URBACT

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greener & closer communities

QUARTERLY NETWORK REPORT #1

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SUMMARY

In this quarterly network report, you will find an overview of the core activities the ECONNECTING network is carrying out. You will find out what the partners learned from the last transnational meeting in Ireland, thanks to County Clare Council which provided interesting insights into how they are tackling the sustainable mobility challenges. Then, a glance to one of our 4 pillars, the 30-minutes territory, followed by a short brief look on the local activities from the partners (Unione della Romagna Faentina - IT). In the end, don't miss the interview with Carmel Kirby and the two facilitating tools we have chosen for you!

Highlights from Ennis

THE HUB CITY

The first day of the ECONNECTING network Transnational Meeting was centered around the themes of "**Good Governance and Ennis as a hub-city**". The participants discussed the good practices implemented and planned by Ennis, exchanging ideas to address their local challenges. Lively discussions animated the sessions between the partners, in particular on how to establish more sustainable transport systems, both within the town and in the surrounding hinterland. These discussions were punctuated by presentations offering the national and local perspectives on sustainable transport solutions. The participants experienced these solutions firsthand during a visit to the Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark.

ENNIS 2040

Can you imagine a city in twenty years? Ennis gave it a try and created "Ennis 2040", a long-term vision of how the city can change in better without giving up on global sustainability goals. The strategy intends to attract inward investments and create a vibrant economy indentifying and delivering transformational projects that take into consideration a sustainable growth and assure a high quality of life. The hearth of this vision are the "10 minute town" and the goal is to become the "Ireland's First Climate Adaptive Town".

DIGITALLY INTELLIGENT COMMUNITIES

Another exciting project focuses on digital development in rural areas, known as "Digiclare". The first three digital hubs were established in 2018, but today there are eleven throughout County Clare and they offer: desks, co-working spaces and video conferencing services. County Clare Council supports rural development by encouraging small and medium enterprises through these services. The key aim of Digiclare is to bridge the digital divide and create digitally intelligent communities in Clare.

Transnational Meetings

August 2023
Malmo University

October 2023
First Transnational Meeting in Orihuela, Spain

February 2024
Second Transnational Meeting in Viseu, Portugal

April 2024
Third Transnational Meeting in Ennis, Ireland

Highlights from Ennis

FUNDING THE 30-MINUTE TERRITORY

On the second day in Ennis, the partners delved deeply into the topic of funding, participating in a lesson facilitated by Mr. Miguel Sousa, CEO of Inova Business, an expert in European funding. Each partner shared their best practices for securing funding and identifying various funding streams to support their desired changes. A significant insight for the group was recognizing the importance of having **specialized personnel** within each team dedicated to securing funding and staying updated on evolving funding opportunities. These discussions sparked valuable inputs for all partner countries, leading to substantial progress in refining ideas tailored to each partner's needs. As the meeting concluded, the team was tasked with additional homework to prepare for reporting at their next gathering in Greece in two months' time.

The 30-minutes territory

FOSTERING ACCESSIBILITY

ECONNECTING envisions the establishment of "30-minute territories", where essential services, work-places, and recreational spaces are conveniently reachable within a 30-minute radius, promoting accessibility for all citizens and minimizing environmental impact.

This is a particular challenge given the spatial context of the ECONNECTING partners, with many covering a large territory with a scattered population. Many still count rural settlements that are **hardly reachable** by sustainable modes of transport from the local centres, there is a lack of planned urban-rural linkages.

The ECONNECTING network actively tackles these challenges and wants to foster a **humanized** and **sustainable** approach to mobility that has a positive effect on the quality of life of the inhabitants, through developing innovative and efficient public transportation solutions and the development of infrastructure for active mobility.

Sustainable Mobility

Urban-Rural Linkages

Accessibility of Services & Workplaces

The 30-minutes territory

AN INTEGRATED VISION

The creation of "30-minute territories" is a holistic transformation that aims to ensure equal access to services for more inclusive urban and rural development. In many ECONNECTING partner cities and territories, the spatial context of a dispersed population with unequal access to services fosters a sense of isolation. The population is highly dependent on the use of private cars: in some partner municipalities, **more than 70% of journeys are made by car**.
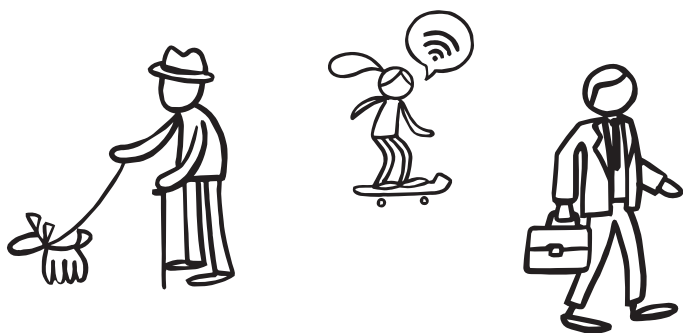
On the other hand, the network also aims to **regenerate public space** in towns and villages to make them more attractive and to create integrated hubs that combine mobility functions with innovative public space design. As it is not easy to change mobility habits overnight, the key is to also raise awareness among the population about sustainable modes of transport and to improve mobility infrastructure, transform public space and create more connected territories.
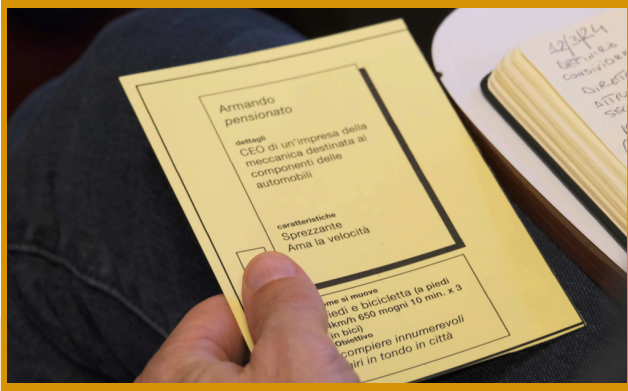
This calls for a variety of actions and initiatives: on the one hand, ECONNECTING develops sustainable mobility solutions, such as the creation of business models for new bus lines and taxis on demand. In creating new mobility services, it is crucial to make them **accessible** and **adaptable to all citizens**, especially the elderly and the younger generations, who are often affected by car dependency.
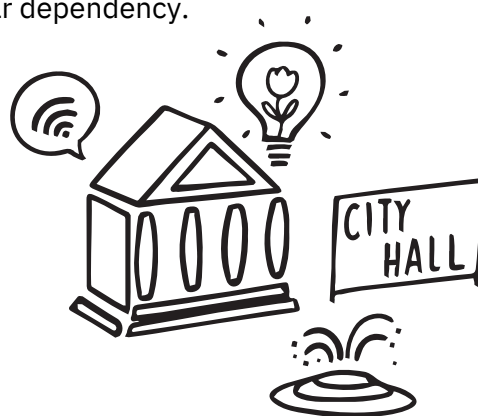
This integrated ECONNECTING approach addresses the often overlooked issue of urban-rural linkages, which are essential to achieving the transition to green mobility and thus to align with European climate goals. United in their diversity of spatial contexts and solutions, the ECONNECTING partners share a common vision for 30-minute territories and aim to overcome the challenges together through **continuous learning** and **intensive exchange** along their action-planning journey!

Unione della Romagna Faentina: what's up?

ANNA (medico)
Area ospedaliera
non è sicura la strada per gli operatori 118, e il TPL e poco sincronizzato con orari non canonici del lavoro

SERIOUS-GAMES WITH THE ULG

The activities with the URBACT Local Group in Unione della Romagna Faentina (IT) were very productive: the group has been stimulated to generate imaginative scenarios by applying a "**serious-game**", namely the participants created and interpreted fictional but plausible characters to change perspectives on mobility issues.
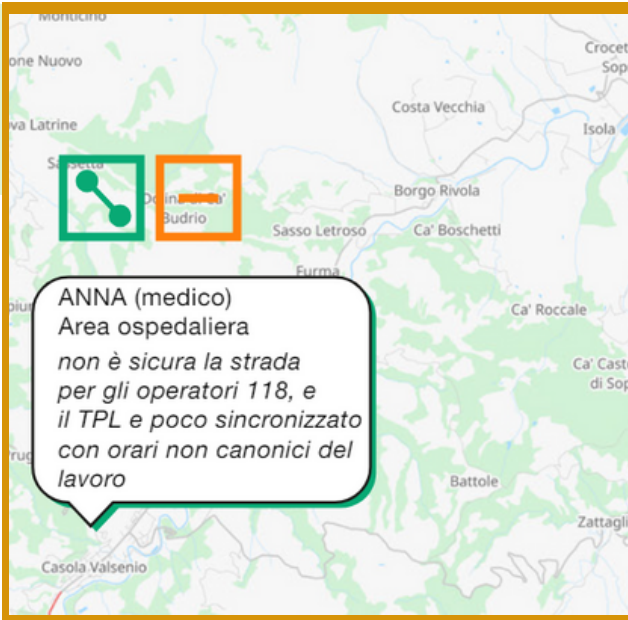
After creating the characters, each participant mapped their own territorial node, representing the key element believed to be decisive in their territory regarding mobility for that particular character. These mapped nodes could indicate both strengths or weaknesses of the territory.

The participants - interpreting the perspective of the characters created - then shared their key nodes by indicating, on a map placed at the center of the table, the elements, places, and/or areas they believe are either opportunities in a positive sense or areas for reconsideration and solution-seeking if they have a negative impact.

Legenda

Infrastructures	**Public Transport**	**Slow Mobility**
Weakness	**Strenght**	

Co-design for decision making

WHAT CAN I REACH IN 30 MINUTES?

The serious game allowed participants to ask themselves some fundamental questions: are 30 minutes the same for everyone? What does 30 minutes mean for different people in terms of mobility? During a serious-game session, the characters were asked to trace their movement on the map and then to estimate their movement in the 30 minutes available. The game involved the presence of unexpected events, positive or negative, which slowed down, blocked or accelerated the movement of the different subjects, such as fog, health problems, public transport delay and so on. Subsequently, the group engaged in a phase of analysis and interpretation, which aim was to extract positive and negative aspects of the territory and its infrastructures, synthesized in the visual map alongside. From the brainstorming, five **strategic objectives** have been defined, keeping the general approach of not considering the car as the only mean of transport.

The game made it possible to map very different lines of travel and reveal a variety of strengths and weaknesses of the current mobility context.

Ci sono barriere architettoniche

Analizzare aree ad alta frequenza e bassa frequenza

30 minuti non uguali lungo via Emilia e in collina

Mobilità degli studenti scuole inferiori e superiori molto affrontata, negli orari scolastici.

Va considerato l'aspetto di perifericità delle valli

Scarso approfondimento verso studenti universitari

Ci sono infrastrutture sottoutilizzate

Manca approfondimento verso il tempo libero

Analizzare meglio i 30 minuti dei turisti rispetto ai 30 minuti dei residenti. come equilibrare l'offerta di mobilità?

Utile sarebbe promuovere le alternative esistenti in termini di mobilità sostenibile

Collegare tra loro i servizi di base (tipo ospedali)

Difficile l'accesso alle info degli orari dei mezzi pubblci

Nei 30 minuti l'impatto degli snodi è grade. Quanto?

Small Scale Action

The third ULG meeting was opened with the presentation of "*Mirano si fa spazio*" case study, a partecipatory process to **co-design new public space scenarios** with the citizens, by Ilaria Cottu, expert of urban regeneration. One of the most interesting parts concerns the testing phase of the project, during which some public roads were transformed in order to experiment alternative more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly scenarios. Local residents were positively impressed by these new settings, unlike what they previously expected. Therefore, the ULG was splitted in three subgroups and each subgruop developed a small scale action by using a canvas model, starting from the topics emerged during the previous activities.

As a result, the ULG co-designed three different meta-projects inspired by the theme of the 30-minutes city.

Small Scale Action no. 1

A communication campaign to facilitate soft mobility in the industrial area of Faenza

Small Scale Action no. 2

A digital and multilayer map that collects all the useful information for local mobility, to which also the users can contribute.

Small Scale Action no. 3

A digital and interactive totem which provides useful information to move in the area, located in the key places of Romagna Faentina.

Videocast with Carmel Kirby from Ennis

Director of Economic Development and Deputy Chief Executive, Clare County Council

LEADING DIGITAL TRENDS FOR URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES

Roland: Welcome to the ECONNECTING videocast. I'm Roland Krebs, Lead Expert from the ECONNECTING Action Planning Network and I'm co-hosting with Nadia Carboni. Nadia, can you introduce yourself too?

Nadia: Hello, very pleased to be here with one of our partner, which is Ireland, represented by Carmel. How are you doing?

Carmel: Hi Roland, hi Nadia, nice to be here.

Roland: Can you shortly introduce what is Ennis, where is Ennis?

Carmel: Yeah, Ennis is a town on the west of Ireland, in the county of Clare. Some of you people watching might be familiar of, you've heard of the Cliffs of Moher, that's a destination in County Clare. Ennis is the county town and it's the sixth largest town in Ireland. It's a medieval historical town, beautiful, great culture. I'm sure our colleagues of the ECONNECTING network have experienced in terms of, you know, traditional Irish music, medieval historical narrow streets...but with a lot of challenges around mobility and sustainability.

Roland: So, with the URBACT Action Planning Network ECONNECTING we are trying to develop stratedies for urban-rural connectivity and 30-minute territories to transfer the concept of the 15 minutes city towns or in Ennis it's maybe the 10 minutes town only! So, what's the initial motivations of Ennis to join the network?

Carmel: Well, I suppose before we had joined ECONNECTING, the Irish government policy tried to implement the 15 minutes city or the 10 minutes town...

Listen the whole interview!

https://vimeo.com/956176845

Tools of the month

WALKSHOP

The aim of a walkshop is to develop a better understanding of the planning area through the **eyes of community members** and to bring them together. Participants can contribute their views, stories and everyday experiences. This method stimulates local interest and discussion. Walkshops take place locally, with residents, city officials and local planners & experts exploring the area together as a group. The walk should be guided by questions that elicit different perceptions and characteristics of the area, as well as personal experiences and details of everyday life. Each participant should be equipped with:

- a map
- stickers
- pens

to make notes about their personal ideas and thoughts, which can later be shared and discussed.

EMOTIONAL MAP

Emotional Mapping is useful for discovering different perceptions of an area, it is a simple approach that even makes it possible to involve stakeholders and children in the planning process. It associates the area with **personal feelings** and encourages local people to think about improving spaces that play a role in their daily lives. A large scale satellite image of the area is printed out and participants can use stickers of different colours to mark places where they feel happy or uncomfortable, as well as places where they feel intervention or no change is needed. After a mapping session, the map ideally shows how people perceive the space and helps the planning team to identify areas for future intervention in order to develop a project with a positive impact.

Conclusions

NEXT STEPS

Currently, the ECONNECTING partners are working intensively on defining and concretizing their integrated actions and objectives and drafting their Integrated Action Plan (IAP).

The next meeting will take place in June in **West Mani, Greece**, to exchange on the progress made in action planning and discuss participative strategies and make important steps towards the draft of the IAP. The meeting will also discuss matters of **Green Community**, a key topic of the ECONNECTING network.

Partners will work on how to integrate green economy principles into the fabric of villages and towns, fostering a holistic approach to community development.

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