



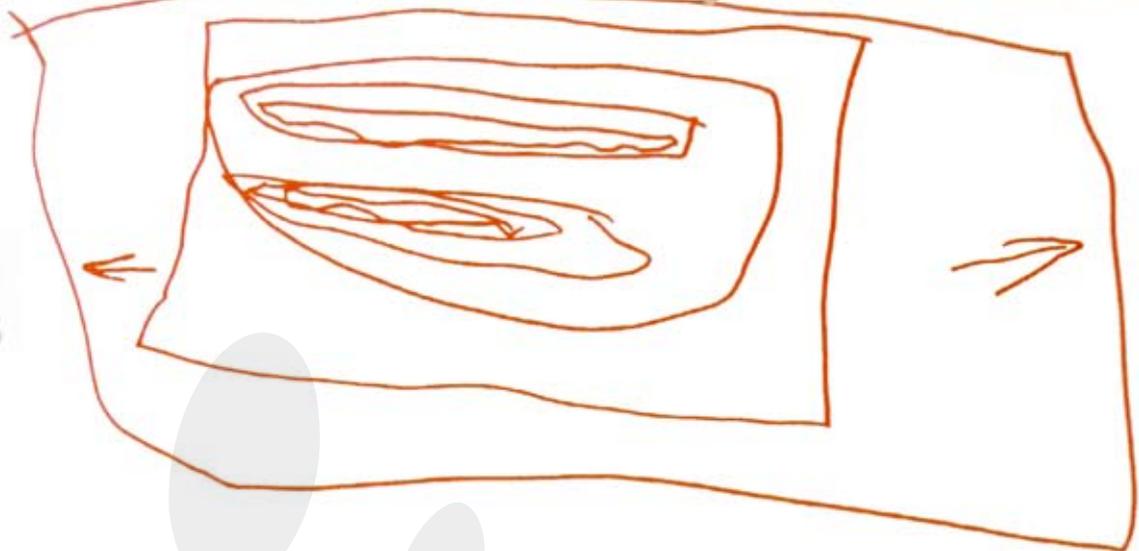
creative **Clusters**
in low density urban areas



BARNSELY . ÓBIDOS . REGGIO EMILIA . HÓDMEZŐVÁSÁRHELY . MIZIL . INTELI . ENGUERA . VIAREGGIO . JYVÄSKYLÄ . CATANZARO

il confine è un fumo
the boundary is like smoke

MONDI
WORLDS



Exhibition "Una città tanti bambini", Centro Internazionale Loris Malaguzzi - Reggio Emilia

Creativity and Innovation in Europe

A few months after the presentation of the Green Paper on Cultural and Creative Industries the European debate has been more centred on innovation, rather than creativity. In a document produced for the EC Enterprise & Industry Directorate-General called "New Cluster Concepts Activities in Creative Industries" the core definition of creative industries is linked to art, music, culture, writing and fashion. This approach is mainly metropolitan-based.

The document also states a big difference between creativity and innovation: "Art and culture and most other creative industries are not driven by neither research, nor new solutions based on new knowledge from users; creative industries are basically taste-driven and most creative workers aspiration is to set new standards for users taste and choice".

As appealing as this theory can be, for us, the two words are connected. We don't have one without the other. In small and medium-sized urban areas the main difference is to have an integrated strategy connecting creativity, innovation, sustainability and education.

And that's why Education was the subject of our last thematic workshop in Reggio Emilia. For the partners, it was the opportunity to learn with one of the world references. The degree of specialisation and educational development in Reggio Emilia is impressive, and the feeling from outside is that Reggio Emilia has the future guaranteed. Obviously things are always most complicated, but one thing is for sure, Reggio has a huge advantage when competing with other places: Innovation.

Miguel Silvestre – lead partner
creativeobidos@cm-obidos.pt

Miguel Rivas, the Lead Expert of the network, has recently delivered an article on the city responses to the crisis using as evidence the sample of cities participating in URBACT Creative Clusters. (http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general_library/TroubledTimes_MiguelRivas_March2010FINAL.pdf).



Learning from troubled times: city reactions to economic crisis

The poor capacity of our cities to respond locally to the crisis, other than collaborating with Central States in the execution of Keynesian measures, underlines yet again the question of financial devolution. Unfortunately, the boom of public deficits in most of the EU member states and the subsequent necessity to reduce them will postpone sine die such a debate. Meanwhile, many of our cities are giving evidence of a more proactive behaviour than States and regions in the design and promotion of a new post-crisis productive model.

The crisis has dramatically raised the question of financial devolution

The lack of financial devolution explains the scarcity of local packages of anti-crisis measures, including formal recovery plans. And in the few cases where there are such initiatives, they are limited to soft support measures, based on little public funding. Nowadays, local governments have no say in neo-Keynesian strategies. Actually, major short-

term recovery measures such as those facing credit flow recovery or labour market reforms are being implemented far from the local scale.

According to the Centre for Cities, the British think tank on urban issues, "the recession is a time for more devolution, not less; the downturn is affecting places differently, and cities need to be better able to respond with tailored solutions". Sadly this demand has not yet been realised; it is far from what is

actually happening these days.

This is a lesson that must be learnt for the future. City governments have suffered from a lack of relevant tools to respond locally to the impacts of crisis. These kinds of local responses, when properly combined with those from broader scales, could act as a contribution in the fight against economic downturns.

Moreover, I suggest that devolution to the "local state" should be one of the key questions linked to innovation in the public sector, along with metropolitan government (or the new territorial governance) or increasing use of PPP formulas. This kind of social innovation should be a driver in the post-crisis long-term strategy, together with knowledge-

based economies, low-carbon economies, and so on.

Nevertheless, the strong increase of social expenditure and Keynesian measures and the huge flow of resources to rescue of the financial system have made the public deficit in the EU skyrocket. In the Euro zone, it is forecast to reach 7% of GDP by 2010. In Ireland, the public budget balance is estimated to turn from a surplus of 0.5% of GDP in 2007 to a deficit of 15% in 2010. In the same period, Spain will move from a surplus in national budget of roughly 3% of GDP to a deficit of 11%. Unfortunately, this strong deterioration of public accounts will not create the propitious ground needed for the issue of devolution to be included in national and regional public agendas.

A systematic local strategic planning will be a catalyst in the building new productive model

As a period potentially favourable to creative destruction, the crisis could be seen as an opportunity for local economies to introduce necessary adjustments or to simply re-think themselves as urban economies at the crux of global trends (sustainability, knowledge economies,...). This could be a turning point, creating the right momentum for strategy. When it comes to planning, cities are also showing more dynamism than other scales of government, regardless of the rank or the size of the city. Most of the sample cities already have a city model and a scenario for the future in place. Local strategic planning will help to build the new productive model, on the condition that two directions are followed:

a) Planning must be radically innovative regarding the

Reactivating commercial life in Barnsley (UK)

Under the title "Re-making Barnsley", this mid-sized town in Northern England has the ambition to be a "21st Century Market Town" in the heart of an enterprising and innovative local economy. They have already successfully completed a huge restructuring process from a steel and coal-based economy.

In this strategy, culture and creativity-based activities are playing a central role, even in the effort to put in place short-term measures to face the ongoing downturn. For instance, their strategic cultural programme targets 'emerging trading days' (a measure to balance weaker trading days, usually Sunday; events are scheduled on this day to increase trade sales) in the town centre to encourage footfall and spending in the retail and hospitality offer there. This includes Sunday Specialty markets and regular entertainment programming during weekends.

They are also programming empty retail units with contemporary visual art and dressing all the development sites in creative attractive hoardings. They have a programme of "creative shop windows", facilitated by 'The Barnsley Welcome', in order to cover empty windows with vibrant images of the market and the cultural offer, to help create a more appealing and engaging urban environment.

Moreover, they have invested in a new plan of "Town centre ambassadors" and developed the cleaning services in the town centre, with the objective to ensure responsive and effective public service.

strategic thinking of urban economy. This involves:

- Using the cluster approach as an exercise of deconstruction/reconstruction of the local economic base - a way of re-thinking the economic identity of our cities.
- An analysis at the spatial level: the nature of the new urban industrial space; new productive functions for central areas in metropolitan contexts; how to deal with deindustrialization and re-industrialization processes in metropolitan contexts; the new role of "intermediate regions" and medium-sized cities in polycentric models, etc.
- Translating into specific local actions global trends which

are shaping the new economy, such as eco-innovation, tech-based activities, creativity-based business models, open innovation or social innovation.

b) A robust articulation with regional, national and European strategies.

Here articulation means both alignment and financial support. In specific contexts, as in Central Finland or Yorkshire, it works more or less satisfactorily, while Southern Europe still has progress to make in terms of such strong articulation (the case of Portugal is particularly striking). It is simply an issue of efficiency in public management, independent of the grade of regionalism or regional political autonomy.

TIWI

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Visions from Members of the Local Support Groups

TIWI: Moving from Bologna and Milan to Reggio Emilia (IT)

TIWI is a company based in Reggio Emilia (Italy), founded in 2009 by two PhD students of the University of Bologna and a young professional in communication sciences. TIWI produces digital contents and is specialized in creating motion graphics videos. TIWI's products are meant to be distributed over the Internet, as well as over internal networks of private companies and public administrations with the aim of using animation techniques to promote the comprehension and the divulgation of complex contents such as: the specifications of a product, the results of a research program, the aim of a public policy.

TIWI started its activity by winning in 2008 the business plan competition INMENTOR as "best business idea" proposed by young entrepreneurs. INMENTOR was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. Among the benefits of this competition is the possibility for TIWI to have its office rents in Reggio Emilia and the Internet connection expenses granted by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia until 2013.

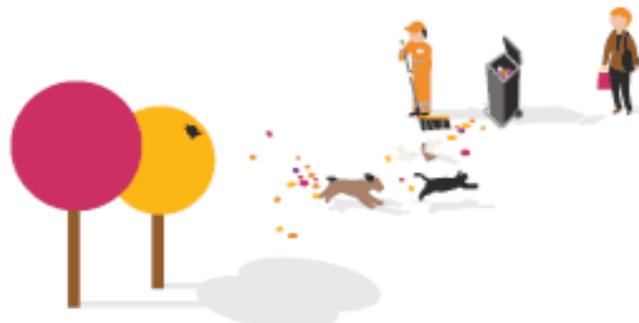
The team of TIWI counts now on 8 people with a wide variety of expertise in contents design, graphics

and animation. Among the people who are currently in TIWI though, only two are from Reggio Emilia. All the others come from bigger Italian cities, such as Milan and Bologna, and have moved to Reggio Emilia specifically for joining TIWI.

For this reason **TIWI might provide an example of how small and medium-sized cities can also compete in the challenge of attracting creative talents by offering valuable services that improve the quality of people's lives.**

In Reggio Emilia the cost of renting an apartment to live, for example, is much more affordable than in bigger cities such as Milan. Moreover the presence of many bicycle lanes and pedestrian zones offers easy access to the workplace without a car. In short, life in a small-medium city such as Reggio Emilia is simply easier than in a large metropolis, and this peculiar aspect for people operating in knowledge intensive sectors can be a good incentive to move into less densely populated areas to carry on their professional activity.

Federico Riboldazzi
Business Development





O BICHINHO DE CONTO
editora



O Bichinho de Conto: Moving from Lisbon to Óbidos (PT)

Interview with Mafalda Milhões

WHAT IS THE MAIN ACTIVITY OF BICHINHO DO CONTO?

Bichinho do Conto is an editorial project with the objective of promoting literature as a way of personal development for children and adults. Our slogan is "For Readers from 0 to 200 Years Old".

It integrates a bookshop specialised in books for children and an art gallery. We provide also other services related to distribution, training, consultancy and graphic design.

WHY MOVING FROM LISBON TO ÓBIDOS, A SMALL TOWN?

Bichinho do Conto moved from Lisbon to Óbidos two years ago. We are now located in an old building that used to be a school. It was totally refurbished by our team. We were looking for an abandoned place on the top of a hill with a big tree and a view to the sea. We could only find it in Óbidos, in a poetic environment of a medieval town surrounded by walls. Proximity to Lisbon, good accessibilities, quality of life, historical heritage, and a mix of coastline, beaches and



countryside were some of the motivations for this big change in our life.

www.obichinhodeconto.pt/



Green Paper on Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries

An Overview of the Green Paper

The Green Paper on Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries was presented last April, 27 by the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth.

The paper recognizes that there is a lot of untapped potential in the cultural and creative industries to create growth and jobs in the European Union, namely in a new digital economy where the ability to create social experiences and networking is a factor of competitiveness.

In the context of globalisation, digitisation and cultural diversity, three challenges are pointed out for the development of the cultural and creative industries in Europe:

FIRST: to put the right enablers in place by increasing

the capacity to experiment, innovate and succeed as entrepreneurs, and by providing access to funding and the right mix of skills.

SECOND: to help cultural and creative industries develop in their local and regional environment as a launch pad for a stronger global presence, including through increased exchange and mobility.

THIRD: to move towards a creative economy by catalysing the spill-over effects of cultural and creative industries on a wide range of economic and social contexts.

The document provides an analysis of several relevant issues such as: experimentation, innovation and entrepreneurship, skills' needs, access to funding, local and regional dimension, mobility and the circulation of works, cultural exchanges and international trade, and creative enterprises.

Finally the paper stresses that Europe's cultural and creative industries may contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy and to some of its flagships initiatives such as: the Innovation Union, the Digital Agenda, Tackling Climate Change, the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs and an Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era.

However, the document is short on concrete ideas to unlock the potential of the creative sector and is timid on steps that the EC could already set in motion to support it. For example, the Green Paper states only little on measures to stimulate creativity, imagination and lateral thinking in Europe and on promoting multidisciplinary across creative disciplines, art, science and technology.

Besides this, creativity is a transversal issue, so it must be approached as an integrated European policy. EU institutions should ensure that the different EU policies aimed at stimulating innovation can be effectively used to promote the creative and cultural sectors.

The position of the Creative Clusters' Network

In the framework of the Creative Clusters' network, INTELI – Intelligence in Innovation Centre (Portugal), in collaboration with the other partners, is producing a Technical Action Plan with Policy Recommendations and Strategic Orientations for the development of creative clusters in low density areas, both small and medium-sized cities and rural areas. Our thesis is that creativity can act as a driver for the development of small economies and not only for big cities or metropolis.

Public Consultation on the Green Paper

The objective of this consultation is to gather views on various issues impacting the cultural and creative industries in Europe, from business environment to the need to open up a common European space for culture, from capacity building to skills development and promotion of European creators on the world stage. The responses to the consultation will inform the Commission and help it ensure that EU programmes and policies involving cultural and creative industries are "fit for purpose".

The consultation is promoted by DG Educational and Culture and is open until 30th July 2010.

For additional information: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

We will answer to the public consultation launched by the EC in the context of the green paper for cultural and creative industries before 30 July 2010, giving voice to small cities and towns in the definition of European creativity-related policies and funding programmes and instruments.



With the objective of getting support for our proposals we launched last January 2009 a political memorandum called "The Óbidos Charter - a Pact for Creativity" that was signed by around 30 mayors of European cities and towns from Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, Italy, Romania and Hungary. The intention is the creation of a European Network of Creative Small and Medium-Sized Cities in order to promote the exchange of experiences and best practices, the development of joint projects and the mobility of creative people.

The Green Paper recognises that creative and cultural industries develop in a cluster basis at local and regional levels. Moreover, the document postulates that "academic research suggests that large scale industrialisation of creativity and cultural innovation occurs in large urban areas (...) nonetheless, there is no straightforward connection between cultural and creative industries and labour market size or population (...) regional distribution of industrial and innovation systems, including cultural and creative industries is much more diverse (...) in rural areas new business models can help bring innovation and sustainability to traditional forms and lead to economic viability".

However, we want to propose concrete measures and initiatives oriented to the specificities of these important areas of the EU. Special places with a strong natural and cultural heritage and other endogenous assets but with a strategic vision: to become creative communities to live, work, learn and play.

Sharing innovative ideas and approaches is one of the objectives of the URBACT Creative Clusters network. This session contains concrete projects from our partners that have been identified as good practices, benchmarks or simply local ways of doing things in a framework of a creativity-based local economic development strategy.

Ceramics Symposium - Hódmezővásárhely (Hungary)



The Ceramics Symposium has been organised annually since 1992. Instead of encouraging the artists to continue the traditions of the ceramics craft, the aim of the event is to give them opportunity to create and experiment in an inspiring environment, and to make use of the mass production technologies in arts and in their own creative art activities.

The Symposia are organised around a different topic

each year, giving room for diversity and change. The topics are connected to the ancient and newer traditions of the city, or to opportunities of mass production technologies. For example: 1999 – “The Bounds of Material”; 2000 – “The Idol”; 2001 – “The Totem”; 2002 – “The Way of the Motif”; 2009: “The brick”; and 2010: “In Memoriam Lechner Ödön”. For each topic a conference is held with the motto “A City Building up from Ceramics”.

The event is based on a wide cooperation of the artists, the professionals, and the municipality, involving local decision-makers, economic and civil players.

138 artists participated in the 11 symposia held so far. The artists traditionally donate one of their works created in Hódmezővásárhely to the city, thus contributing to a continuously growing collection (around 500 pieces at present). The pieces are exhibited first in the local Tornyai János Museum, then in Budapest, and also in other periodic national exhibitions.

The Symposia are organised and implemented by the following associations: The Company of Hungarian Ceramists, Wartha Vince Ceramic Arts Foundation, National Association of Hungarian Creative Artists, National Association of Fine and Industrial



Artists, and the Municipality of Hódmezővásárhely. The silicate industrial factories of the city (Porcelain Tableware Factory of the Great Plain Plc, Buron-Apta Refractory Works Ltd, Silicate



Industrial Ltd, Clay Industry of Hódmezővásárhely Ltd, Villeroy & Boch Hungary Plc) support the events with their modern infrastructures and financial contribution.

CREATIVE PEOPLE

Levo Systems



LEVO Systems specializes in the production, commercialization and application of modular systems. These are composed of a number of components that, joined together, make up structures with the most varied functions that can be used in different contexts (ex. Office furniture, fair exhibiting structures, etc).

The LEVO structures mark the presence not only in environments in which they are traditionally destined for, but can

also be used private houses, workshops, small home offices, prototypes for designers or architects, laboratory support structures, therefore making daily life easier for users and part of the LEVO mission.

ESYS

LEVO's first product is the ESYS - Modular Operative System that enables anyone to create their own structures. ESYS is an Open Source System that allows

the community to create other systems that work over these. Learn more at:

www.levosystems.com
www.levosystems.com/ESYS



The European Interest Group on Creativity and Innovation becomes a formal Association

On 17th May 2010, after more than 18 months of international activities and success stories the initiative **European Interest Group on Creativity and Innovation** became an official network.



International founding members and special guests attended the event in order to formalize the initiative on Creative Industries and Innovation. Creative Clusters project is a partner of the network and INTELI is a founding member of the association.

The first General Assembly met in Stuttgart in order to accept the Official Statute and Strategic Plan of the association and to elect as Chairman Mr. Klaus Haasis (MFG Baden-Württemberg) and as Deputy Chairman Mrs. Michela Pollone (CSP - Innovazione nelle ICT).

EICI aims to develop itself as the leading European network to promote and defend regional and local interests in European creative industries and innovation policy. It will actively influence EU strategies and funding on behalf of its members and thereby contributes to more creativity, competitiveness, social cohesion, sustainability and innovation in the EICI regions and cities.

"What we want to create is a collaborative space to take full advantage of the potential of the European Interest Group on Creativity and Innovation in sharing experiences, developing new project ideas and promoting our local and regional activities at European level" (Mr. Klaus Haasis).

www.creativity-innovation.eu

Eurotowns collaborates with URBACT Creative Clusters' Network

Eurotowns is a network of 21 European medium-sized towns and cities. Its mission is the

development of a network of vibrant, inclusive and sustainable medium-sized European cities which will act as a catalyst for urban innovation, creativity and renewal.

Eurotowns policy agenda focuses on the following areas: promoting lifelong learning and the development of education and skills; growing the knowledge economy and creating better local jobs; providing effective, efficient and sustainable transport systems; ensuring that growth is socially inclusive – all in society benefit; improving the quality of the physical environment.

The vice-presidency of the Executive Council Team of Eurotowns is constituted by representatives of the cities of Reggio Emilia (IT) and Jyväskylä (FIN), two partners of the URBACT Creative Clusters network.

Thus, the two networks are beginning a cooperation process focused on sharing of experiences and best practices in the area of creativity and innovation.

www.eurotowns.org/

URBACT Creative Clusters network invited to a JRC-IPTS Workshop

URBACT Creative Clusters' network was invited to the JRC-IPTS (Joint Research Centre – Institute for Prospective Technological Studies) validation workshop (June, 1-2) on "Innovation and Creativity in Education and Training in the EU Member States" (ICEAC). The workshop is the final step of a two years research promoted by DG Education and Culture on creativity in education.

<http://is.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pages/EAP/iceac.html>

URBACT Creative Clusters' network joins the Working Group on "Open Innovation and the City"

The URBACT cloud on innovation and creativity, promoted at the Thematic Pole level, is working around the concept of 'open innovation' and its applications to urban policies. Creative clusters' network has joined this working group and is contributing actively to the debate on "open innovation and the city". In fact, the space of creative industries is basically a space for interaction, an idea at the heart of the open innovation concept.

<http://urbact.eu/en/homepage-2/>

3rd THEMATIC WORKSHOP: "The Space of the Creative Class: Urban Facilities and Strategies for Creative-based Entrepreneurs" Hódmezővásárhely (Hungary), October 2-4, 2010



This time the third thematic workshop will cover two key topics in our shared learning process, namely: city strategies for talent attraction & retaining and new urban facilities for creative entrepreneurs including

a wide reflection on the spatiality of the creativity-based urban strategies.

Hódmezővásárhely is located in South-East Hungary, near the Romanian and Serbian

borders. The workshop will take place during the 57th Autumn Exhibition, a renowned art event in Hungary.

Further information: Anikó Varga
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RELATED EVENTS

The Creative Regions Summer School, 12-16 July 2010, Birmingham (UK)

The Creative Regions Summer School is an exciting week of intense learning for postgraduate students, practitioners and policy makers interested in engaging with the current debates and research surrounding the role of the creative economy in local and regional development. Key themes that will be explored during the Summer School are as follows: understanding creative people, creative work and creative skills; mapping and analysing the creative economy; innovation and entrepreneurship in the creative industries; creative clusters and networks; urban regeneration and the creative economy; creative class and regional economic development; policy perspectives: international, national, regional and local.

www.creative-regions.org.uk

<http://nuke.creative-regions.org.uk/Portals/0/Downloads/Creative%20Regions%20Summer%20School.pdf>

6th International Conference on Cultural Policy Research, 24-27 August 2010, Jyväskylä (Finland)

The conference aims to provide a space for

explorations on cultural policies, their meanings, roles and impact in an interdisciplinary and international environment. It will integrate the following topics: cultural policy and globalisation, new technologies & knowledge production, intellectuals and cultural policy, politics and ethics of cultural policy, cultural policy and values, cultural diversity, history and historiographies of cultural policy, etc. The organizer of the event is the Cultural Policy Unit of the University of Jyväskylä, in collaboration with the International Journal of Cultural Policy.

www.iccpr.net/

European Cluster Conference 2010, 29-30 September and 1 October 2010, Brussels (Belgium)

The conference will address the role of world-class clusters in renewing European industry in light of the Europe 2020 strategy. It will gather key policy-makers from the European Commission, Member States, regional authorities and high-level speakers from academia and industry to discuss how better policies can be formulated to make full use of the economic potential of excellent clusters.

www.proinno-europe.eu/clusterconference2010/content/european-cluster-conference-2010

SUGGESTED READINGS & SITES

NEW CLUSTER CONCEPTS IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

A document produced for the European Commission Enterprise & Industry Directorate-General, January 2010.

This study discusses the different perceptions and methods of identifying creative clusters. It also presents international benchmarking of creative industries along with cluster initiatives for creative industries.

www.europe-innova.eu/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=21454&name=DLFE-6816.pdf

A CREATIVE ECONOMY GREEN PAPER FOR THE NORDIC REGION

A document produced by Tom Fleming in cooperation with the Nordic Innovation Centre, November 2007.

This objective of this green paper is to open up a policy debate about the drivers of the creative industries in the Nordic region, and to understand the opportunities and challenges facing the sector.

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/dk_crea_economy_green_paper.pdf

CREATIVITY IN SCHOOLS IN EUROPE: A SURVEY OF TEACHERS

A report produced by Romina Cachia, Anusca Ferrari, Caroline Kearney, Yves Punie, Wouter Van Den Berghe, Patricia Wastiau, IPTS, December 2009.

This brochure provides the preliminary results of an online survey of around 10,000 teachers from the 27 Member States of the EU, about their opinions concerning creativity in schools, as a contribution to the 2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

<http://resources.eun.org/etwinning/25/Creativity%20Survey%20Brochure.pdf>

MEASURING CREATIVITY

A book edited by Ernesto Villalba, September 2009.

This book collects together contributions from the conference that took place in Brussels on 28 and 29 May 2009: "Can creativity be measured?" organised by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture together with the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) of the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

It is probably the most ambitious attempt so far to measure creativity-based performances.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc2082_en.htm

FINAL REPORT: OMC – EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, IN PARTICULAR THAT OF SMEs

A report of the Expert Working Group on Cultural and Creative Industries, June 2010.

This document presents an overview of the basic framework for policy recommendations and of the priorities on promoting the potential of cultural and creative industries and also 104 case studies submitted by member-states or experts.

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/library/EU_OMC_WG_CCI_Final_Report_June_2010.pdf

TOURISM, CREATIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

A book edited by Greg Richards and Julie Wilson, Routledge, 2007.

This book critically analyses the impact and effectiveness of creative strategies in tourism development and charts the emergence of 'creative tourism'. A wide range of examples from Europe, North America, Australia and Africa are presented.

WEB SITES

Project ORGANZA – INTERREG IV C
www.organzanelwork.eu/

Project Creative City Challenge – INTERREG IV B
www.creative-city-challenge.net

Project ATCluster – Atlantic Area
www.atcluster.org/

Creative City Network of Canada
www.creativecity.ca/

Arts Management Network
www.artsmangement.net/

EUROTOWNS
www.eurotowns.org/

facebook



creative Clusters
in low density urban areas

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<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=184167143955>

The *Creative Brief* is the newsletter of the URBACT network on “Creative Clusters in Low-Density Urban Areas” [<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/innovation-creativity/creative-clusters/homepage/>] lead by the Portuguese city of Óbidos. It is an added value cooperation project with the goal to perform a collective “learning by doing” exercise in the field of urban creative clusters. The fundamental assumption is that creative issues in local economic development are also a functional pattern beyond the frame of big metropolitan hubs. Even more, creativity as source of innovation should act as a cross cutting approach to re-think economic

and social development in middle-sized and small towns given new opportunities related to accessibility, community life, culture and creativity-based business models.

During the period 2008-2011 this URBACT network is working on five key sub-themes: i) creative clusters: diversifying local economic base and opportunities to young people; ii) events and cultural agendas as catalysts; iii) promoting the creative city: a new range of facilities and infrastructures; iv) creative entrepreneurs and talented people: attraction and retaining; v) setting the basis: creative education environments at local levels.

The URBACT Network on Creative Clusters is opened to further collaborations with networks, cities and organizations operating with creative clusters and related fields. This newsletter is also opened to any information and contribution concerning creative industries and economic development.

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