



# Quarterly Network Report #2

## April - July 2024

By Lead Expert, Stine Skot

# COPE

– Coherent, place-based climate action



Co-funded by  
the European Union  
Interreg

# Index

This report is made using all the material and input the Lead partner team and the network partners from the 8 COPE municipalities have provided before and during the Core Network Meeting #3

1. COPE in short.....	3
2. COPE partner highlights .....	3
3. Core Network Meeting #3.....	26
4. Coming Up .....	32

## 1. COPE in short

COPE is an URBACT APN IV network. The network consists of 8 partners, all European municipalities, with the City of Copenhagen as lead partner, and the seven partners are the cities of A Coruña in Spain, the two Greek cities of Kavala and Korydallos, the Romanian city of Bistrița, the French city of Saint-Quentin, the Portuguese city of Pombal and the Lithuanian capital Vilnius.

The COPE Network is about changing mindsets. As an URBACT Action Planning Network, the focus is on testing smaller initiatives to develop meaningful integrated action plans for urban development. To succeed in the green transition, change is needed in our political institutions, in the way we govern and plan our cities, and in civil society. Through co-created actions, deliberative dialogue, and the testing and evaluation of activities and governance structures, cities in the COPE network will work to develop and adjust municipal policies, strategies and structures to become coherent and integrated. In practice, this means that the municipality must be able to facilitate citizens' green actions in balance with the need for equity and a just transition.

## 2. COPE partner highlights

### Highlights from the partners

#### A Coruña

Within the URBACT COPE project, A Coruña is focusing on transforming the Sagrada Familia neighborhood. The area is clearly defined by four primary streets that form its boundaries. This area is notable for the planned future pedestrian route that will go through the neighbourhood and is flanked by two large parks at either end. These elements provide an opportunity for integrating green spaces and improving urban infrastructure within the neighbourhood.



Inside the Sagrada Familia neighborhood, green spaces are notably limited. The primary green area is this central plaza, which serves as a small oasis amidst the urban environment.

That is, unless we consider this sport field as a "green space", where the only greenery is actually just painted on.

Some streets in the neighborhood have seen positive changes with the introduction of new green spaces and areas designed for meeting and resting. However, these changes are still

limited and need to be expanded to make a broader impact across the entire area.

Despite some progress, most streets in the Sagrada Familia neighborhood still look like this. They often lack trees, are cluttered with parked cars, have narrow sidewalks, and feature vacant commercial properties.

During our ULG meetings, residents discussed various challenges faced by the neighborhood and helped identify key focus areas for improvement. These discussions were very important to understand local priorities and pinpoint the issues that have the most significant impact on daily life.



During these meetings, we identified four main issues to address:



**Expanding green spaces**

**Improving housing and energy efficiency**

**Enhancing mobility**

**Revitalizing vacant commercial properties**

The following ULG meeting focused on green areas and greening the neighbourhood. Experts from the University provided insights into Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and the opportunities for the area. These systems are designed to manage rainfall and reduce urban flooding, which is vital for improving the resilience and functionality of urban infrastructure. Their expertise will help guide effective implementation in the neighbourhood



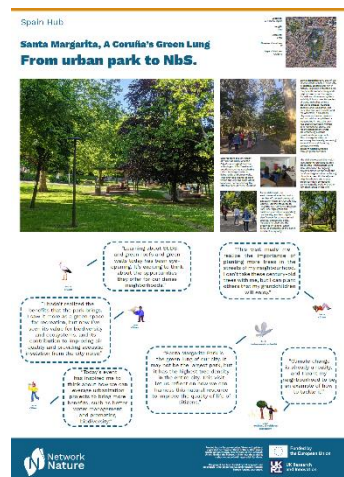
Experts also highlighted problems with some recently rehabilitated streets. They offered suggestions for enhancing these interventions in future projects to make sure that the interventions can bring more benefits.

Local experts from the ULG also discussed innovative ways to incorporate greenery in spaces with limited room, such as on rooftops or building facades, also involving the community on its design, installation and maintenance. These methods can help bring more nature into the neighborhood despite spatial constraints.



Together with our ULG members, we visited Santa Margarita Park, one of the two significant green spaces near the neighborhood. This visit provided inspiration and insight into how large parks can positively influence urban areas, and the importance of improving accessibility and connectivity with the park in the Sagrada Familia neighbourhood

The conclusions from these meetings and visits were shared in Berlin at The Nature of Cities Festival.



We also looked for inspiration in nearby neighborhoods. For instance, the Canido district in the neighbouring city of Ferrol offers interesting insights. This area, a humble working-class neighbourhood that had been neglected during years, has recently undergone significant revitalization through an urban art festival and various community-driven events, serving as a model for our project. We are planning to invite community leaders from Canido to our next ULG meeting.



In terms of small-scale actions, we are considering addressing the issue of vacant commercial properties, a significant problem in the neighborhood. These empty spaces not only detract from the neighborhood's appearance and vibrancy, but also affect safety perceptions. Finding solutions to activate these spaces is a key part of our strategy.

One initiative we are considering is organizing a plastic recycling workshop in the neighborhood. This idea is inspired by the "Precious Plastic" movement, which focuses on creating sustainable solutions for plastic waste through community workshops. A Coruña already has an association involved in organizing these workshops, and collaborating with them could help us establish a similar program in Sagrada Familia, addressing plastic waste while engaging the community and bringing new activities to vacant spaces. Another potential project is hosting a Repair Café in the neighborhood. Repair Cafés are community events where people can bring broken items to be repaired, promoting sustainability and reducing waste. There is already a group in A Coruña organizing these Repair Cafés, and partnering with them could bring this valuable initiative to Sagrada Familia. Additionally, pop-up shops are an option for revitalizing vacant commercial spaces. These temporary stores can attract visitors and businesses, providing a dynamic and flexible use for otherwise empty properties.



The good news is that the city council has allocated a budget for local climate actions. This funding could be used to support the small-scale initiatives proposed in the URBACT COPE project, hopefully helping to implement the ideas outlined in the IAP and make a tangible impact.

## Bistrița



In Bistrița we are focusing on the new green line through the city, which consists of a public transport bus line with electric busses through the city, bicycle lanes and reconfiguration of a municipal transport line.



The bus line is going in a straight line right through the city and will push out the cars in a large scale.



This will together with the establishment give room for soft mobility, such as bikes on the newly established bike lanes.

These are projects prior to COPE and then COPE will take the next step and engage the local citizens and stakeholders in converting from cars into using these new opportunities provided by the municipality.

Though these projects that COPE are depending on finishing have been a bit delayed, which is influencing the level of engaging activities in COPE.

In approaching the ULG members, we are using several methods we have used before. Being an experienced URBACT city, we are using existing core groups already working with the municipality.

But we are also very keen on using our personal connections because when we work within international projects people approach us and they can both be representatives of companies or “just” citizens of the city.



We want to involve the citizens, because this approach is the heart of URBACT and COPE - the development of the city through the engagement of the citizens.

And we want to make sure that their voices are heard. We want to show them that they can have a partner within the municipality and that their proposals can take life.

We are also using our prior project as a show of good example. And when people see that things actually happen, they start spreading the word and so our local group gets bigger and bigger.



We are also involving the Children because they are of the future. School classes are involved in pitching ideas to how they school ways can look like and how their schools can take part in the green transition.

## Copenhagen

Let's zoom in on a small part of the city

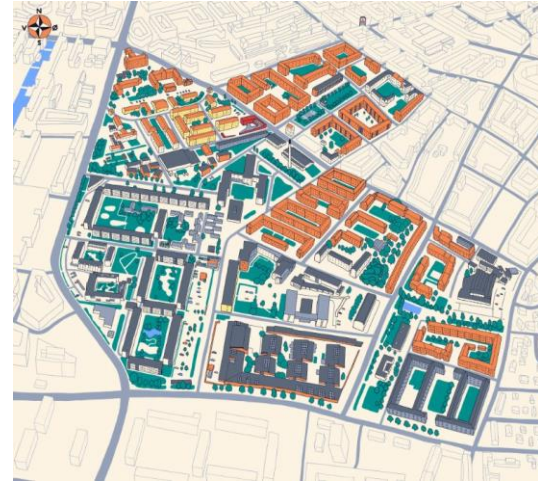
The area we have named Sønderbro with around 9000 people.

It's mainly a residential area and it has two schools and two supermarkets.

This is one of the disadvantaged areas of the city. It is characterized by a number of physical and social challenges

Sønderbro is e.g., cut off from the surrounding city by big roads that are difficult to cross and there is a lack of meeting places in the area.

Sønderbro is falling behind the general development in the city. The level of education and income is lower than average and 19% of the residents don't have a job. The feeling of safety is also lower than the average for Copenhagen.



In the unit we work with urban renewal to help create a more positive development in areas like Sønderbro. We are 6 employees based locally for five years and we come with 11 mio. euros.

We asked the residents and stakeholders of Sønderbro to help us identify what can give this neighbourhood a boost. We drank a lot of coffee around meeting tables and out in the streets and got a lot of input.

We also arranged 3 big meetings where we identified what initiatives we could work on together with all those who want to participate from the area. The 3 overarching themes are connections, community and meeting places.





We have selected a steering committee, kind of like an ULG, that will help us complete the 8 projects we have identified. The committee consists of members from the municipality, local stakeholders and residents.



Right now, we have identified 4 different objectives we could include in the IAP.

Mobility is one of them. It's both about the big issues like the big roads that surrounds the area like barriers but also the small things like missing ramps and bars that obstruct the passage.

It could be really interesting to work with loneliness and community dinners but with a focus on vegetarian dishes created with leftover food or from local urban gardens.

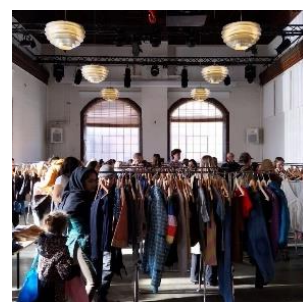
We know we are going to work with energy consumption and production in apartment buildings. We are going to offer guidance about photovoltaic cells and energy efficient operation of buildings.



This is a difficult topic to get people involved in, so we tried a small-scale action in may where we teamed up with a local NGO and held a community dinner and panel debate about buildings, mobility and biodiversity. People came for the hot meal and biodiversity but stayed for the tips about solar panels.

We also know that we are going to include actions on circularity. We would like to increase the possibilities to reduce, reuse and recycle by supporting repair initiatives, swap markets or educate on proper waste sorting.

In March we tested a small-scale circular action in the form of a swap market together with three local stakeholders. We had 168 swappers at the event. We checked in nearly 600 kg of clothes and swapped 1600 items. Only 100 kg were leftover, and they were donated to the local swap station. Huge success.



Now we are continuing the journey to define actions we want to take. In August we are planning a guided talk around Sønderbro where we learn about Copenhagen's next climate plan and discuss how we can support it locally. The challenge right now is to make a design for meetings and actions that keeps the ULG motivated. The concern is that we are going to plan for so long that they will lose their motivation.



Another challenge is that right now we have a lot of 'invisible' actions like educating housing associations on their possibilities or create a better flow for waste from households. What could be our big visible mark on the neighborhood? Could it be this old barn? Right now, it is unused. Besides a thorough cleaning of bird droppings, it is in an ok condition and could house activities like distribution of leftover food or be a repair facility.

We already started activating the area with an art project. Lines were cut through the concrete and residents helped plant flower seeds to activate the area in a new way.

We have a lot of opportunities in Sønderbro and are looking forward to turning them into actions.



## Kavala

Kavala is located in northern Greece, situated in the region of East Macedonia and Thrace. With a rich history dating back to ancient times, Kavala has been an important cultural and commercial hub for centuries. The Municipality of Kavala plays the role of the gateway to the trans-European axes for the Aegean Sea and the center of international trade routes for the Balkans.

The population of Kavala is around 60.000 citizens.



Neapolis Neighbourhood of Kavala is a newer neighbourhood built without a coherent plan.



We chose this neighbourhood as intervention area for the following reasons:

1. It fits the profile, being a neighbourhood consisting of primarily young persons and families with education and in some cases young children.
2. It is a neighbourhood that is very responsive to change as we saw recently when testing a new system of garbage bins.
3. The neighbourhood council is particularly active, outnumbering 900 members.
4. This local area has 3 well-functioning primary schools that all are engaged in this project.
5. There are 4000 citizens living in this neighbourhood.

The residents in the neighbourhood currently face a shortage of shared green areas for leisure, and there is a need for a shift towards circular practices, mindful consumption, and waste recycling.



Our primary objectives focused on revitalizing and expanding the community's communal green spaces, as well as launching awareness initiatives to educate residents about the impacts of climate change. To achieve this, we embarked on a project to transform a neglected public space into a vibrant live green park, where residents could gather, relax, and enjoy nature. On the slide we see an aerial photo of the park.

We teamed up with the Neapolis Neighbourhood Association Kavala, a group known for their passion and commitment to driving positive change in their community. The photo above shows one of their previous initiatives, where they brought color and joy to the local school. We're excited to work on our park project, and value the enthusiasm and participation of children and young people who are essential to our efforts.



Generally, the Neapolis Neighbourhood Association Kavala conducts regular meetings with local stakeholders. Given that the social capital of the neighborhood is high, we sought to leverage this existing strength by partnering with them.

What's more, their active dancing team is an integral part of their efforts, using dance as a powerful tool to bring people together and foster a sense of community. And of course, food and drinks are essential for every team!



During our ULGs, we worked to identify the needs and track all proposals submitted by the local community.



Ours meetings were regular, that's why you can see all types of clothing from long sleeved to short sleeved clothes! Meeting regularly can ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.



During our third ULG session, we took a practical approach and decided on initiatives for restoring the park. The high level of community participation ensured that all voices were heard, and we incorporated a diverse range of proposals into our plan.

The map of the neighbourhood, which provides a

visual representation of the area, while the ideas gathered during our meeting offer a comprehensive overview of the proposals put forth for the restoration of the park.



Following our meeting, we visited the park with the municipality, public servants, and workers to finalize the workload. The Neapolis Neighborhood Association Kavala also played an active role, contributing significantly to the restoration efforts by putting in a lot of hard work.

representatives from our plans and distribute



The revitalization of the park began with a thorough cleanup effort, where we removed all trash and debris that had accumulated over time. We also tackled the overgrown vegetation by cutting back tall grass. This essential step not only restored the park's visual appeal but also prepared the area for further improvements, setting the stage for a safer and more enjoyable experience for citizens.

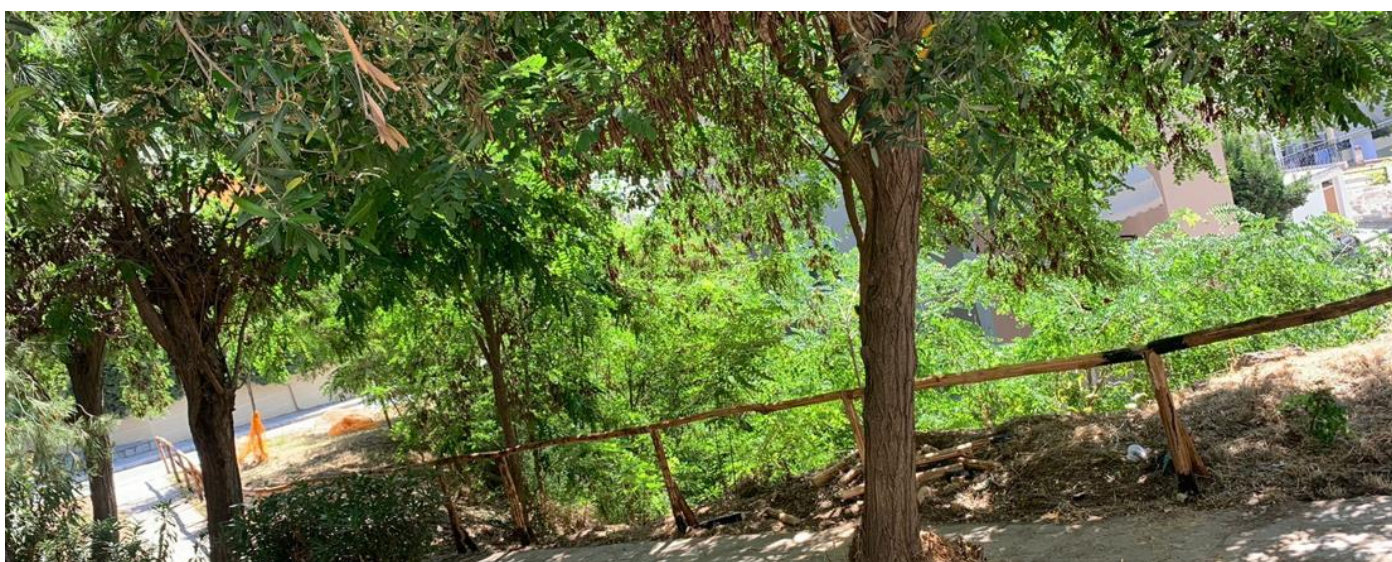


To further enhance the park's aesthetic appeal and reduce waste, we repurposed stones left over from a previous city project - the construction of a public square. We carefully arranged these stones to create a beautiful path that traverses the park, adding texture and visual interest to the landscape. By giving new life to discarded materials, we're once again demonstrating our commitment to circularity and sustainability, reducing waste and promoting an eco-friendlier approach to urban



development.

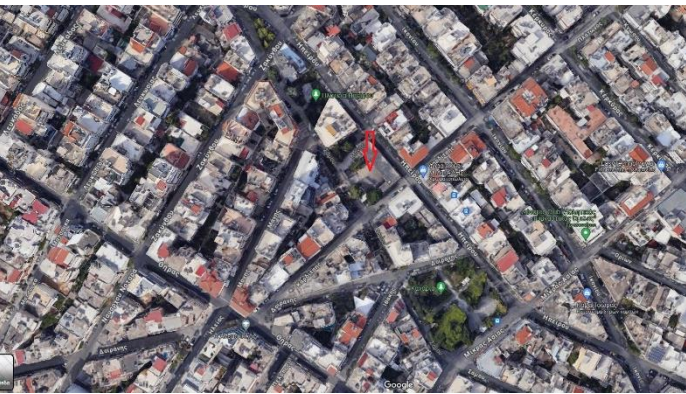
We also took steps to ensure the overall safety and accessibility of the park. We built a sturdy fence to demilit the steep area of the park, preventing accidents and creating a safe space for residents to enjoy. By doing so, we're able to provide a secure environment for people of all ages to explore and appreciate the park's natural beauty. Furthermore, we used sustainable materials - specifically tree branches - to construct the fence, adhering to our commitment to environmentally friendly practices. This decision not only reduces waste but also adds a touch of natural charm to the park's landscape.



We also took advantage of some rusty and old commissioned benches that were no longer in use, giving them a new purpose, by restoring them. We then placed them in the park, providing a comfortable spot for residents to sit, relax, and enjoy the atmosphere. By giving new purpose to discarded items, we're promoting a culture of circularity, where waste is minimized and resources are cherished. This approach not only reduces waste but also creates a sense of community and belonging among the residents, who can now enjoy their park in a more meaningful way.



community, hosting intimate theatrical performances and celebrations.

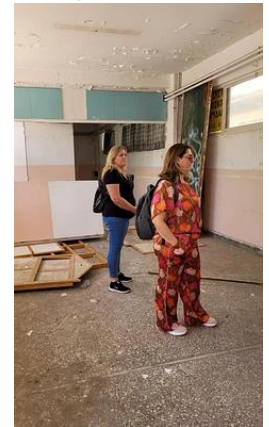


The chosen place-based location is Kanaria neighbourhood that encompasses the western side of the Prison's building within an expansive area now known as 88 acres. The 88-acre space now hosts schools, childcare facilities, a theatre, sports fields, and recently, a family park.

In the Kanaria neighbourhood we find an abandoned old school, which is the focus of our IAP.

We are focusing on restoration and renovation of the old school abandoned since the earthquake of 1999.

The vision is to create a green space that fosters playfulness and creativity, encouraging citizen empowerment, ownership, and entrepreneurship. The goal is to establish a modern innovation hub where start-ups and entrepreneurs can operate in an eco-friendly environment, contributing to the city's ongoing revitalization. The main focus is to restore the old school building and turn the surrounding area into a public green space that promotes and stimulates new commercial ideas and projects.



In this process we have identified different challenges rooting in economic factors, policy and administrative issues and social and community factors. Just as we have identified what social, economic and environmental effects this have.

**Economic Factors**

- Lack of funding for restoration
- Lack of prioritization in municipal planning
- Budget constraints
- Lack of technical expertise or resources for restoration

**Policy and Administrative Issues**

- Bureaucratic delays
- Lack of prioritization in municipal planning

**Social and community Factors**

- No community engagement
- Shift in population dynamics
- Lack of advocacy

**Social effects**

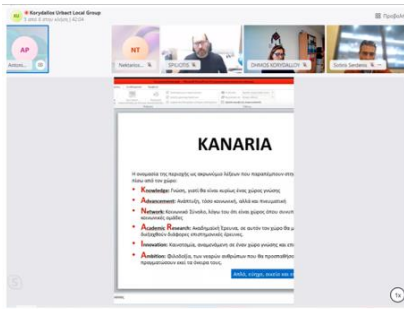
- Low education level
- Loss of potential community/educational facility
- Potential for illegal activities in the abandoned building

**Economic effects**

- Missed opportunities for economic development

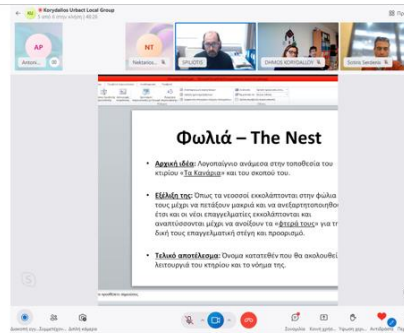
**Environmental Effects**

- Negative impact on the neighborhood's urban environment



## Neo

- Δηλώνει κάτι 'καινούριο' που ξανακτιζείται από την αρχή, επομένως έχει μεγάλη νοηματική αξία
- Το 'neo' όντας μικρό και περιεκτικό σαν λέξη θα ήταν πολύ λειτουργικό ως όνομα του κτηρίου.



## We can.

- **Can → canary**  
η τελέια χρησιμοποιείται για να δηλώσει την συντομογραφία της λέξης, ενώ η σημασία της στα αγγλικά παραπέμπει στη λέξη **μπορώ**
- Ο τίτλος: 'we can' επίσης δίνει κίνητρο στους ανθρώπους που θέλουν να ξεκινήσουν την καριέρα τους, δίνοντάς τους ώθηση

In this first part of the COPE project the focus have been on the cooperation with the 1<sup>st</sup> Vocational High-School of Korydallos, where students have been engaged through their classes and teachers in the creation of the building's visual identity (name & logo). In an online ULG meeting they presented the proposed names.



The students and their teachers were also participating in the Core Network Meeting in Kavala listening to the COPE partners presentations to get a feeling of the COPE projects as such and also to present their work. In COPE this kind of stakeholder engagement is very much appreciated as a tool to empower the participant into taking responsibility and action and to feel the appreciation from the authorities.

As part of its public anthropology initiatives, European Association of Social Anthropologists in collaboration with European national associations have led to the choice of three annual European Anthropology Days. The Association of Social Anthropologists Greece (ΣΚΑΕ/ASAG) celebrates European Anthropology Days between 15 February - 20 March 2024 where, amongst other events they welcomed the collaboration of Municipality of Korydallos with the 1st Vocational High School. *Designing together: a collaboration of the school community with local governance through a European project (COPE/URBACT IV) on designing names and logos for the reuse of a municipal building for newcomers professionals.* Coordinated by teachers Eftichia Siembenou, Margarita Gelada, and Antonios Kambourparisis, and Mimina Pateraki, social anthropologist at the Dept of Research, Development and Planning, Municipality of Korydallos. This gave a larger audience and platform for engagement and knowledge about the future transformation and restoration of the old school.





2ο ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ  
ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΥ  
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΩΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΛΟΓΩΝ  
ΕΛΛΑΔΑΣ 2024

24-26/5/2024

ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ



The cooperation with the 1<sup>st</sup> Vocational High School was also highlighted by Ms Mimina Pateraki during the 2nd Transnational Conference of Association of Social Anthropologists in Greece, Thessaloniki, 24-26 of May. Presentation at Panel



#3: Ethnographing the emerging ecological sensitivities in the era of energy transition and climate crisis. The title: Policies for the environment, sustainability and public engagement in the political arena of the European Union (25 May 2024).



In Korydallos we have had internal ULG meeting. Employees of the Planning Department and Technical Services with Vice Mayors for the funding opportunities of THE NEST

building (Ministry of Environment and Energy/ Green Fund). And a ULG meeting in May presenting the progress of the project and presentation of the proposed logos created by the students.



We have also identified the Specific objective we will focus on:  
SO 1: to foster citizen empowerment and entrepreneurship.  
SO 2: Promote sustainable urban environments.  
Activities, such as creation of an Innovation Hub, which start-ups and new entrepreneurs will use, in an eco-friendly environment



Just as concrete building interventions and surrounding activities have been identified.

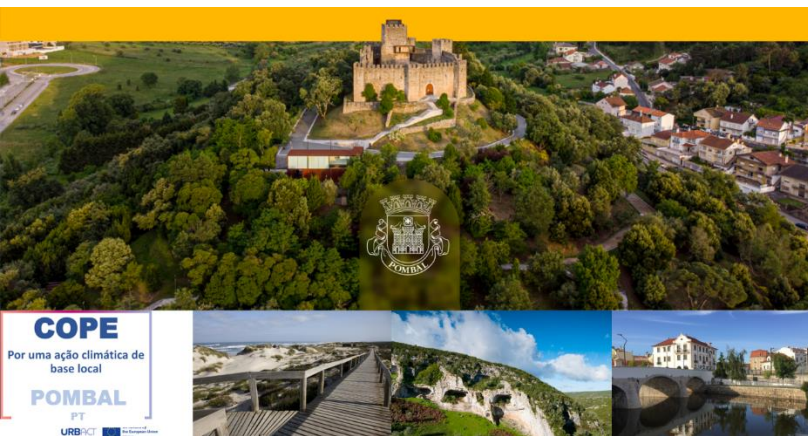
### Building interventions

- external insulation
- replacement of glazing and frames
- LED lighting replacement
- gas heating and purchase of equipment

### Surrounding activities

- Creating green pathways for student access to the school
- Establishing bike lanes
- Tree planting initiatives: Launching tree planting campaigns to increase greenery and improve air quality in the neighborhood, involving local residents, students, and community groups.
- Community gardens: Establishing community gardens in vacant spaces around the school.

## Pombal



Pombal is a medieval town with a highly frequented historic center, featuring parks, offices, shops, and a castle.

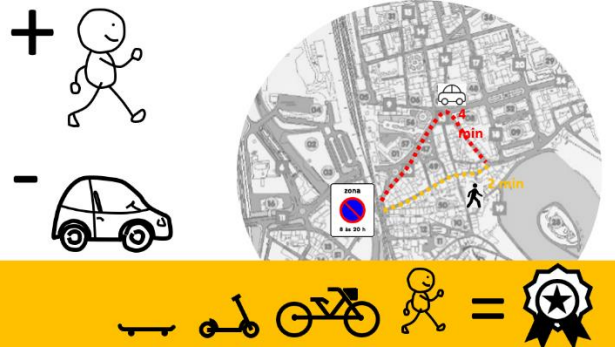
The first ULG meeting was arranged in the public square and open for everyone interested. It showed that the city had resources amongst the local citizens and interested citizens showed up.

The following ULG meetings were organized with invited stakeholders and interested citizens to identify the problems and to narrow down what exact part of Pombal should be in focus.



The selected neighborhood to be focused on is the historical center of the city with abandoned and worn-out buildings, cars jamming the public space and lack of greening in the streets.

The two main themes to be addressed was identified to be:



## Mobility



## Renaturation

The objective of the Mobility initiative is to limit road traffic in the city center between 8 AM and 8 PM, while providing free access to three parking lots during the summer (tourist season), knowing that the area is served by buses. It is quicker to reach the center on foot than by car.

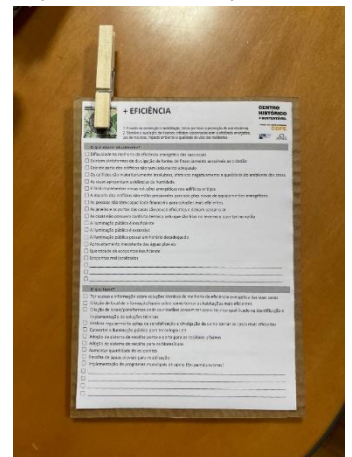
During prior events in the city center, car traffic is already prohibited, which already provide some experience with this.



The historic city center has no real green areas. The squares are lacking greenery and not many trees are to be seen either.

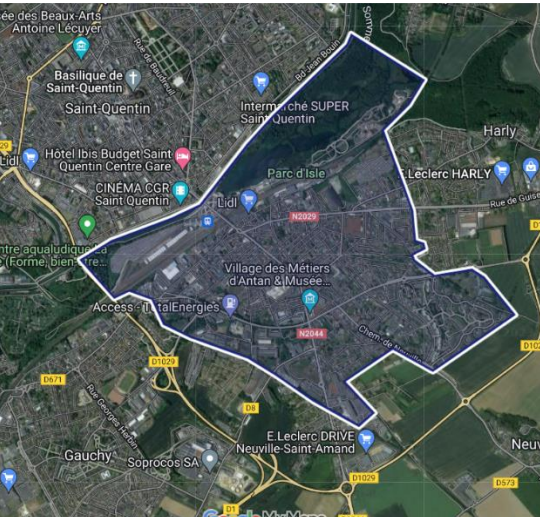


This project was proposed to the citizens and stakeholders, who were asked to identify issues through a questionnaire.



We are now at the stage of finding solutions to address these issues.

## Saint-Quentin



The City of San of Saint-Quentin is through COPE aiming to make the green transition happen with the help of our citizen within this our cities. For several years now, we created the participatory democracy department, which helps the, the city department to involve all the citizen in our project.

It's very important for us to involve our citizens in the project because they're the first and the best ambassador for the project to happen. And they know very well the problematic of their neighborhood and they can help and co-construct with the services of the municipality and the public servants of the COPE project to have a great impact in the city.

In our attempts trying to involve our citizen as much as possible we established a citizen council all across the city several years ago, representing all the neighbourhoods of the city and also thematic councils such as Sustainable Development Council or Youth Council.



We have a house of service to the population in the district of the faubourg d'isle de Saint-Quentin. The project was funded under the European Regional Development Fund. Our first ULG meeting took place in the house of service to the population.

So far we organized three meetings with our ULG and during these meetings we organized several workshops working with tools such as the problem tree and the newspaper tomorrow.



Organization of the second local group at the "Maison du Parc d'Isle" with elected in charge of citizen participation. Here we worked on mapping of the neighbourhood in order to identify existing infrastructures and those to be developed.

We also work on a map of the neighborhood the faubourg d'isle selected for the project to identify what the ULG would like to improve regarding the green transition in our city.

The different local groups highlighted 4 themes:



**Renaturalisation**



**Waste**



**Mobility**



**Water management**



We also work on a communication tools with the members of the local group so that they express themselves in one word. They were asked what they would think of when thinking of COPE if they could just use ONE word. The objective was to engage the ULG in a fun and concrete activity and at the same time to have a product to broadcast to the general public.



Other activities to be highlighted are the shared refrigerators that have been installed in districts of Saint-Quentin. The objective is to fight food waste and to allow wealthier families to share with families in need.



And the testing of installed connected bins in the largest school canteen to reduce food waste.

## Vilnius



This is the picture of a Soviet-built microdistrict, not a sweet image of the old town. Vilnius, rich with old trees and green spaces, has untapped potential. Most residents live in these areas, ripe for transformation. Adopting climate-neutral activities and community involvement is crucial for a greener, vibrant Vilnius.

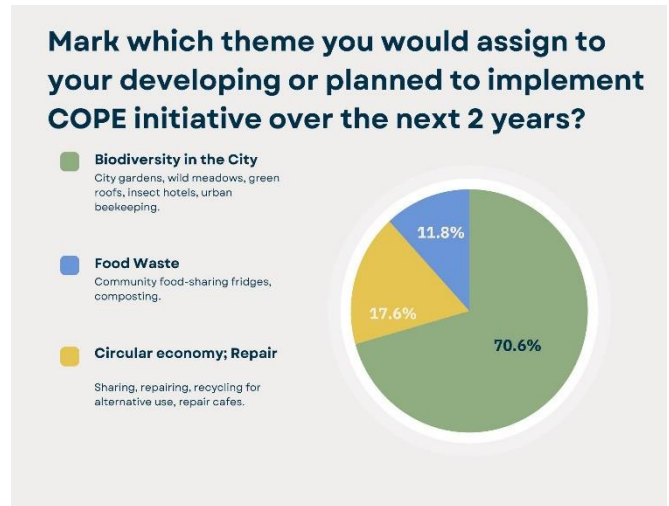
At the start of the project, we discovered Vilnius citizens' interest in climate-neutral activities. Their priorities included biodiversity, urban beekeeping, community gardens, wild fields, environmental education, repair and exchange practices, and food waste reduction. These insights will guide our efforts to create a more sustainable and engaged community.



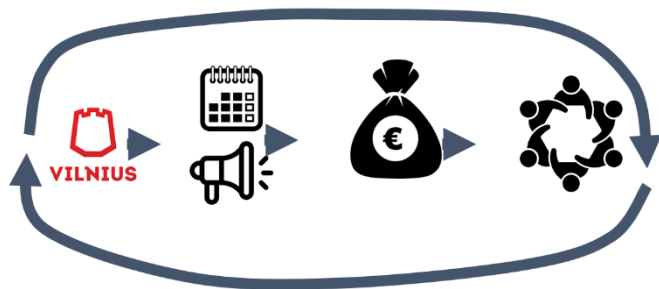


We are building a community network to function beyond the project's end. In the Facebook group, ULG share all relevant project updates, insights, and important information. This platform ensures ongoing engagement and communication among community members.

In a detailed questionnaire, communities identified their top project topics for the next two years: urban biodiversity, food waste, circular economy, and repair practices. The most popular initiatives expected in two years are related to urban biodiversity, reflecting strong community interest in enhancing local ecosystems.

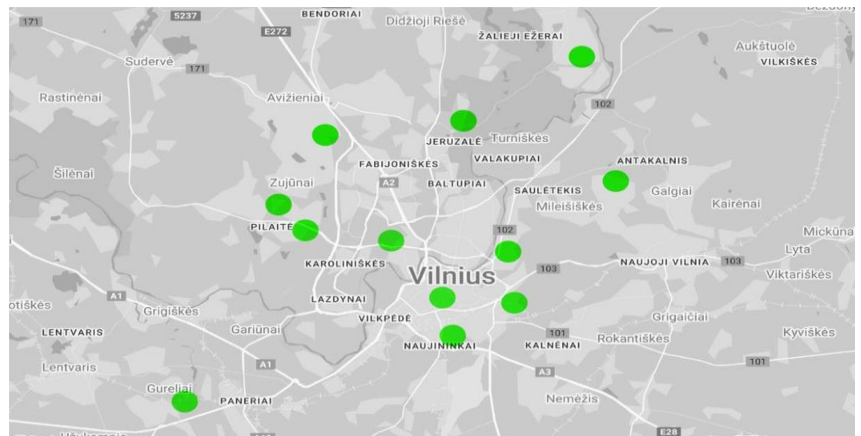


We have adopted a community support financial instrument, prioritizing climate-neutral activities for funding. Our aim is to establish an ongoing tradition, enabling communities to secure funding annually for their climate-neutral initiatives in the city. This approach ensures continuous support for sustainable local projects.



We received 45 applications, and 12 initiatives focused on climate-neutral activities were funded, each receiving up to €5,000. These projects are distributed across Vilnius, with more than half being part of our ULG network.

One initiative is a new community garden in underused territory. A few meetings were held with the ULG and municipality to discuss projects feasibility before a successful funding application. The municipality mediated between the ULG and the landowner to secure a positive response for the project.



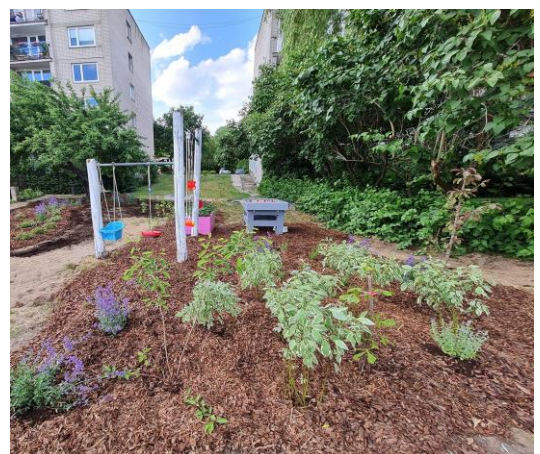


A few months later, the project received funding. In one day, with the help of 17 people, a new community garden emerged with eight raised beds. After announcing the garden, the spaces were taken in less than an hour. Two more beds will be built next week to accommodate more gardeners.

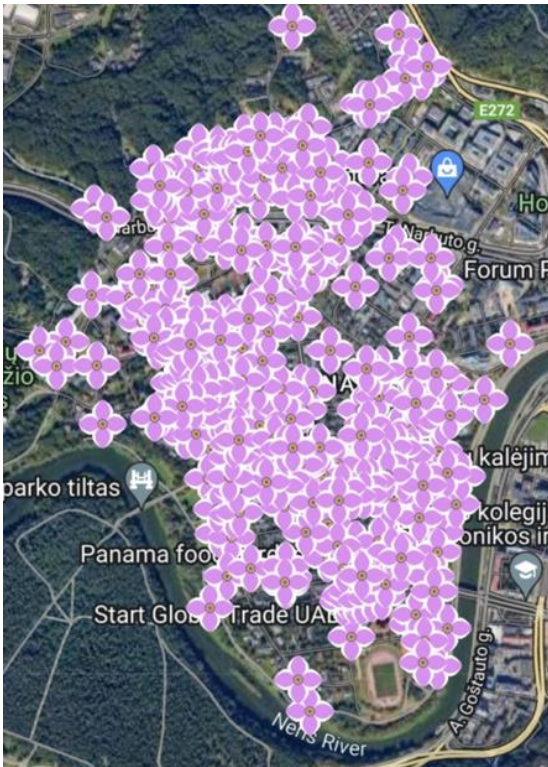


ULG members visited the Vilnius neighborhood of Šiaurinis Žvėrynas. It is a nice tradition to gather ULG leaders under one roof to discuss and share ideas and experiences from their neighborhoods. Informal meetings foster new connections and collaborations.

Šiaurinis Žvėrynas leaders shared community ideas and dreams for the area, marked in blue. The idea was to transform the area into a garden to promote biodiversity and attract more pollinators. With a successful funding application, the work was completed a few months later!



We are also proud of the initiative in this neighborhood to map all the lilacs. Residents engaged enthusiastically, marking numerous lilac locations and turning the map completely purple! This is a good example of working with the community to embrace and enhance their surroundings. And to keep the citizens motivated and engaged.



Another climate-neutral initiative in Vilnius is the community fridge, aimed at tackling food waste and providing food access to those in need. Run voluntarily, it allows shops, restaurants, and households to leave surplus food, which can then be taken for free by anyone. Inspired by successful examples in Copenhagen and Reykjavik, this project fosters community support and sustainability. In June the first community fridge in Lithuania open in Sapiegos Park next to Antakalnis

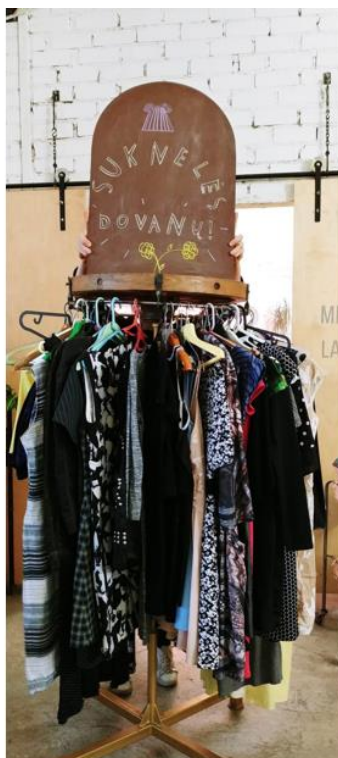
eldership. This social experiment aims to break stereotypes and promote a more conscious and resilient community. We hope it will inspire more communities to launch similar initiatives.

Thematic events serve as crucial platforms for organising, networking, and broadening horizons on climate-neutral activities. A recent event focused on reuse, refurbishment, and repair practices. Participants discussed innovative approaches to extend product lifespan, minimise waste, and promote sustainable consumption.





One of our ULG members sets a great example by organising exchange events that have become popular among neighbours. Exchanging books, clothes, fragrances, or houseplants are some examples. These initiatives not only promote community bonding but also reduce waste and promote sustainable consumption, contributing positively to the environment.



Community gardens are becoming a powerful tool to engage communities and are increasingly popular in Vilnius. The local community café, Urban Laboratory, invited residents to join the garden club and care for the environment around the café. Alongside gardening activities, plant exchange events every spring are also very popular. This season, over 3 COPE ULG groups built insect hotels in their neighborhoods to attract pollinators, boost biodiversity, and educate the community about the importance of insects and their shelters.



The success of community-powered action lies in trust and common belief. Bottom-up climate-neutral activities unite residents to tackle environmental challenges. These initiatives foster collaboration, enhance local biodiversity, and promote sustainable living, demonstrating the power of collective effort in achieving a greener future.



With Vilnius receiving the European Green Capital award for 2025, we anticipate a powerful synergy with the community-driven activities currently underway. This recognition aligns perfectly with our efforts, ensuring lasting results in our pursuit of sustainability and environmental care.

### 3. Core Network Meeting #3

In our third Core Network Meeting we learned and experinced a lot. Here is a brief summary and further down you get some highlights from the partner cities, more information about the site visit in Kavala and about the different methods we used during the meeting.

During the first day, the project partners presented their progress in formulating the comprehensive climate strategy plan. They were asked to do it in a pecha cucha presentation presenting 20 slides with 20 seconds per slide. These presentations made very visual presentations and kept the presentations short and to the point. BRAVO to all partners for accepting the challenge and for their excellent execution! 🏆

Common issues were discussed, such as the need for more green spaces, reducing cars in the city centre, promoting alternative modes of transport and increasing environmental awareness.

Our host partner Municipality of Kavala had arranged a neighbourhood community festival to celebrate and introduce their small scale action. They actually co-created a parc during only three months. All partners participated actively in the festival through a mission – more about that later.

On the second day we focused on digesting the site-visit and all the impressions from the site and conversations with citizens and stakeholders and through methods like De Bonos Six Thinking Hats and Reflecting Teams we used these impressions to both give feedback to the Kavala Team on their small scale action and also to use the inspiration and new knowledge to develop new or existing ideas for small scale actions in the partner cities.

We also had time to touch on the URBACT cross-cutting themes and not least did we dive into the possibilities AI is giving us.

### Site visit – Presentation of small scale action in Kavala



The Municipality of Kavala decided to do a small scale action focusing on engaging the local neighbourhood in the process of both identifying the action and also in completing the action. The neighbourhood citizens and stakeholders identified the small area covered with trees, bushes and garbage in a dense urban area – the kind of area that you would hurry passing, because it is dark and does not feel safe.

The municipality facilitated a discussion about how the citizens wanted the area to be used and how they could transform it in small scale not spending a lot of time nor a lot of money. They decided to clear the area for bushes and branches. They used the branches to build a small fence.



They found broken benches in the municipality depot, which volunteers fixed. They got used pallets from a local company and made them into a small sitting area and lastly they used broken tiles from another municipal project and made a pathway with them.

## The event got a lot of local attention

### E-PRESS

<https://www.kavalapost.gr/energia-perivallon/319000/ena-akomi-vima-gia-tin-klimatiki-metavasi-tis-polis-tis-kavalas/#zp675l9kja>

<https://eidisis247.gr/ena-akomi-vima-gia-tin-klimatiki-metavasi-tis-polis-tis-kavalas/>

<https://www.proininews.gr/to-cope-sti-geitonia-tis-neapolis-fotografies/>

<https://www.proininews.gr/i-geitonia-tis-neapolis-filoxenei-tin-3i-diakratiki-synantisi-diktyou-gia-to-ergo-cope/>

<https://empros.gr/2024/06/to-klima-sto-epikentro-ton-syzitiseon-stin-kavala/>

<https://gnomikavala.gr/2024/06/19/dimos-kavalas-to-cope-sti-geitonia-tis-nea/>

### FACEBOOK POSTS

<https://www.facebook.com/Kavala.gov.gr/posts/pfbid051zg8VztNurjiJWZ168SstXpE6oNRXkTJqDAXvAV1XMWY1KcL5GsVSDCa5sPyHnsl>

<https://www.facebook.com/Kavala.gov.gr/posts/pfbid0pPyfBZakAA8ELtnV2dpfUAPAZkRBsiUU7KLEzXJPFKyEXmnFik2pUH4Vvkq2SLo55l>

### NEIGHBOURHOOD POSTS

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1692216254370971/posts/3817595005166408>

### LINKEDIN POSTS

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/municipality-of-kavala\\_climateaction-sustainablecities-copeproject-activity-7208722380049784833-RMl?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/municipality-of-kavala_climateaction-sustainablecities-copeproject-activity-7208722380049784833-RMl?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)



The park already moved playing kids and teenagers from the parking lot and the area is now a place giving value to the neighbourhood and not least a proof that citizens and governance can work together.

This small scale action is a beautiful example of how the cooperation between governance and local stakeholders and citizens add value and possibilities to the city. And not least it show how the municipality can benefit from changing role from being a solely decisionmake and do'er to a more facilitating entity.



At the site visit the local community was engaged in neighbourhood festival introducing the park to the COPE project partners and to the local news.

The local stakeholders were available to explain the process and their considerations and volunteers had prepared local food to serve the COPE partners. A local artist producing handicrafts from recycled materials were present and the greek NGO "Opsometha" organized a Climate Fresk workshop for kids.



## Methods used

### Mission



At the COPE Core Network Meetings the partners are sent on missions linked to the site visits. This time they were asked to review the small scale action. The partners were paired working together with another city. They were asked to talk to the local citizens and stakeholders and the representatives from Kavala Municipality. They should investigate the level of integration, the level of neighbourhood participation, how the small scale action supports the green transition. And they got the Integration assessment grid and a small scale action canvas as supporting tools.

The Challenge	What if...	We want to test
Our IDEA		Measurement
We will...		

Small Scale Action Canvas

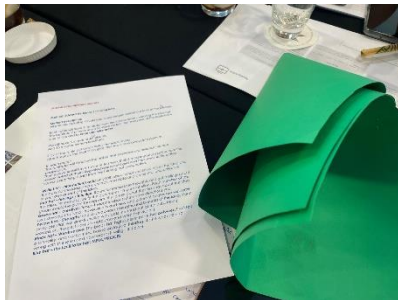
Types of integration	Description	What is the current situation?	To what extent can progress be made?
Policy / Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate economic, social and environmental challenges</li> <li>Join up solutions and minimize the effects of negative externalities</li> </ul>		
Horizontal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop partnerships at local level</li> <li>Bring together all of the main actors around a challenge</li> </ul>		
Vertical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align policies, interventions and funding upwards</li> <li>Vertical chain of governance</li> <li>Ensure coherence and build scale</li> </ul>		
Territorial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure cooperation takes place between adjacent municipalities in functional urban areas</li> <li>Minimise edge effects and displacement of problems</li> </ul>		
Hard and soft investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate physical investments with human resources in urban regeneration</li> <li>For instance, ERDF + ESF</li> <li>Avoid silos</li> </ul>		

Integration Assessment Grid

Second day of the meeting we shared the mission findings using the method De Bonos Six Thinking Hats.

### De Bonos Six Thinking Hats

This method can be used in many ways. What we focused at was the different perspectives the hats forces everyone to integrate in the conversation. The hats also give everyone an excuse to says things that you normally would not do out of politeness or other things related to culture, group dynamics or other human factors. And then the hast are just funny – though after a few rounds everybody forgets they wear a hat and they have deep, serious conversations wearing colored hats



#### Method description:

All partners including Kavala and Copenhagen spread out to sit at the 5 tables. Each table will have 1 facilitator from the Kavala team – wearing the blue hat.

The facilitators' primary role is to make certain that everyone at the table have time to talk and to **listen and take notes!** We will have 5 rounds of 15 minutes. And 15 minutes plenum feedback. Stay at the table but switch hats after each round.

After 5 rounds. The facilitators give their top 5 take-aways into plenum.

In each round the facilitator will describe the hat so that everyone understands the hats perspective. Then everyone will have 1 minute to speak their 3 most important points from the mission noted at their integrated assessment grid and their small-scale action canvas. Everything is said from the thinking hat perspective.

**White hat – Information/Facts:** only talk about what you know about the idea and the basis for the idea. Focus on facts and data and be neutral and objective in your assessment of the idea.

**Red hat – feelings / intuition:** Room for immediate thoughts and gut feelings about the idea. No need to justify the comments, it's pure intuition. Each member of the group should be given the opportunity to talk about their feelings about the idea

**Green hat – creative:** Pursue thoughts about alternative directions you can develop the idea. Provocations and new and different angles are welcome.

**Yellow hat – Strengths:** Focus on obvious strengths and benefits of the idea, vision and potential. Ask questions like who gets the most out of the idea being worked on, the best possible outcome and what the vision is.

**Black hat – Weaknesses:** The black hat highlights mismatches between the idea and reality, errors or barriers, based on logical thinking. It asks what can go wrong with the idea and how wrong it will go if it does.

**Blue hat – the facilitator hat: META/PROCES**



## Reflecting Teams

After the mission accomplished exercise using De Bonos Six Thinking hats, we followed up by a workshop on developing small scale actions in all partner cities. Working with the Kavala small scale action in detail made a good set-off. To facilitate the development, we used the method Reflecting Teams. In this method one idea or one person gets help from all the bright heads in the team. Again the method is conducted in different ways, but we did it like this :



### Method description:



Choose a focus person, an interviewer and a reflecting team consisting of minimum 2 - 5 people.  
The reflecting team are not talking during the interview, but take notes, write down the main points of the conversation and look for good questions to ask.  
Through questions and curiosity, the interviewer's task is to enable the focus person to find new perspectives and answers to the issues themselves. It is important that the interviewer does not offer advice or their own opinions.

### The process:

The focus person and interviewer sit facing each other so that the focus person has their back to the reflective team. There are three phases in the method:

1. The focus person starts by briefly describing their problem. During the interview, the focus person must only answer questions.
2. The interviewer's job is to ask curious questions, to be the archaeologist of the focus person's story. The interviewer's own opinions, advice and solutions are uninteresting!
3. The reflective team is silent during the interview. One or more themes have been agreed in advance that the team should keep an eye on during the interview. When the interviewer has finished interviewing the focus person, the team briefly reflects on what they have heard based on the pre-agreed themes. The interviewer can take a timeout to ask the reflecting team for advice.



## Pecha Kucha – Our COPE project: Here and Now

### The Pecha Kucha rules:

Prepare 20 slides (no more no less) and keep it to pictures (you can write notes below).  
You will have 20 seconds per slide and it will shift automatically.

All partners were asked to prepare a pecha kucha presentation before the meeting and present it at the meeting. The ideas for having this approach was for everyone to get a feeling about what is the status of COPE in the different cities and at the same time to avoid using all the meeting time on presentations. And furthermore we also wanted to make visual presentations and avoid text heavy - and dare I say boring – slideshows. The presentations also formed the basis for this report.

The partners were asked to consider following points in their presentation:

- ) Present ULG and their work so far
- ) Small scale action – any action yet or thoughts?
- ) Do you meet limitations / challenges?
- ) Explain your progression
- ) Are you looking at any cases of best practise or other projects you find inspiration in?
- ) Have you identified synergies with other partners / projects?
- ) Status on IAP
- ) Would like to ask the network for feedback on anything particular?

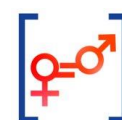
The method was well received and the partners presented very well. Though it is also a difficult format and may be difficult to work with and this was also remarked by some partners.

### Cross cutting themes



The three crosscutting priorities Gender equal cities, Digital transition and Green transition are subject we keep talking about. In COPE the green transition is in everything we do. But even though our highest goal is to push for a green transition, we can always do more in our everyday work and when we meet in core network meetings. First of all it would help to be able to take the train instead of flying, but it would also make a difference to eat less (red) meat and more plantbased. And we should consider the material we use. As municipalities we can be frontrunners and show what we need to change and in that way also push our local suppliers to make a change. This is not easy, but we can try.

The Gender Equal Cities is in COPE not only considered as a gender perspective but also an equity agenda, which the COPE cities are very concerned about in different ways e.g., about welcoming refugees and immigrants and giving vulnerable groups a voice.



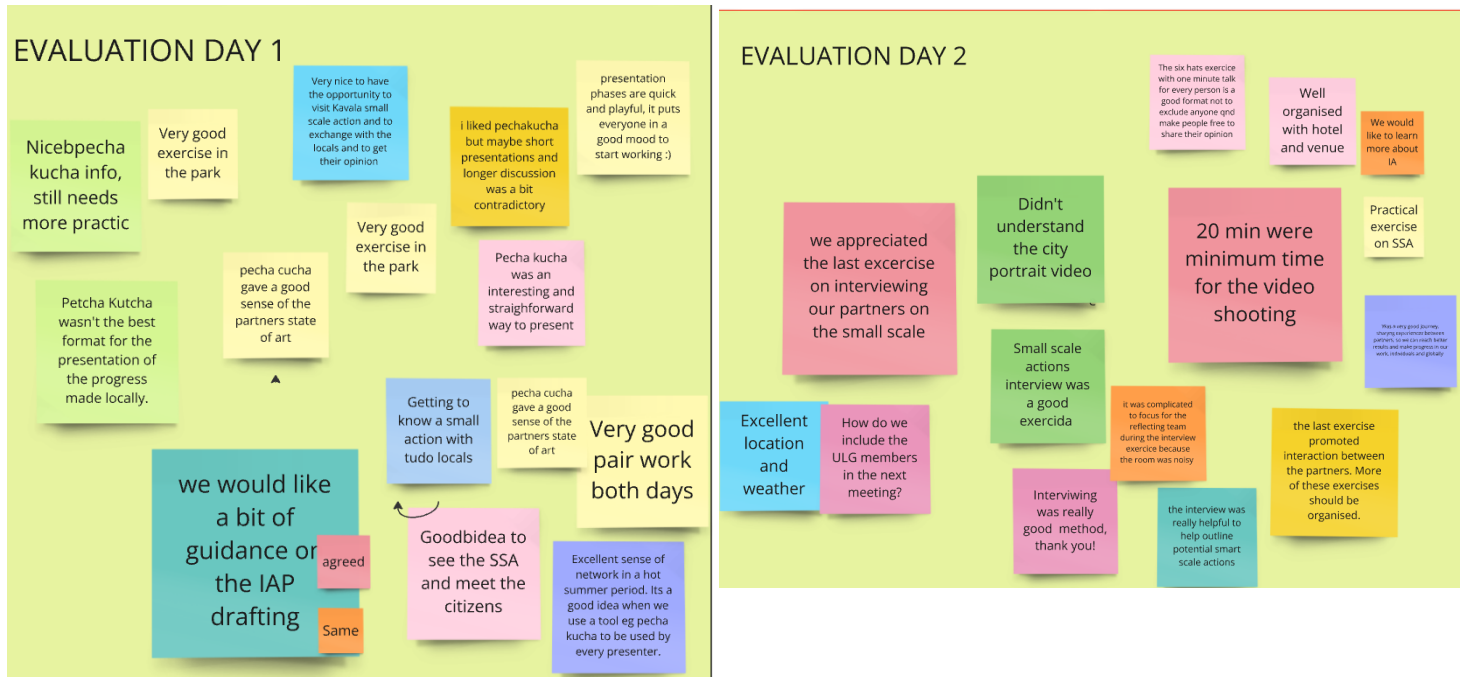
The digital transition is a subject that all partners relates to and work on in different levels. Some cities are very digitalised and some are in the process of digitalising.

In Core Network Meeting #3 our communication officer Ida Nordborg showcased how AI can be used. She made a recorded presentation explaining the rules to be aware of when using AI. She recorded herself and then transformed her recording into presentations where she presented in different languages. It looked very real and it was very funny to see « AI Ida » (Alda ?) presenting in all 7 languages represented in COPE.



## Evaluation

When we evaluate at the end of a Core Network Meeting, we use a MIRO board, where the partners can all write any feedback or wish they have in mind. It looked like this after the CNM#3 evaluation:



## 4. Coming Up

### COPE

**CNM#4** in Pombal beginning of October.

Agenda so far:

- ) Process with peer-review and IAP focus begins October with Ad Hoc expert Marion Cugnet.
- ) Site-visit: small scale action
- ) The Mid-term Reflection process: it will be a 3-step process including:
  - o a **survey**
  - o a **session** during our meeting where the Secretariat will attend.
  - o a **possibility** for reprogramming which will allow for any adjustment in terms of outputs and budget.

**Webinar on Circular Economy** October 11<sup>th</sup> with Ad Hoc Expert Eleno Feleki

**Webinar on funding** tailored the partners needs by Ad Hoc Expert Marion Cugnet, around February/March 2025.

**Process of IAP development and peer review** with help from Ad Hoc Expert Marion Cugnet, beginning October 2024.

### URBACT



September – December: NUP meetings across Europe

18-22 November: City Lab on energy

April-June 2025 application for Transfer Network opens (based on Good Practice, among other things)

8-10 April 2025: City Festival – open to actors also outside the networks (put it in the calendar).

March 2026: Final City Festival only for the participants in this round of networking

April-June 2026: Call for the next APN round (to be launched at City Festival 2026 New City Labs TBD by URBACT).



URBACT



Co-funded by  
the European Union  
Interreg