learn from practice and discover new ways of turning ideas into action."



The We Create Space website:
<https://urbact.eu/networks/we-create-space>



The We Create Space social media:
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/we-create-space-urbact/>