EUREKA

Training Urban Innovators

THE EUROPEAN URBAN INNOVATOR

Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Report

Abstract: The following report results from the research activities carried out within the WP2 Needs analysis of the selected target group - Task 2.2 - Defining the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed by the job market for the Urban Innovators of tomorrow.
It offers an overview of the main common elements that emerged from the comparison of the reports elaborated at national level by the Italian, Spanish, Romanian and Dutch clusters, and at transnational level by Trans Europe Halles, focusing on the following aspects:

• The profile of the Urban Innovator;
• The state of the current job market for Urban Innovators;
• The existing training offer and training needs for Urban Innovators.

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1 Introduction

The following report is based on the European-wide research carried out from April to September 2021 within *EUREKA - European Urban REgenerators Knowledge Alliance* **(621709-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-EPPKA2-KA)**, a three-year European funded project under the Erasmus Plus Knowledge Alliance framework. EUREKA involves 11 organisations from five EU countries[1] working together to create a new joint **multidisciplinary curriculum** leading to the definition of the Urban Innovator (UI) profile for the public and private sector. The project aims to create a mutually supportive network of academics, practitioners, students, public administration representatives and entrepreneurs interested in sharing knowledge and practices in urban regeneration based on social innovation.

The purpose of this research is to identify gaps in skills and competencies in the urban regeneration sector to design an innovative international master curriculum able to overcome mismatches between the job market and professional needs.

To this end, the investigation was conducted on a national basis in Italy, Romania, the Netherlands and Spain, by partners grouped in national clusters – each composed of one university and one sectoral organisation. In addition, the involvement of the EU network Trans Europe Halles (TEH) allowed data gathering both at the national level (Sweden) and at the European level. The analysis considered three main aspects concerning the Urban Innovator profile, namely:

- **The professional profile in terms of skills and attitudes**
- **The job market scenario**
- **The training offer**

The approach to the research was mainly qualitative, using a variety of investigative tools, chosen according to the specific aim and target group. These included:

- **Surveys:** Online questionnaires addressed to students and professionals, investigating the skills and competencies required by the job market. A total of 339 respondents (169 students and 170 practitioners) filled in the questionnaire.

- **Focus Groups:** Online and face-to-face focus groups, involving academic experts and professionals and representatives from the third sector, from companies and from public administration. 10 focus groups were organised around Europe, targeting 88 experts.

- **One-to-one Interviews:** In-depth Interviews with 8 experts from the sector.

- **Job observation:** Direct observation or interview targeting 11 practitioners.

- **Desk Research on Linkedin:** Analysis of 39 open job positions around Europe.

- **Desk Research on the training offer:** Analysis of 49 master's degree courses and 34 other informal/non-formal[2] courses related to urban regeneration.

The following table gives an at-a-glance overview of the indicators of the research activities at a national and European level.

TYPE OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY	EU Indicators	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	ITA	ES	RO	NL	TEH (SE/EU)
SURVEY STUDENTS	169	101	65	3	53	32	65	19	/
SURVEY PRACTITIONERS	170	91	76	3	44	40	38	34	14
FOCUS GROUPS (n. focus groups/n. participants)	10/88	43	45	/	2/27	2/13	2/16	2/19	2/13
INTERVIEWS	8	2	6	/	3	2	3	/	/
JOB OBSERVATIONS	11	4	7	/	4	2	3	2	/
OPEN JOB POSITION ANALYSED	39	/	/	/	10	10	/	10	9
MASTER COURSES ANALYSED	49	/	/	/	8	12	11	8	10
OTHER COURSES ANALYSED	34	/	/	/	12	10	/	12	/

Table 1. Impact of the EUREKA research
For more information about each country please refer to the appendix of this report, in which national cluster results are reported in detail.

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[1] *Università Iuav di Venezia (Lead partner, IT), Melting Pro (IT), Lama Agenzia (IT), Universidad de Deusto (ES), Espazio Open Bilbao (ES), Trans Europe Halles (SE), Municipiul Timisoara (RO), Universitatea de Vest Din Timisoara (RO), Asociatia Casa Plai (RO), Stichting P60 (NL) and Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL)*

[2] *Following the definition given by the council of Europe, "non-formal education" refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education for young people outside the formal education curriculum that are designed to improve a range of skills and competencies. "Informal education" refers to a lifelong learning process whereby each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience.*

2 The Urban Innovator

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As a first step in the research, the EUREKA Alliance shared their knowledge and expertise to reach a joint understanding of the Urban Innovator/Urban Regenerator profile.

A temporary description was drafted in order to introduce the questionnaires and accompany the focus groups and interviews, with the awareness that, being fluid, the definition would probably take on a different shape by the end of the project.

Each partner was asked to formulate their own definition of the profile. From all the descriptions given, the alliance decided not to adopt a single "merged" definition, but rather a **cloud of keywords** common to all the visions, clustered around the following categories: Who; How; On

What; and Effects.

The use of keywords rather than a definition allowed those participating in the surveys, focus groups and interviews to have more freedom of interpretation.

Starting from these premises, an initial definition of the Urban Innovator profile was attempted:

WHO

The UI is defined as a complex, multidisciplinary and multidimensional professional figure who:

- embraces different tasks such as research, fundraising, networking, and community management;
- possesses a range of aptitudes, from leadership to mediation;
- manages complexity, is able to coordinate human (individuals, groups, agents), financial and organisational resources;
- innovates, pushing boundaries;
- activates actions, processes and networks through the involvement of multiple agents.

HOW

This professional figure activates their capacities through adopting different approaches, fostering collaboration and managing a variety of areas, dimensions and agents. In particular, they must:

- engage in a reflective practice aimed at creating sustainable actions, projects and processes;
- apply a collaborative and integrated approach based on co-design, open design and teamwork activities;
- foster a bottom-up, user- and context-centred approach, supporting vulnerable groups and addressing inequalities;
- simultaneously manage a range of:
  - dimensions (social, cultural, economic, environmental);
  - geographical scales (building, street, neighbourhood, city, etc.);
  - agents (citizens, civic societies, private companies, public administration, etc.).

ON WHAT

The professional must focus on the following:

- Local strategies, integrated into broader dimensions (at city, regional and national levels), and ambitious and feasible multidimensional strategies (of a social, cultural, economic and environmental nature);

- the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation in the short, medium, and long term.

EFFECTS

The effects produced by the UI action can be summarised as strengthening social and spatial capital. In particular, they are:

- the strengthening of communities through:
- increasing a sense of belonging to a place/places;
  - Local development,
  - Fostering well-being and the fulfilment of social needs,
  - Creating new public spaces,
  - Unleashing the potential of cities,
  - Increasing opportunities for minorities;
- innovation;
- changing institutions and organisations;
- the establishment of new collaborations and partnerships;
- the continuity and sustainability of (social, cultural, economic and environmental) action.

An important question that emerged in the initial stages was whether to use both the term "Urban Regenerator" and "Urban Innovator." The partners agreed to use the term "Urban Innovator" as the two are not always interchangeable in all of the countries involved.

However, each partner was entitled to use both classifications if the terms were synonymous when translated into their mother tongue.

The term "Urban Innovator" was the subject of much debate during the research phase and raised important questions in all the countries involved. These are detailed in the following paragraphs.

2.1 The term Urban Innovator

Farm Cultural Park - Italy.

The analysis of practices and debates on urban innovation within national contexts led to the identification of various different labels used to identify the emerging professional profile.

Italy

In Italy the proposed label was **Territorial (Re)generator.**

When critically and reflectively analysing the term "urban regeneration", many experts pointed out that the word "urban" seems to narrow down the boundaries of regeneration actions and processes to urban areas. It would thus be more appropriate to speak of "territorial regeneration" in order to expand the range of activities to include those that take place not only in urban spaces but also in suburban and rural areas.

Some interviewees found the use of the prefix "re" in the term "regeneration" problematic, pointing out that the process is often not a case of regeneration but of "generation." While regeneration implies starting from something that is no longer good — which has lost something it had had previously and has problems that need to be solved — the term "generation" implies a greater focus on culture-based social innovation *tout-court.*

Spain

In Spain the preferred term was **Urban Innovator** rather than Urban Regenerator, as the latter is already used in reference to different contexts, ranging from traditional innovation in the built environment (top-down) to practices and projects led by citizens that create new insights and tools (bottom-up).

The research pointed at urban innovation as a specific emerging field in urban regeneration that includes traditional disciplines such as urban planning and territorial organisation, but also leaves room for diverse practices that try to solve the challenges cities are facing, from climate change to labour disruption and rising inequality. As one participant summarised it: *"Urban innovation aims to use interdisciplinary approaches to design solutions that can help us attain better future scenarios."*

It is important to be aware that different definitions of urban innovation could be influenced by the different backgrounds, working environments or sociodemographic factors (for instance, age) of the respondents. Finding clearer correlations between these factors remains a challenge for this research in the future. The research included in-depth reflection on what innovation is in this context and more specifically within the framework of this project, paying particular attention to: (1) technology-based solutions in urban regeneration processes (linked to the smart city concept); and (2) social innovation.

A substantial number of Urban Innovators do not recognise themselves as such.

Romania

In Romania terms such as urban regeneration and urban innovation were rare, including in the academic and the cultural and creative world. The research shows a real absence of these terms in public discourse, which is reflected in the lack of university programs, training platforms or job offers in this field.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands the terms chosen were **Urban Manager/Citymakers**.
Even though a large number of alternative titles were suggested (Urban Connector, Urban Accelerator, Citymaker, Urban Innovation Expert and Urban Activator), in the Dutch context, the term Urban Manager is much more common than Urban Innovator or Urban Regenerator. This professional profile has existed for the last twelve years, and is based in practices of innovation or regeneration. Although the title is Urban Manager, they can also work outside the urban domain and the role is more horizontal than that of a traditional manager.

The term Urban Manager is closely connected to the Citymaker profile (in Dutch, "*stadmakers*"), although there are important differences: the Citymaker is an entrepreneur who sets up and initiates projects that support local development with communities and stakeholders, while the Urban Manager connects and supports various stakeholders/groups. Furthermore, Citymakers are most often active in urban/spatial transformation, while Urban Managers can also work outside the physical urban domain (e.g tackling complex issues regarding youth or climate change, or as a change agent in a complex corporate organisation). Furthermore, the Urban Manager is always a professional who is contracted to do a specific task or has a temporary assignment and is paid for their work, while a Citymaker works more independently, often as a freelancer who starts out of personal motivation, and is able to raise funding in order to cover their

cost. In an EU context, the profile of Citymakers is more recognisable than the profile of the Urban Manager, which is more specific to the Dutch context.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES AND CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

All cluster results showed that the emergent profile – which from now on we will call the Urban Innovator (UI), bearing in mind the different nuances of the term used in each national context – is not a static or a single role. It is unlikely that all of the required competencies and attitudes could be encompassed in a single figure.

People involved in urban regeneration have very different roles and tasks, and are part of a team with heterogeneous profiles. These teams generally have a shared vision and specific roles (project manager/leader, connector, researcher, spatial designer) depending on the particular projects and processes.

Teamwork is essential. The UI is not a "superhero", but a team member. Eventually more profiles should be identified under the umbrella of the UI, rather than leaving all of these tasks to one person. In this scenario, rigid and strong specialisation could be counterproductive. It might be more effective for the EUREKA Alliance to identify what to teach in order to contribute to integrating and supporting those professionals who are already working in this capacity. Lastly, there is a fundamental choice to be made: Should similarities between countries be found and focused on, or should we instead be identifying and stressing national/regional specificities?

In the first instance it might be helpful to find a new shared term and formulate a centralised European profile (e.g. the term could be Citymakers, Community and City Makers or Territorial Activators), towards building a new European common training path. In the second instance, differences in professional profiles across the involved countries could be seen as an asset. By nurturing differences, every partner/country or group of partners/countries could bring their specialisation to the table, and students could choose and learn from the various types of expertise in the network.

The EUREKA Alliance needs to confront these issues and choose the correct path to pursue.

From a **European** perspective – obtained from comparing some of the organisations in the TEH network – although the term Urban Innovator was in general well-received, its definition was considered complex and long-winded by participants. **Creative Placemaking** was instead considered a more suitable and familiar profile for the European community of practitioners and professionals in the field of urban innovation. Despite not using the term Urban Innovator, the knowledge and skills required for this profile, as well as its day-to-day tasks, are very similar.

The term **Creative Placemaking** refers to the deployment of arts and culture to transform the physical and societal settings of places in order to bring about social and environmental change and economic development. It generally takes place in a multi-stakeholder environment – between the city, the creative community and land developers – and the related professional profile is represented as a group or community of people rather than one individual. It is a team of action-driven community developers/social workers that almost works like an invisible mediator between top-down actors (city, land developers, officials) and bottom-up dynamics (users, the community and artists) by speaking both the language of politics and the language of the streets. It also works on building trust with the community, listening to others and adapting to different contexts.

Far from being based in idealism and naivety, creative placemaking requires the setting of strategic objectives and the laying-out of coherent and detailed plans. Creative placemaking is a relatively new term that was initially recognised by the city development offices in the cities of Amsterdam, Vienna, London and Copenhagen in the 1990s. In the last 15 years, the term has moved to some mid-sized cities in Europe, such as Aarhus, Bratislava and Esch. However, challenges remain.

There is a real struggle to gain recognition of the work done in creative placemaking, and the term is still foreign to many city politicians and officials. It is also difficult to receive the resources necessary for creating sustainable placemaking practices.

Ambasada - Romania.

2.2 Skills and attitudes

Visssual - Romania.

The research provided a detailed definition of Urban Innovators that focused on the coexistence of a plurality of elements, revealing a hybrid figure with multiple skills and attitudes. The UI is defined as a complex, multidisciplinary and multidimensional professional figure capable of adopting different approaches, looking after others, fostering collaboration, and managing different areas, dimensions, and agents. The effects produced by the UI's actions are strengthening communities, producing (social) innovation, changing institutions and organisations and establishing new collaborations and partnerships.

SKILLS

Referring to the **ESCO classification**[3], the skills and competencies of the Urban Innovator can be summarised as:

3 *ESCO is the European multilingual classification of Skills, Competencies and Occupations, run by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)*

1 / Communication, collaboration and creativity

Communicating, collaborating, liaising and negotiating with other people, developing solutions to problems, creating plans or specifications for the design of objects and systems, performing to entertain an audience and transferring knowledge to others.

- connecting different communities, stakeholders, domains and scales **(the mediator)**;
  - working collaboratively,
  - negotiating and dealing with conflict,
  - undertaking stakeholder analysis/management,
  - communicating with different people and institutions using different languages,
  - adopting a people-oriented and participatory approach,
  - acting as a social worker/community manager,
  - creating a rich network of contacts,
  - practising design thinking/inclusive design,
  - entering into dialogue with public and private institutions,
  - connecting diverse points of view to help urban innovation to flourish;
- having passion and vocation/a strong sense of mission and caring about the needs of the communities and territories involved **(the activist)**;
  - adopting a user centred/people oriented approach.

2 / Information skills

Collecting, storing, monitoring, and using information; conducting studies, investigations and tests; maintaining records; and managing, evaluating, processing, analysing and monitoring information and projecting outcomes.

- managing complexity, activating and coordinating resources **(the complexity manager)**;

- reframing problems and approaches,
- taking a multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach,
- having a holistic vision,
- considering different dimensions, perspectives and disciplines;
- managing both urban 'hardware and software', looking at and managing both spatial/material and social/cultural/symbolic issues **(the societal infrastructure manager)**;
- reading/analysing the context and conducting action-research **(the analyst)**.

3 / Management and leadership skills

Managing people, activities, resources and organisation; developing objectives and strategies, organising work activities, allocating and controlling resources and leading, motivating, recruiting and supervising people and teams.

- leading and motivating others **(the leader)**;
- innovating, experimenting and finding creative solutions **(the visionary)**;
- having a problem solving attitude **(the convergent thinker)**;
  - orienting oneself pragmatically
- managing projects **(the project manager)**;
  - conceiving of and drawing up projects,
  - taking personal responsibility for deliverables, and for the structuring of one's work,
  - producing documents between different stages of the detailed planning process (e.g. consultation proposal, review proposal, feasibility study and sketch work);
- adapting to different contexts **(the resilient expert)**;
- collecting funds (more in some contexts such as Italy and less so in the Netherlands) **(the fundraiser)**;
- having good knowledge of the law **(the legal adviser)**.
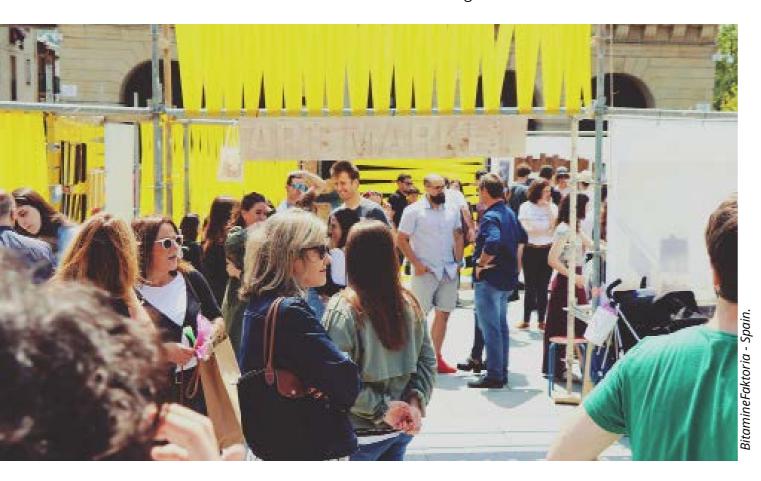
4 / Digital skills
Using computers and other digital tools to develop, install and maintain ICT software and infrastructure and to browse, search, filter, organise, store, retrieve and analyse data, to collaborate and communicate with others and to create and edit new content.

- Accessing and analysing digital data **(the digital analyst)**;
- Using digital tools for collaboration, content creation and problem solving **(the digital community manager)**.

ATTITUDES

The main recurrent attitudes emerging from the different national clusters of research are:

- adapting to change (flexible, open, able to work in multidisciplinary teams);
- attending to detail (results-driven);
- coping with pressure (stress-resistant);
- demonstrating enthusiasm;
- meeting commitments (practical, entrepreneurial);
- working independently;
- being tenacious;
- demonstrating empathy;
- being reflective;
- being honest;
- demonstrating courage;
- being confident.

BitamineFaktoria - Spain.

3 Current state of national job markets for Urban Innovators

P60 (Kenny B) - The Netherlands.

From the analysis of the single national job markets (i.e. in Italy, Spain, Romania, and the Netherlands) and, more generally, of the European job market, thanks to the involvement of the European TEH network members, the research highlighted the strong dynamism in Western European countries where the figure of the UI is rather widespread and well-established, followed by a slightly weaker and more static presence in central European countries, where the UI role has been in place for some years, and lastly, a practical absence of the role in Eastern European countries, where the UI is still being defined.

AN INSIGHT INTO NATIONAL JOB MARKETS

Italy

Although a large number of practices and experiences – mainly at a grassroots level – of culture-based territorial regeneration and social innovation exist in Italy, **the Urban/Territorial (Re)generator** does not have a clearly specified definition and recognised role; it is included in regional legislation, but not yet at a national level. It is mainly considered as an aspiration due the

lack of money and funds available.

This is confirmed by the fact that there are currently no specific job openings for the profile in question, but rather positions relating to technical profiles oriented towards single disciplines such as architecture, engineering, urban design and territorial planning, very much at odds with the versatility of the UI profile. Consequently, the educational backgrounds generally required are highly traditional and mainly concern the fields of architecture, construction engineering and related disciplines with three to five years of experience in the sector and a mastery of English for positions related to management, organisational, and planning skills.

At a more general level, the overall national market scenario showed **a certain dynamism in the private sector and a great lack of innovation in the public sector** at intercepting the new figure of the Urban Innovator. The majority of the vacancies were in private companies – mostly located in the north of Italy – and those promoted by public institutions were generally linked to tenders and grants. However, urban regeneration positions are gradually emerging in some public institutions, organisations that engage in cultural activities with impacts on regeneration, and in the world of consulting (public sector or private sector consultants, called upon to evaluate, organise and guide regeneration processes).

Spain

In the Spanish context, **the majority of the Urban Innovators' interventions are funded by local authorities**, and above all, local administrations that demand profiles traditionally related to urban planning processes such as architects, engineers and lawyers. These professionals do not generally pay adequate attention to the intangible features of the interventions and do not have a long-term strategy or engage in a follow-up program.

The analysed job offers related to purely technical roles focussed on infrastructure-only approaches, and building renovation and energy efficiency issues. Soft skills, mainly related to adopting bottom-up approaches and participatory methodologies, were sometimes mentioned as a surplus selection criterion, but not as a core requirement.

There is however a trend towards recognising the need for a multidisciplinary professional who acts transversally and has specific knowledge in the field that is not only technology-based, but is also related to processes and methodologies. This is a sort of innovation director who can be embedded within the structures of public administration, and meet the requirements of integrated sustainable urban development that the different political agendas have been applying to urban regeneration processes. Lately, thanks to national and European funding programs, some figures of this kind have emerged on the national scene, namely the Professional Public Managers of large city councils such as those in Valencia, Barcelona and Madrid. This figure works like a CEO in a private company but in the context of public administration, modernizing the sector and bringing innovation to its daily administrative processes and projects.

Also connected to the public sphere, some Urban Innovators act as facilitators inside public organisations, finding ways to connect with new stakeholders. These figures are defined by author Charles Landry as "creative bureaucrats" and are fundamental for creating new public-private-people partnerships.
It is hard to find the Urban Innovator profile in the Spanish private sector. Some private companies are starting to include social and environmental current and future challenges in their mission statements, but, generally speaking, job demand is usually related to consulting and engineering/architectural firms that need an expert to complete their work on an urban regeneration project, or to public tenders. In this respect, the Urban Innovator is commonly seen as a part of the urban innovation process rather than the figure that generates the innovation.

These professionals have traditional educational and professional profiles such as engineers, architects, economists, geographers, sociologists and lawyers, and they tend to introduce elements of innovation into projects since they have extensive practical knowledge of administrative processes and can take advantage of their more flexible positions to come up with innovative solutions.

In parallel, urban innovation processes are also creating new institutions offering new job opportunities that can be summarised as follows:
- Non-profit associations and social enterprises specialised in applying participatory and community-building approaches and methodologies within urban regeneration processes. At a small-scale, these services involve specific buildings or spaces, and at a large-scale they aim at larger areas such as neighbourhoods or even cities.
- Non-profit associations, social enterprises, and small private companies with their own physical spaces, which are financially sustainable through different models, for example, charging for access and resources, offering extra services such as a restaurant and bar, or obtaining grants from public or private institutions for carrying out activities.

These are new job niches initially created with little or no public support. The teams who are involved in these associations, enterprises and companies find ways of transforming the initial vision into a sustainable project in several fields, from the cultural and creative industries to sports, local manufacturing, design and artisanship.

Romania

The research showed a lack of open job positions in the areas of urban regeneration and innovation at the national level. The University of Timisoara, which conducted the research nationally, reported that they *"expected a relatively small number of job offers, but not a complete absence of them"*. This might be related to the adoption of a fragmented, non-integrated approach based on a 7-year development strategy by each municipality, and often performed by professionals with specific or limited expertise. Interview and questionnaire results have outlined the key elements that should comprise the UI job profile operating in the national market in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Specifically, the results have outlined the requirement for the person to be empathetic, compassionate, creative and innovative with a strong sense of mission and social justice, and for them to be open to people and the environment. They should have strong communication and management skills and be capable of coordinating projects and fundraising. They should also have a knowledge of foreign languages, of the main current social issues and of the urban development system.
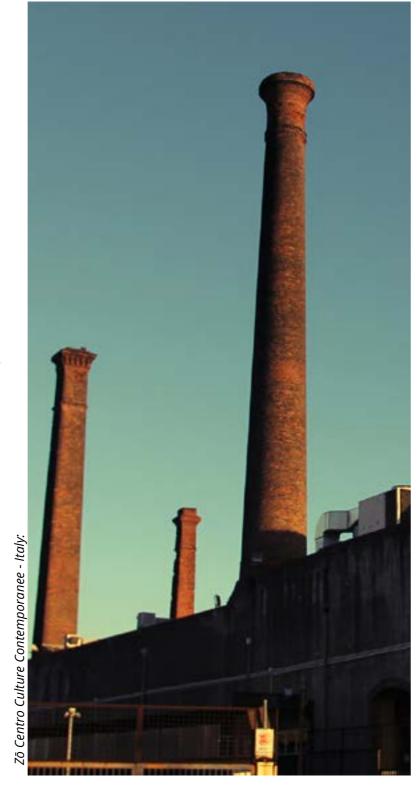
The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the profile of the Urban Manager is fairly well-established, along

with other roles such as Researcher, Process Manager, Connector, Integral Project Manager, *Kwartiermarker*, Innovator and Placemaker. According to the national results there are several job positions available on the national market, providing evidence of a general need for the Urban Manager's profile and expertise by different types of commissioning organisations. This includes public administration at various levels, semi-public organisations such as housing corporations and water management companies, and, within the private sector, urban development and consultancy agencies, as well as local collectives of business owners.

The majority of the job positions offer a contract, while a few are freelance-based collaborations. The former are mostly full-time and permanent, while the latter are more likely to have a temporary and part-time character.

In the open job positions, a large number of skills and attitudes are mentioned, either in the description of tasks or in the requirements for the positions. Specifically, the Urban Manager is expected to have a very broad set of skills in communication, collaboration and creativity, as well as in information processing and management. In terms of attitudes, the person is required to be highly flexible, enthusiastic, transparent and empathic, but also results-driven and entrepreneurial. The analysis has also brought up a small number of methods and approaches, such as: integrating domains (boundary spanning - ensuring an integrated approach in relation to the domains of youth and security); observation and gathering in-depth knowledge (knowing what is happening in the local area, being the eyes and ears of the street, living in the area or nearby); and stakeholder analysis (conducting stakeholder analyses and drawing up

environmental and communication strategies and plans).

Z6 Centro Culture Contemporanee - Italy.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

A comparative analysis of national contexts reveals many discrepancies. First of all, each partner country has reported different funding actors for the practises related to urban innovation and, consequently, different roles played by public institutions. In Spain, for instance, local authorities and municipalities represent the main funding resource for Urban Innovator interventions. This is also reported by research in Romania, although there is no data that can validate it due to the complete lack of open job positions. In Italy and the Netherlands, on the other hand, the job market is composed of a multitude of organisations and institutions from both the public and private spheres. European funding programmes are also an essential point to be addressed, mostly in countries such as Italy and Spain where urban innovation practices are often reliant on direct and indirect European funding, without which they could not carry out as many projects and interventions in the field.

Concerning the national job market scenario, an important difference that emerged is the possibility of regenerating places either temporarily or permanently, depending on national and local laws and customs.

The legislation on urban regeneration is quite extensive in Northern Europe (e.g., Sweden and the Netherlands), in contrast to the Southwest area (e.g., Spaing and Italy) and to the Eastern area (e.g., Romania). For example, in Northern Europe, the concept of temporary use does not exist and converting an old building might be very challenging, whereas in countries such as Italy, Spain and Romania it is a widespread concept, since the regulations are less strict, and the practices related to urban regeneration are

relatively new and not yet clearly integrated into national policies.

Overall, a relevant issue that emerged during the comparison sessions between clusters was the need to explore, deepen and compare the regulations and laws in each national context involved and beyond – with a view to Europe as a whole – to grasp their effects on urban regeneration and innovation practices.

Despite the many discrepancies outlined above, the research has also found some commonalities, such as the main profiles operating within the urban regeneration and innovation sector in Europe.
These are as follows:
- Community Manager or Community Organiser
- Territorial Storyteller
- Cultural Events Manager
- Fundraiser
- Architect
- Urbanist
- Artist
- Socio-Anthropologist
- Project Manager or Program Manager
- Academic or Researcher
- Activist

Furthermore, still on a European level, the research outlined a large number of new important networks committed to advocacy activities, debates and mutual learning around culturally-based regeneration processes, such as Stato dei Luoghi in Italy, Tiers-lieux in France and TEH across Europe.

The research results have heightened the existing discrepancies in terms of innovation across the countries involved. In the Netherlands, for example, there was a lower demand for innovation

than in other partner countries. As previously outlined, in the former the Urban Manager – rather than the Urban Innovator or Regenerator – is a professional figure which has become fairly widespread nationally over the last 12 years, and so the innovative nature that we tend to associate with it is taken for granted.

In Romania, the need for innovation held different meanings. Innovation was not defined as creating something from scratch or taking something new that works somewhere else and transposing and adapting it into another national context: *"in Romania, a bike lane can be innovative, but for the Netherlands, it's not."*

Comparing the results gained at the national level, we report several commonalities between the Italian and the Spanish context. Firstly, the mainstream perspective, widely held among the most influential institutions in the field, mainly employs the term "urban regeneration" for technical interventions focussed on buildings

and infrastructure. Secondly, both the national job markets still look for traditional professional profiles related to urban planning intervention such as architects, engineers, and lawyers, which do not fit with that which is required by non-profit organisations, social enterprises, and small companies highly specialised in applying community-building and participatory approaches and methodologies within urban regeneration processes.

In both cases there is a significant gap between professionals who are stuck in administrative urban planning-related tasks and practitioners who work in organisations where innovation is the key strategic asset.

Melkweg - The Netherlands.

4 Educational markets and training needs

Manifatture Knos - Italy.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MARKETS RELATED TO THE PROFILE

Italy

In Italy, the formal training offer in Urban Regeneration is delivered by private and public universities which provide specialised master's degrees. The training is multidisciplinary, covering several different knowledge fields, and proposes both a theoretical framework and a hands-on approach (i.e., traineeships, fieldwork, project work, etc.). It is specifically designed to strengthen the skillset of students entering the labour market. Mentorship with practitioners and placement services are also commonly provided as part of the course. These master's degrees are addressed to recent graduates coming from

heterogeneous educational backgrounds (law, urban planning, economics, etc.), and practitioners from different fields (public administration, non-profit organisations, consultancy firms, research institutes, etc).

Non-formal training is also quite well developed in Italy, offering a variety of structured courses, seminars and webinars. It is provided mainly by organisations specialised in non-formal learning, and private actors such as associations, consultancy firms and limited liability companies, with the majority of courses being financed by direct or indirect European funds.

In Italy, training in Urban Regeneration is divided into two main strands. On the one hand, courses focused on management and mainly targeted at

project managers, fundraisers and entrepreneurs. On the other hand, courses focused on legal and technical issues and mainly targeted at lawyers, architects and construction engineers.

Spain

The Spanish training offer in Urban Innovation and related subjects is very diversified both in the formal and informal framework, providing some helpful insights into new international curriculum development such as the internationalisation feature of the 4CITIES Master in Urban Studies, or the KAIA methodology that involves a cross-cutting perspective through students' learning, research and action.

In terms of common trends, the formal framework outlines traditional approaches to urban regeneration and subjects oriented towards the physical transformation of urban spaces, with a strong focus on planning, maintenance and renovation. Among the main themes are urban planning, urban regeneration, urban sustainability, urban design and public space. While more innovative programs cover the following themes: governance and local welfare, smart cities, public policies, urban project management, urban policies and social innovation.

There is also concern about multidisciplinarity, as these courses are usually restricted to a single field of knowledge, highlighting an absence of the transversal integration that is typical of urban innovation. Citizen participation is still a pending issue to be addressed by almost all the courses evaluated.
For the most part, participants are graduates from architecture and from different branches of engineering. The sample has reported some examples of both professionals and practitioners

specialised in the field or with a transversal profile.

The non-formal training offer reflects the current dynamics of the national job market. Despite the dominance of a traditional view of urban regeneration, made up of infrastructure interventions and top-down procedures, an innovative trend is emerging with a focus on participation and user-centred approaches and methodologies. Specifically, the research has revealed an interest in innovation-based learning activities such as hands-on design, placemaking and other participatory methodologies that enhance inclusivity and diversity within communities.

The organisations that generally provide these courses are public bodies and architects' associations. It is not possible to identify a specific audience to which these courses are addressed since the participants' profile results are heterogeneous and embrace several profiles and targets, from young people to retirees with a strong commitment to their city and community.

Romania

The Romanian educational scenario in relation to urban innovation is fairly weak, with a training offer mainly composed of 11 formal – and traditional – courses such as master's programs in Urban Planning, Urban Mobility, Landscape Studies and Conservation of Cultural Heritage, which are not linked to the idea of urban innovation. They are generally addressed to graduates and practitioners, although the participants' are mostly new graduates. The transition from a bachelor's degree to a master's degree is generally smooth, with the common perception that taking a gap year between them is a sign of failure. As a result, new graduates tend to stick to their faculty of origin,

hindering the development of interdisciplinary contexts.

The non-formal educational offer is almost entirely missing, with the research finding no summer schools, workshops or short courses in the subject.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands offers a wide range of formal and non-formal training courses. Within the formal training offer, the research found, on the one hand, traditional university master's programs in the fields of Urban Planning and Urban Governance, focusing on knowledge and theory transfer, and, on the other hand, more innovative practice-oriented master's programs, with a strong focus on practical problems and professional skills development, rather than an academic orientation.
The former are mostly addressed to new graduates in Urban Planning, Political Science and Public Administration with no professional experience. The latter are mostly addressed to a professional audience with 3 to 5 years of relevant professional work experience.

The non-formal training offer includes modules within structured courses and vocational courses, and has a strong focus on practice and personal development based on experience-based learning. It involves several innovative methodologies and approaches (e.g., Theory U, Design Thinking, Deep Democracy and Community Processing), and its aim is the professional growth of the participant in terms of skills (e.g., the way they listen, facilitate, observe, mediate, reflect and make decisions).

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES - THE FUTURE OF THE TRAINING

Taking into consideration the actual training offer on urban innovation at the EU level as well as the results of the surveys, focus groups and interviews, we can delineate some common elements and considerations in order to start articulating an EU joint curriculum master's course.

In the first place, being practice-based was a transversal issue. Most of the professionals developed their sector skills and attitudes through practice rather than training, also because training on urban innovation is relatively recent in most of the countries studied. However the experts wondered whether being an Urban Innovator was something spontaneous that arose from the need of each project, process or urban transformation or something that could also be learned through a formal course.

Whatever the answer, it is clear that any potential course related to UI should ideally integrate theoretical education with practical experiences, stressing the need for experiential learning. Specifically, the following actions would add value to the course:
- hands-on activities such as case studies, project work, fieldwork, urban laboratories and internships in ongoing urban regeneration projects with different stakeholders, addressing problems and issues common to urban regeneration projects.
- guest speakers sharing their experiences – both successes and failures – giving the course an interactive laboratory approach.
- a mentoring service, supervising project work, offered by an academic tutor and professional tutor in the company, public institution or third sector actor (dual tutoring).

Another way to bring together the theoretical and the practical is to develop dual training, which is a professional training environment designed and built jointly by universities and private and public organisations.

The EUREKA Alliance will have to consider the evolutionary trend of the profile and be careful not to standardise it in order to keep alive its characteristic of being in perpetual evolution.

From a training point of view, the curriculum refers to the ESCO classification of European Skills, Competencies, Qualifications and Occupations. This classification is put in place more to serve as a dictionary that can facilitate discussion within the different European systems than as a rigid structure of the classification of competencies.

For instance, the potential of recognising the professional role through a register could be a double-edged sword that might not do justice to the different nuances of the profile.

It is fundamental to take into consideration the discourse of European qualifications – planning the process of certification, the assessment of standards, and internal and external evaluation methods – by following the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and to understand how to compare qualifications in Europe and ECTS to ensure mobility and transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes.

Another important aspect to be considered is the interdisciplinary approach the training might adopt. A common objective of all clusters is to strengthen the interdisciplinary perspective, by, for instance, introducing some additional knowledge areas into the training (for example, urban law, economic management, the process of generating entrepreneurial projects and statistical data analysis, etc.). Interdisciplinarity might also be encouraged by including teachers from the professional world or from local public institutions.

Considering the recent digital acceleration, the program could be delivered as a blended format, partly online and partly in person. A valuable piece of advice that emerged from the research was to form mixed classrooms, where participants come from different organisations – i.e., from public institutions, the third sector and businesses – in order for everyone to learn from each other.

Lastly, a fundamental ingredient of the curriculum is its internationalisation, not only in terms of short-term visits, but also for more structural collaboration and educational programs. For students, this approach entails learning to understand problems in a broader context, having a more diverse and global approach to urban strategies, especially in the Global South, and learning about the effective and ineffective practises of other urban communities and cities. People might finally have international recognition and more opportunities, such as being aware of and having access to available European funds and subsidies.

A EUROPEAN VIEW ON TOPICS TO INCLUDE IN THE TRAINING OFFER

The research activities have revealed the main topics covered in each national training offer, as well as the main training needs of students facing their first work experience and operators wishing to improve their expertise.

Among the recurrent subjects core to the four partner countries are:

- European and national frameworks (i.e., administrative, bureaucratic and financial aspects in urban regeneration actions);
- Public policies with an impact on urban areas (i.e., urban planning regulations, housing policies, employment regulations, social policies, cultural policies and public administration contracting and innovation policies);
- Sustainability (i.e., economic and organisational, environmental and social);
- Social impact assessment;
- Project management;
- Effective communication (i.e., communicating a project or a pathway effectively, entering into dialogue with public and private institutions);
- Ecosystemic design (interactions of cities with rural areas and natural spaces);
- Participatory methodologies and approaches (i.e., the active involvement of the local residents, community building).

READER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Dear reader,

we would love to hear your thoughts about the contents and quality of our research !
The information provided in the questionnaire will be used for our assessment and to improve the implementation of the EUREKA! project.

CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY!

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Training Urban Innovators