12 LESSONS LEARNT

CREATE a PLATFORM
BUILDING RESILIENCE

TOOL BOX PROCUREMENT

SHARED SOCIETAL VALUE & RESPONSIBILITY

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

LEADING ROLE of MUNICIPALITIES

APPROACH PLACE-BASED engagement

LONG TERM COMMITMENT
URBAN → REGENERATION

LEARNING → EXPERIMENTATION → INNOVATION
URBACT
LOCAL culture FOCUS
CITIES 4CSR

European Union
European Regional Development Fund

URBACT
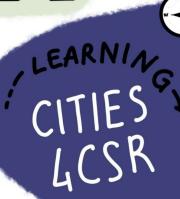Driving change for better cities

CITIES 4 CSR

Comune di Milano

12 LESSONS LEARNT

Lesson 1: FRAMING PLACE-BASED CSR-MOBILISATION

"When it comes to CSR-mobilisation, LOCAL CULTURE UTTERLY MATTERS"

The 'How' of doing things together and relating to another requires a close look and immersion into local capacities and characteristics. It is about long existing cultures of decision-making and engagement, state of trust, historical pathways and the local conditions people and stakeholders find themselves in. DON'T JUDGE FROM AFAR!

Lesson 2: PURSUING PLACE-BASED CSR-ENGAGEMENT

"When it comes to CSR-engagement: CUSTOMISE STRATEGIES, DIVERSIFY APPROACHES"

Different engagement models work for different communities, sectors and actors. Obviously, old industries, international companies, small players, non-profit organisations, young enterprises and young leaders, associations and volunteers – all work distinctively different. As municipality: Be strategic! Sense the energy! Diversify approaches! Learn quickly what works, and with whom?

Lesson 3: ENGENDERING LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

"Place-Based CSR needs ACTIVATION, PERSEVERENCE AND ONGOING COMMITMENT"

If CSR should be boosted via engagement (URBACT model) than activation and mobilisation are key. As Masterclasses 1 and 3 demonstrated, 'Saving the Earth' (Green ambitions) and 'Helping your Neighbour' (Social aspirations) work well for momentum building. The power of in-person, joined events is likely to be strong in the future as well as all kind of platform-building. Always ask: What are the Activator Projects and Topics that motivate stakeholders at the moment? Who should lead? How best organised?

Lesson 4: FULL SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR MUNICIPALITY

"Weakest link or one step ahead? HONESTLY APPRAISING THE VISION, ROLES and PROCESS-STRUCTURES OF YOUR MUNICIPALITY"

The position, processes and leadership of the Municipality matter for engagement success. They can be in the Driver Seat (Visionary Leader) or walled in. Internal champions matter, overcoming the 2-speed conundrum and adapting institutional models and processes.

Lesson 5: EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENTS FOR CHANGE

"If you want success: CUSTOM-DESIGN YOUR MUNICIPAL TOOLBOX"

Revisiting the Toolbox introduced in the Baseline Study shows that a mix of new understandings/awareness, new relations, improved contracts and better-fitting institutions and practices are central to selecting and sharpening tools. Municipal Procurement (Master Class 2) has a particular potential to change business and community behaviour and practices – Is it being used adequately? Ask yourself: What works? Where? Why? How?

Lesson 6: FINDING YOUR NICHE, NAVIGATING YOUR PATH

"There is no laid-out road: PATHFINDING VIA EXPERIMENTATION, RAPID LEARNING AND INNOVATION"

Finding your path means travelling through rugged terrain, in stormy weather, with no map or compass. So pathways are often not laid out clearly. Guimaraes is not alone when claiming that URBACT felt like one big experiment. So be innovative, experiment adapt in reflective fashion. URBACT taught us the importance of finding our niches, learn quickly (e.g. in regards to Small Scale Actions) and adjust in ongoing fashion.

Lesson 7: THE PROMISE OF PLATFORMS - "How the Nantes example inspired us: ADVANCING FROM TECHNICAL CONNECTIONS TO SOCIAL COLLABORATION"

Platforms are en vogue. Our partners got inspired by Nantes' CSR-platform and Guimaraes and Molina de Segura created a local platform as CSR-mobilisation device. But platforms need owner that update and care, and platforms need to connect well to stakeholders' needs. Ultimately, the technological possibilities of modern IT-infrastructure need to translate into social collaboration. Just like in Nantes.

Lesson 8: BUILDING LOCAL RESILIENCE

"Confronting an uncertain world: LOCAL ENGAGEMENT AND CSR AS DEFAULT CRISIS RESPONSE MECHANISM"

In an uncertain world, crisis – both structural ones (demography, climate change, geopolitical disturbance, prosperity losses) and disruptive ones (Covid-19, Ukraine War) – are increasingly common. Resilience, mitigation and adaptation are the new buzzwords. CSR-engagement can help locally to respond quickly and effectively – just remember Bratislava. Be mindful of the three 'A's: Being alert, Being agile, Being active!

Lesson 9: RELATIONAL RECIPE FOR TRANSFORMATIONS

"Architecture for success: LOCAL ENGAGEMENT AS ONE FOUNDATION FOR TRANSFORMING PLACE"

Having the right relationships in place markedly increases the chances to transform place. As Masterclass 4 taught us, transforming place means relationships +. The plus stands for scaling up initiatives, linking up with investment and improving outcomes from Climate action, resilience, to urban renewal. New forms of togetherness will breed success – the Cork example has been illustrative.

Lesson 10: REVISITING THE EUROPEAN CSR-GAP ARGUMENT

"Adequate concept? DON'T THINK CSR GAP – THINK LOCAL POTENTIAL AND CAPABILITIES"

Our Baseline Study asked to what degree the so-called CSR gap between Western and Northern Europe, and the East of the continent prevails. We found that gap is not the right word as it means little in a dynamic, contextual world. Rather, understanding place and culture – and strategically working from there – is key. A place-based approach will encourage thinking along potential and capability-building lines!

Lesson 11: REVISITING DEFINITIONS

"Replacing old definitions: TOWARDS SHARED SOCIETAL VALUE AND RESPONSIBILITY!?"

Definitions can help or hinder adequate comprehension. Clearly CSR, or PSR, or ESG, are not a one-size-fits all model. Definitions and local application matter! DON'T NAME THE BABY BEFORE IT IS BORN! We suggest developing concepts towards shared societal value and responsibility, Corporate Urban Responsibility and Shared Urban Value. Let's make CSR a concept place-based stakeholder communities can work with and let's make it fit-4-purpose for territorial interventions.

Lesson 12: INTERVENTIONS

"Beyond Sector interventions: A TERRITORIAL AND PLACE-BASED APPROACH TO SHARED SOCIETAL VALUE AND RESPONSIBILITY (SSVR)"

The case for territorial and place-based approaches to creating shared societal value and responsibility can be founded on various pillars; embedding the SDG-movement, making our technology-driven world more inclusive, responding well to multiple crises, localising the friend-shoring of supply chains, creating reception alliances for substantial European investment. What ultimately matters is improved local trust levels and win-win dispositions between stakeholders. Territorial and place-based interventions have to show that they can deliver against these goals.