



KICK-OFF MEETING



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Project: 101249763 — COTAF — Connected Towns for a Shared Future
Programme: CERV-2025-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT

December 19th 2025 - Kick-off Meeting – Public Launch Event

Programme Overview and Rationale

The Kick-off Meeting of **COTAF – Connected Towns for a Shared Future** marks the formal public launch of the project and represents the first transnational moment of institutional visibility, stakeholder engagement and community mobilisation.

The event is designed to introduce the project to the wider public and to activate early involvement from local authorities, civil society actors, educational institutions, and private-sector stakeholders.

The programme is structured to:

- present the vision, goals and expected impact of COTAF in terms of civic participation, inclusive dialogue and community resilience;
- introduce the consortium, highlighting the unique expertise that each partner brings to the implementation of Human Libraries, policy co-creation, digital participation, and inclusive innovation;
- offer thematic insights aligned with the project's main strands (migration, gender equality, EU values, social sustainability, participatory governance, inclusive entrepreneurship);
- announce the training sessions and key milestones so that stakeholders can already reserve dates and prepare their involvement;
- engage local and transnational actors in a shared commitment to inclusive, participatory practices that reinforce social cohesion and European democratic values;
- make publicly available the 2026 implementation schedule, while indicating that the 2027 programme will be communicated through the official project channels in October 2026.

The event is intentionally narrative, participatory and forward-looking, mirroring the project's methodological pillars (Human Libraries, empathy-building, co-creation, hybrid participation) and setting the tone for the transnational collaboration that will unfold over the next two years.



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Detailed Programme – 10:00 to 12:30

Opening & Institutional Welcome

Fondazione Yunus Italia (Coordinator)

- Institutional greetings
 - Introduction to COTAF's mission, strategic relevance, and European framework
-

Publication of the 2026 Implementation Schedule

Fondazione Yunus Italia

- Presentation of key WPs, milestones, Human Library events and Policy Labs for 2026
 - Explanation of how 2026 fits into the broader COTAF impact strategy
 - Announcement that the full 2027 programme will be communicated in October 2026 via official channels
-

Consortium Presentations

All partners – short structured round

Each partner introduces:

- their organisation
 - their role in the project
 - their contribution based on the WP structure outlined in the Grant Agreement
-

Training Sessions Overview

Fondazione Yunus Italia

- Purpose and methodology of the training pathway
 - Target groups and expected learning outcomes
 - Strategic link with Human Libraries and Policy Labs
 - Official save-the-date announcement
-

Thematic Deep Dives by Partners

Each intervention is structured to provide a concise but substantive insight (approx. 5 minutes each).

Impact Hub Istria (Slovenia)

Human Library: concept, methodology and value for intercultural dialogue

Movement on The Ground (Greece)

Migration & inclusion: lessons from frontline and community-led resilience

Impact Hub Donostia (Basque Country)

EU values and active citizenship: strengthening democratic participation



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Fondazione Yunus Italia (Italy)

Gender Equality and socio-economic empowerment: intersectional approaches to civic participation

Impact Hub Latvia

The importance of international and transnational political dialogue for inclusive policymaking

Impact Hub Prague / Mladá Boleslav (Czech Republic)

Incubating inclusive entrepreneurship and community innovation

Impact Hub Budapest (Hungary)

Social sustainability: long-term educational impact and community transformation

Synthesis & Narrative Closing

Fondazione Yunus Italia

- Integrative narrative across all thematic contributions
 - Collective meaning and vision for the two-year implementation
 - Opportunities for involvement and collaboration for all attending stakeholders
-

Networking & Informal Exchanges

- online space for dialogues between local authorities, civil society, education representatives, and partners
- Opportunity to explore collaboration pathways



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December 19th 2025 - Kick-off Meeting – Public Launch Event Report

Results and impacts of WP1 – Kick-off & enabling conditions

WP1 represents the “**enabling conditions**” layer of the project’s Theory of Change. Its function goes beyond administrative coordination and serves a **strategic and systemic role**: ensuring that all subsequent activities—**Train-the-Trainers (TtT), Human Libraries, and Policy Labs**—are delivered in a coherent, ethical, and impact-oriented manner across all partner countries.

WP1 includes the **official Kick-off Meeting & Public Project Presentation**, which formally launched the 24-month action and operationalised the project’s governance, methodological framework, ethical safeguards, and monitoring system. As explicitly articulated during the kick-off, WP1 establishes the common language, standards, and working routines required for a transnational “network of towns” to function consistently while remaining adaptable to local contexts.

Achieved results (WP1)

Based on monitoring evidence, implementation documents, and the kick-off meeting transcript, WP1 has **fully achieved its intended outcomes**.

1. Strategic and operational alignment

The kick-off meeting ensured a **shared understanding of the project logic**, including objectives, timelines, work package sequencing, and mutual dependencies between activities. The intervention logic—capacity building (TtT) → citizen dialogue (Human Libraries) → institutional translation (Policy Labs)—was clearly articulated and collectively endorsed.

The roles of the coordinator and work package leaders were formally confirmed, along with **coordination routines** (quarterly consortium meetings and intensified monthly coordination for early work packages). A **shared internal platform** for task tracking, documentation, and dissemination was activated, enabling transparency and accountability across the consortium. These elements were repeatedly referenced during the meeting as foundational to maintaining coherence in a lump-sum, event-based project structure.

2. Methodological and ethical readiness

A substantial portion of the kick-off was dedicated to consolidating a **shared methodological and ethical baseline** for the Human Library approach. Partners collectively framed Human Libraries as **facilitated, small-group, dialogue-based encounters** grounded in lived experience, deep listening, safety, and mutual respect.

The transcript documents explicit emphasis on:

- trauma-sensitive facilitation, particularly in relation to migration and gender-based experiences;
- confidentiality, voluntariness, and the right to withdraw;
- the non-extractive nature of storytelling, avoiding re-traumatisation or instrumentalisation of narratives.

Within this framework, partners aligned on the **strategic role of the Train-the-Trainers pathway** as the backbone of quality assurance and risk prevention. The TtT sessions were presented not as standalone training events, but as the mechanism through which facilitators acquire the skills needed to manage sensitive dialogue, ensure ethical compliance, and translate experiences into structured learning and policy-relevant insights.



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3. Monitoring, evaluation, and risk governance

WP1 operationalised a **Theory of Change-based monitoring and evaluation framework**, explicitly linking activities, outputs, and expected outcomes. During the kick-off, partners validated:

- a combination of quantitative indicators (events delivered, participation levels) and qualitative indicators (changes in perception, engagement, trust);
- standardised tools, including event templates, reporting formats, and pre/post feedback mechanisms;
- a GDPR-sensitive data collection approach prioritising trust and ethical responsibility, with cautious handling of sensitive personal data.

A **shared risk register and mitigation logic** was activated, addressing cross-cutting risks such as methodological inconsistency, staff turnover, facilitation challenges, and sensitive data handling. The transcript shows how WP1 was explicitly positioned as a preventive layer, reducing downstream risks before citizen-facing activities begin.

4. Stakeholder and public engagement

The kick-off meeting reached **approximately 160 participants from 8 countries**, including project partners, associated stakeholders, municipalities providing support, and representatives of civil society organisations. This level of participation demonstrates strong early visibility and confirms the relevance of the project's themes.

Interactive tools—such as the live word cloud and open question box—were used to capture qualitative insights on expected change, community priorities, and perceptions of Human Libraries as tools for dialogue. Participants were explicitly invited to engage with the project through official communication channels, strengthening the dissemination pipeline and reinforcing early community-building around the project.

Early impacts of WP1

Although WP1 is an enabling work package, it has already generated **tangible early impacts**:

- **Capacity impact:** partners and facilitators report increased confidence and clarity regarding their roles, responsibilities, and methodological expectations.
- **Procedural impact:** shared routines, tools, and timelines reduce fragmentation and ensure consistency across countries.
- **Trust and legitimacy impact:** early transparency around ethics, data protection, and facilitation standards strengthens trust among stakeholders and future participants.
- **Risk reduction impact:** early alignment lowers the likelihood of implementation delays, ethical incidents, or inconsistent quality in citizen-facing events.

Contribution of WP1 to future impacts

WP1 directly enables:

- the effective delivery of the **three Train-the-Trainers sessions**, ensuring facilitation quality and methodological consistency;
- the **safe and high-quality organisation of Human Libraries** in all partner countries;
- the **structured transformation of citizen dialogue** into Policy Lab discussions and evidence-informed recommendations.

In this sense, WP1 functions as a **systemic investment**: while its outputs are not citizen-facing by design, its impacts permeate the entire project lifecycle and significantly increase the likelihood of sustainable, replicable, and policy-relevant results across Europe.



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COTAF

“Connected Towns for a Shared Future”

Kick-off meeting
Project - 101249763



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INTRO

- **COTAF (Connected Towns for a Shared Future)**
24 month duration
- **Funded under the CERV-2025-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT – Networks of Towns call, within the CERV – Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values program.**
- **Involves 8 European cities and civil society organisations** to strengthen **social cohesion and democratic participation.**
- **Responds to growing polarization and social exclusion** by creating **safe spaces for dialogue** between **citizens and institutions** in different European cities.





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- **Series of participatory meetings** will be held in **8 cities**: Bologna, Liepaja, Lesvos, Istria, Donostia / San Sebastián, Budapest, Prague, Athens.
- They will utilize the **Human Library methodology**, with people acting as “**living books**” and sharing their personal experiences.
- Activities will take place in **small groups**, supported by **facilitators and cultural mediators** specifically trained for the project.





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- Launch of a **shared digital platform** at the European level.
- Results are turned into **local policy recommendations** and **replicable tools** for other European cities (guidelines, good practices, event formats, etc.).





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TRAIN THE TRAINERS

Train the Trainers (ToT) is a capacity-building programme designed to prepare a group of facilitators and key stakeholders to deliver **Human Library** activities consistently and with high quality in their local contexts.

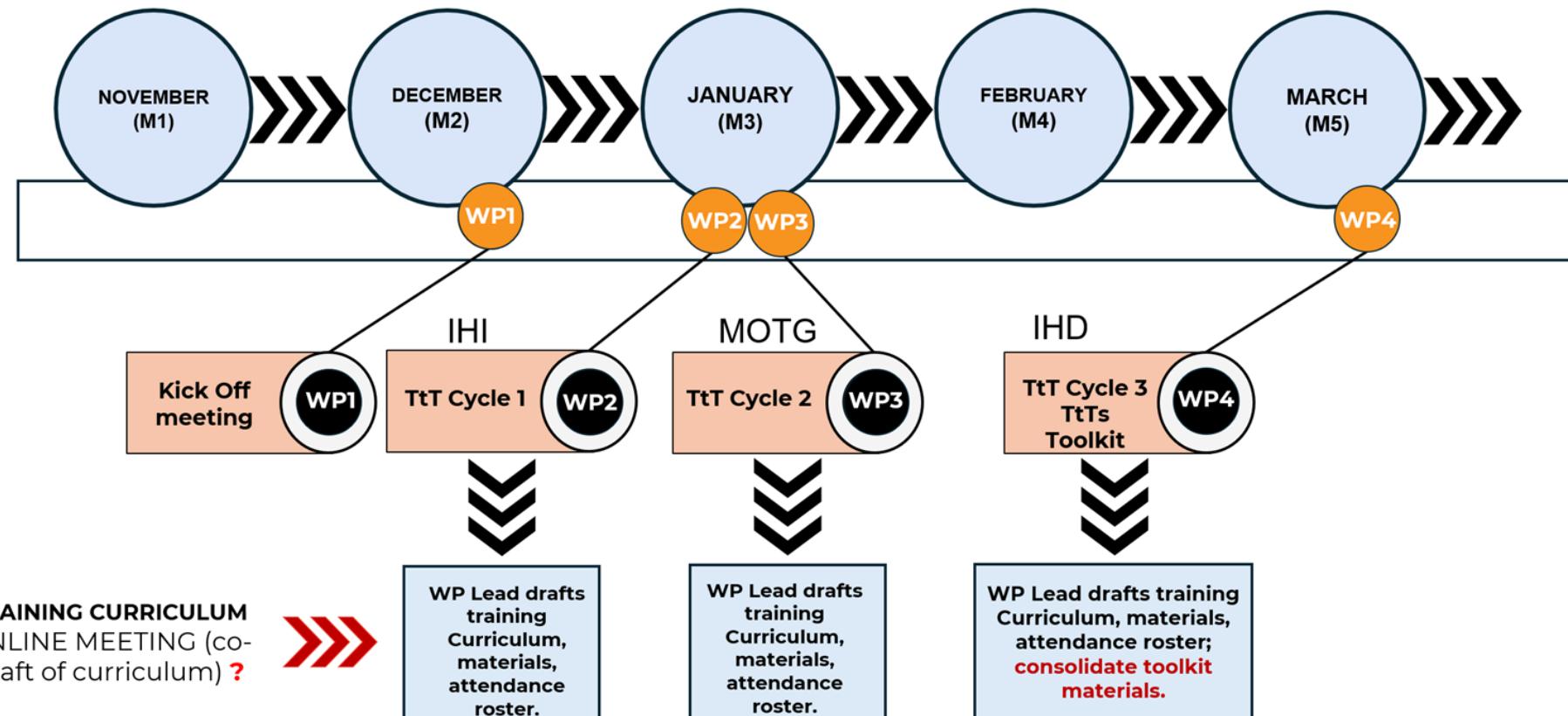
It is a structured, online training that:

- transfers the **method and principles** of the Human Library approach (roles, formats, and key steps to plan and run sessions safely and effectively);
- strengthens **facilitation and dialogue skills**, including group management, active listening, inclusion, handling sensitive topics, and dealing with challenging or emotionally charged situations;
- builds the ability to **document and evaluate** activities (collecting feedback and outcomes) and to translate learning into **good practices and recommendations**, connecting the experience to local strategies against discrimination.

Outcome: trained facilitators who can confidently implement, replicate, and sustain Human Library initiatives at local level



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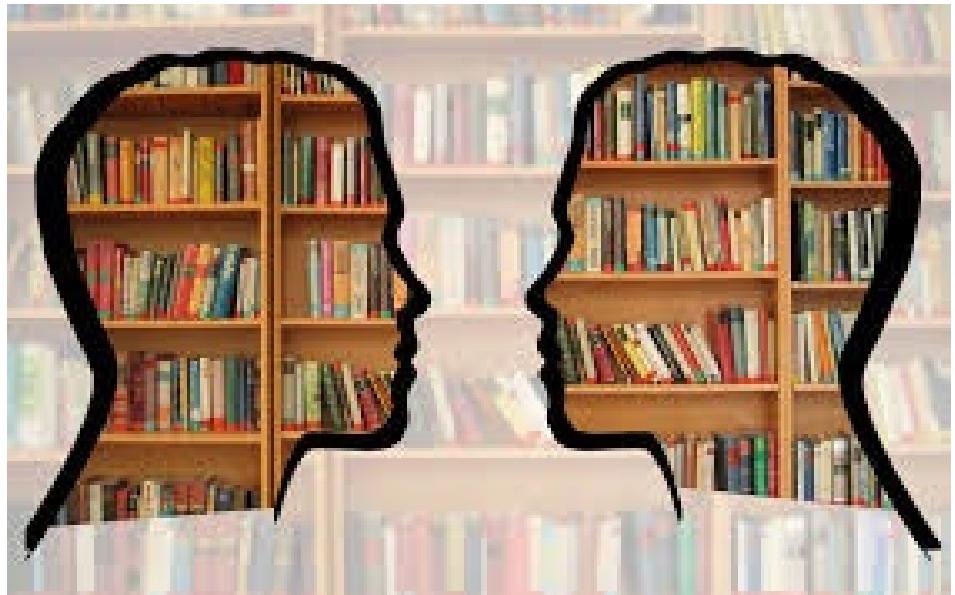


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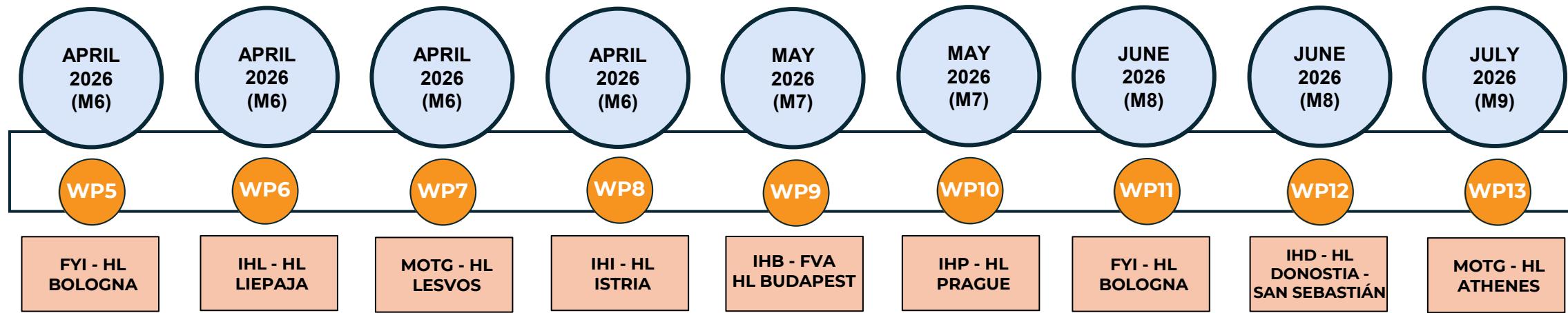
HUMAN LIBRARIES

- Human Libraries are **public events** where citizens make themselves available as “living books” and share their personal stories.
- Each “book” represents a **sensitive topic** or an experience of marginalisation (e.g. migration, disability, poverty, discrimination).
- Participants become “**readers**”: they choose a “book”, sit in small groups and can ask questions in a climate of respect and attentive listening.
- The **meetings are facilitated**, with clear rules for safe dialogue and tools to manage any tensions.
- COTAF Human Libraries will be organised in all partner cities, with a shared format adapted to **local contexts**.





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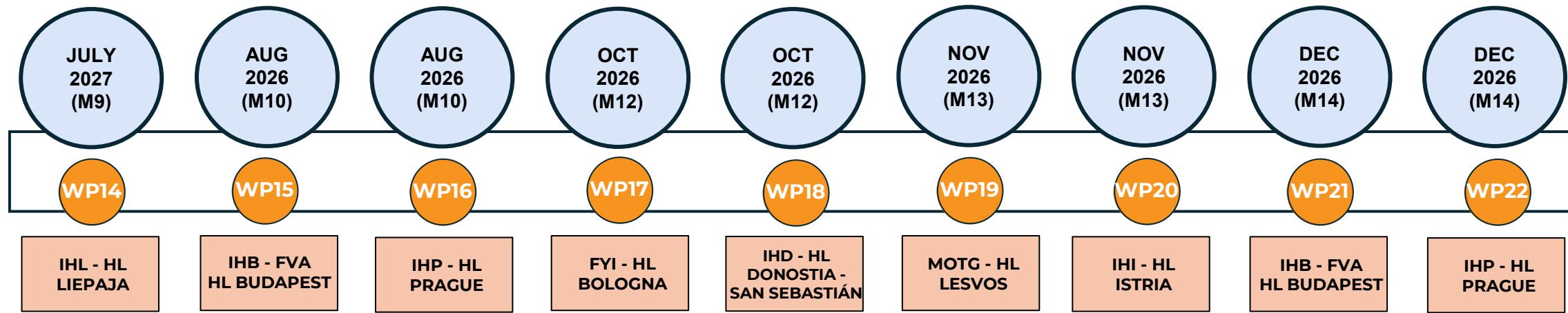


HUMAN LIBRARY PRESENTATION

Human Libraries are public events where some people volunteer as “living books” and share their personal stories on sensitive topics or experiences of marginalization; participants, in small groups and with the support of facilitators, can engage in dialogue and ask questions in a climate of respect and attentive listening.



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POLICY LAB 1

- Policy Lab 1 is an **online lab** that brings together project partners and representatives of local administrations and communities from each city involved.
- The aim is to discuss the interim results of the first Human Libraries (waves 1 and 2), with particular attention to **gender equality and the inclusion of migrants**.
- The work takes place via videoconference, with short presentations of **local results** and discussions in thematic sub-groups to **compare challenges** and possible policy responses at the city level.
- The expected outcome is a **first set of local recommendations** or actions, which will feed into the second Policy Lab and the project's final recommendations.





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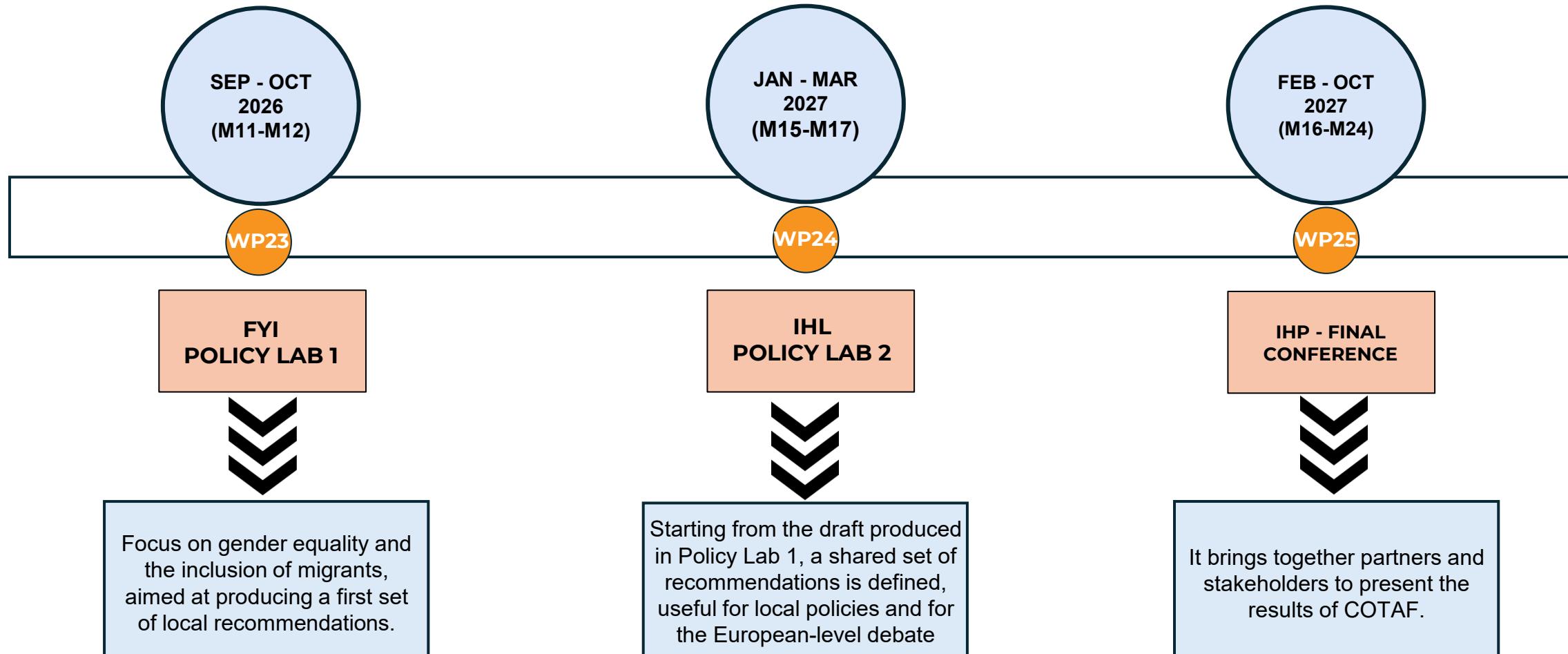
POLICY LAB 2

- Policy Lab 2 is an **online lab** that brings together project partners, city representatives, and external experts.
- It starts **from a draft set of policy recommendations**, built on the results of the Human Libraries and the work carried out in Policy Lab 1.
- During the meeting, **the proposals are discussed**, refined, and tested in terms of feasibility, impact, and potential transferability to different contexts.
- The goal is to arrive at a **shared set of recommendations**, useful for both local policies in the cities involved and for the debate at **European level**.





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CONSORTIUM PRESENTATION

	Italy — Fondazione Yunus Italia (YFI) -Lead Partner Overall coordination, monitoring & learning; communications and Digital Human Library ownership; HL in Bologna.
	Slovenia — Impact Hub Istra develop (IHI) participatory projects centered on inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and youth empowerment.
	Greece — Movement on the Ground (MOTG) Implements HL in Lesvos & Athens with trauma-sensitive facilitation; supports mediator training.
	Spain — Impact Hub Donostia (IHD) Community engagement and events in Donostia/San Sebastián; emphasis on rural/urban inclusion and gender.
	Latvia — Impact Hub Liepāja (IHLV) Youth and minority inclusion; contributes digital storytelling and dissemination
	Czech Republic — Impact Hub Mladá Boleslav (IHP) Hosts the Final Conference in Prague; contributes to intercultural facilitation resources.
	Hungary — Impact Hub Budapest (IHB-FVA) Focus on marginalized groups in Budapest; hosts mediator training and adapts tools to local context.



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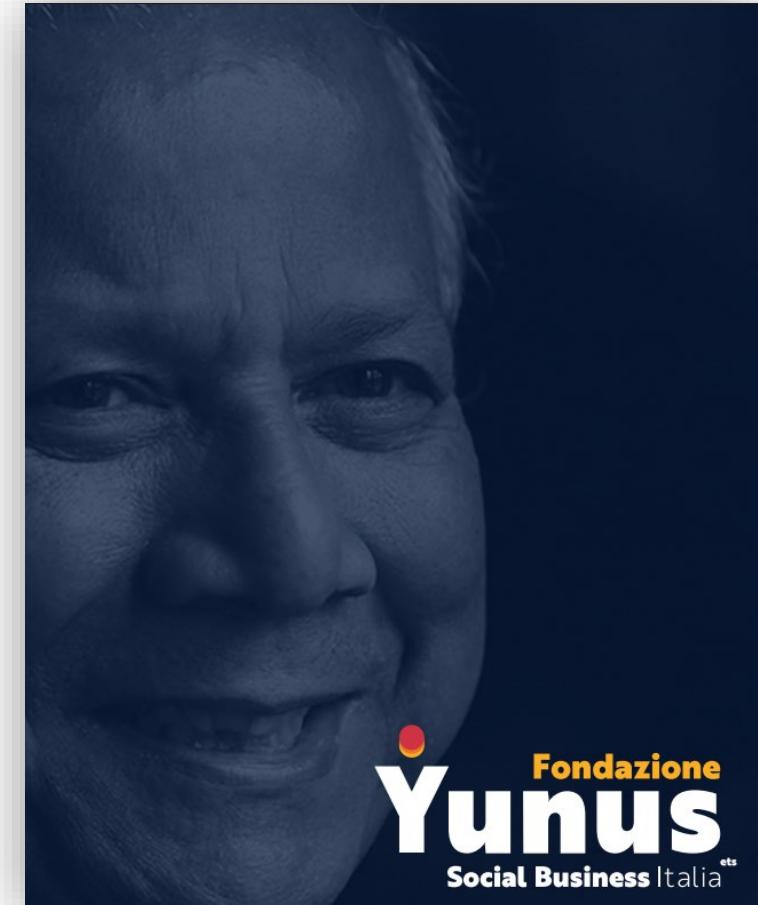


Fondazione Yunus Italia ETS

**promotes financial and entrepreneurship
education**

→ strong expertise in **social business** and
microcredit

→ solid experience in **European projects** writing
and management





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Yunus Fondazione Italia

Grameen Italia

(Univ. of Bologna, UniCredit Foundation, Grameen Trust)

This initiative was strongly inspired by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, aiming to create a European center dedicated to promoting microcredit and social business, following the model of the Grameen Bank.



2010

European Microfinance Network Accreditation

and the inauguration of the Yunus Social Business Centre at the University of Bologna

2018

Rebranding to Fondazione Yunus Italia

This rebranding marked an important evolution in its organizational identity, allowing it to consolidate its position, expand its network, and strengthen its focus beyond microcredit

2023

Social Business

Today, the foundation continues its commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and social innovation, focusing on financial inclusion and sustainable economic development. Inspired by Yunus' vision of a "World of Three Zeros"—zero poverty, zero unemployment, and zero pollution.



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INSIGHT on 3 ZEROS

The Foundation works every day to turn the utopia of a “**World with Three Zeros**” into practical reality, building bridges across the **social, economic, and environmental** spheres. Promoted by **Professor Muhammad Yunus**, the **World with Three Zeros** is a perspective that highlights the interconnection between **Economy, Social and Environment**, envisioning a society **without poverty, without unemployment, and without net CO2 emissions**.

- **ZERO POVERTY:** Minimize the number of people living on less than a dollar a day.
- **ZERO UNEMPLOYMENT:** Promote the employment of as many individuals as possible through **self-entrepreneurship** or the creation of **social businesses**.
- **ZERO EMISSION:** Promote global ethics — through **social businesses** — that conserve resources, reduce environmental impact, and tackle climate change.



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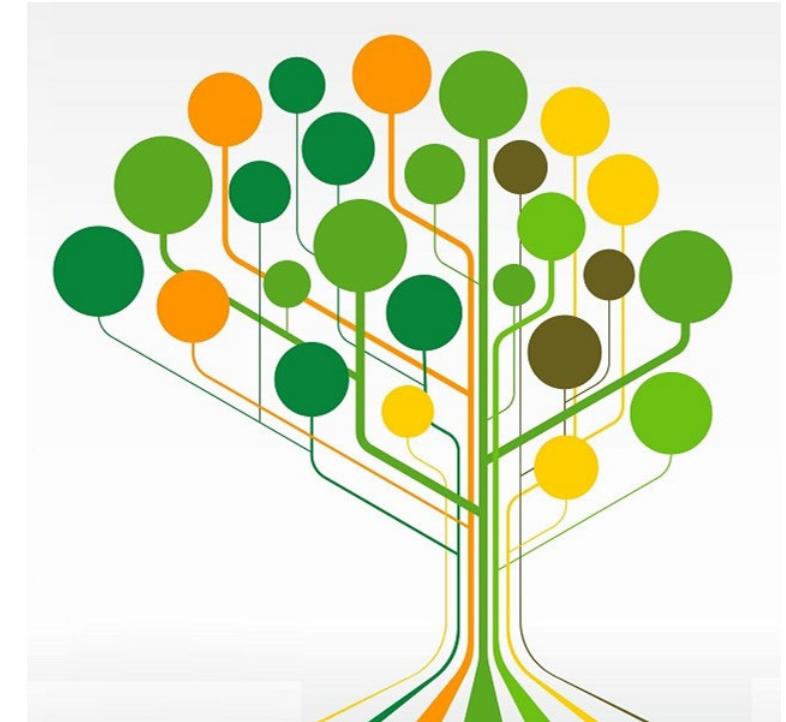
A GROWING ECOSYSTEM

Based in **Bologna**, the Yunus Foundation has built a solid and expanding ecosystem connecting **universities, public institutions, businesses, and civil society**, strengthening its ability to promote an inclusive and sustainable economy inspired by a World with Three Zeros.

Through **research, training, social innovation pathways, and community-based initiatives**, the Foundation supports people and organizations to **develop new skills, address social inequalities, and contribute to ecological and economic transitions**.

Five strategic areas:

- Social Inclusion and Microcredit
- Financial Education and Self-Entrepreneurship
- Research, Strategic Consultancy and Advocacy
- Educational Projects for Youth
- Ecological Transition and Sustainable Innovation





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OUR BENEFICIARIES

- NEETs, unemployed people & job seekers**
- Students (secondary schools) & school communities**
- Women (incl. survivors of economic violence, with/without disabilities)**
- People with disabilities**
- Migrants, refugees & Roma**
- Migrant families (parents)**
- Migrant entrepreneurs (European dimension)**
- Innovation ecosystem & territories (PAs, SMEs/start-ups, ecological transition/energy)**

OUR FORMATS

- ⇒ Yunus LABs
- ⇒ 3Zero Clubs
- ⇒ Financial Education and economic empowerment
- ⇒ Autonomous empowered paths
- ⇒ Social-Entrepreneurship Incubation
- ⇒ Socio-economic capacitation
- ⇒ Consultancies for Companies and PA
- ⇒ Co-Ideation of Strategic Local Action Plans



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Partners



OPEN GROUP



Stakeholders



Major donors



CERV
Citizens, Equality, Rights
and Values programme





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THE STAFF



**Prof. Giuseppe
Torluccio**
Vice-President



M.Benedetta Cabitza
Strategic Development
Consultant & Project
Designer



Alessandra Cavallo
PhD Candidate in
Banking and Finance
& Project Manager



Giulia Zanetti
Sr Project Manager &
Designer



Davide Verrocchi
Administration &
Accounting Manager



Interns
Assistance to Project
Management &
Communication



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Yunus role in the project

- **Coordination & Governance (Lead Partner):** overall coordination of the consortium, ensuring strategic and operational coherence across all activities.
- **Project Management & Compliance:** financial and legal management, budget oversight, reporting and risk management.
- **Quality Assurance:** quality system and peer-review processes to ensure consistency and high standards of outputs.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation & Impact Framework:** design and leadership of the M&E framework, impact assessment and data-driven learning.
- **Digital Platform & Tools:** design, development and management of the COTAF digital hub (documentation + engagement tools).
- **Capacity Building & Training:** development of training content and delivery/coordination of capacity-building workshops.
- **Stakeholder Engagement & Policy Dialogue:** multi-stakeholder outreach, facilitation of dialogues/events, support to policy-oriented outputs.
- **Flagship Implementation in Bologna (Human Library):** organization of key in-person events and Human Library sessions in Bologna.





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ABOUT US

An incubator for social and impact entrepreneurs promoting social innovation.

Builds a diverse community of social & impact entrepreneurs, investors, organizations and changemakers

→ **creates an inspiring co-working** space and supportive growth environment in Koper (by the coast)

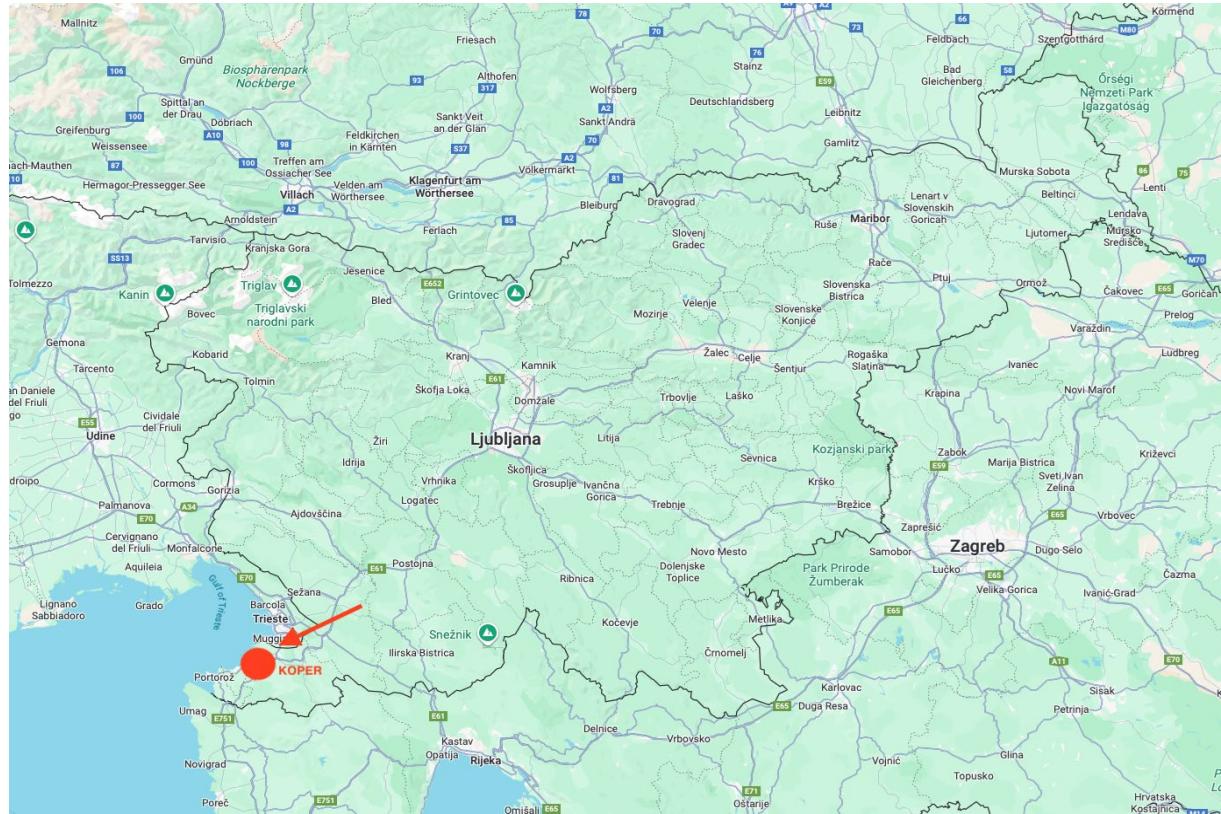
→ **connects members with peer knowledge**, mentors, resources, and impact-oriented funding opportunities





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IMPACT
HUB Istra





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MEET OUR TEAM



Nassim Djaba, Director



Nina Bavčar Čargo, Programs lead



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Istra

OUR PROGRAMS



IMPACT LAUNCHPAD



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COWORKING





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Istra

SUPPORT FROM



MESTNA OBČINA KOPER
COMUNE CITTÀ DI CAPODISTRIA



Zavod Republike Slovenije
za zaposlovanje



PRIMORSKA
GOSPODARSKA
ZBORNICA

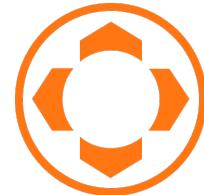


Ljudska univerza Koper
Università popolare Capodistria





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MOVEMENT
ON THE GROUND

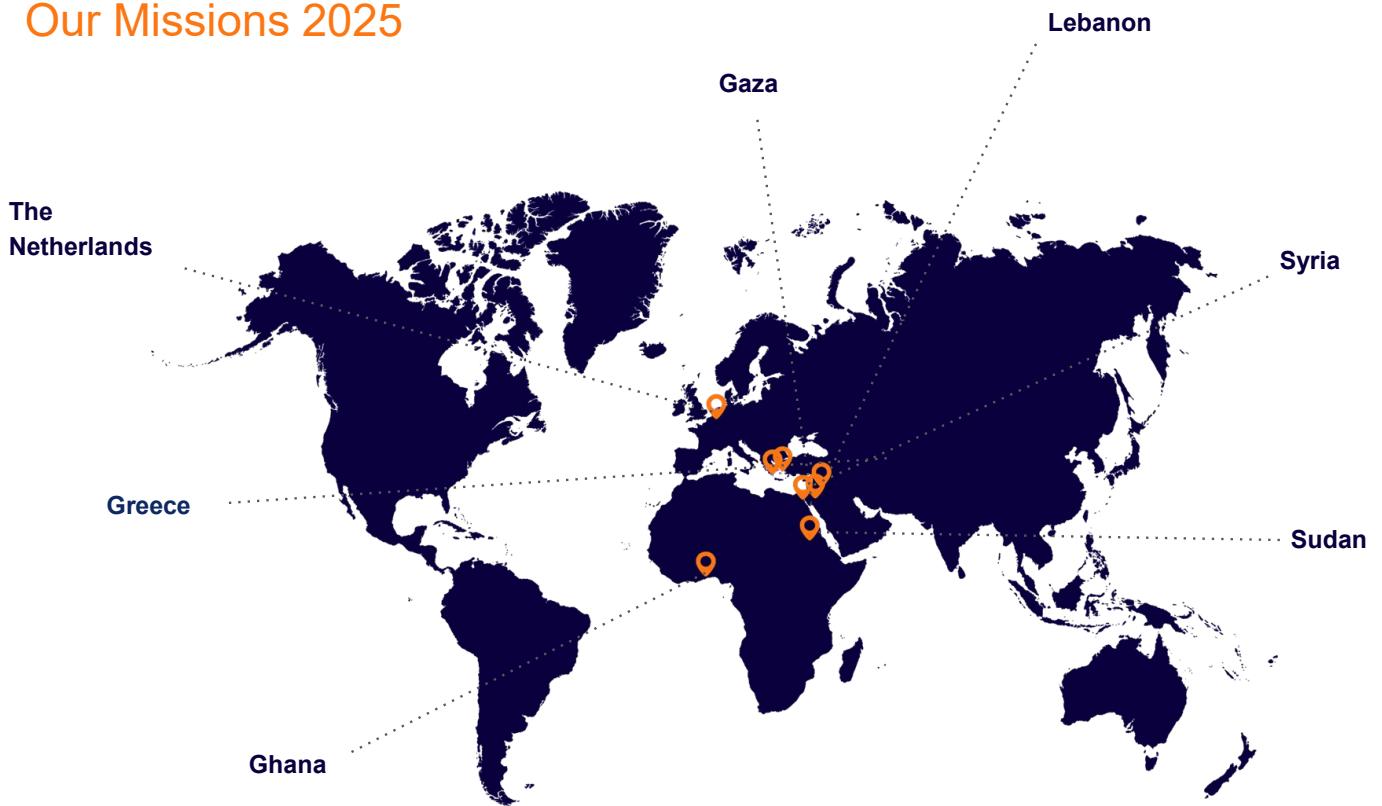
ABOUT US

We are an international NGO that takes a new approach to humanitarian aid - **one where the path to recovery is built from within the community itself.**

We create an **enabling environment** where basic needs are met, **training and employment is facilitated**, and a **sense of belonging is restored** under adverse circumstances.

Through our '**Camp to CampUs**' approach people can return to being active members of society. Over the last nine years we have **impacted over 250,000 people with projects** across Europe, the MENA region and Africa.

Our Missions 2025





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MOVEMENT
ON THE GROUND

Role in the Project

- 1

Lesvos, Greece, has a long-standing history shaped by population movements — from the arrival of **Asia Minor migrants** in the **1920s** to the **large-scale displacement** from **Syria** in **2015**.
- 2

Across Europe, societies are experiencing growing **social fragmentation, weakening trust in institutions, and limited opportunities for genuine civic participation**. These challenges are even more acute for marginalized communities, including **migrants**. According to the **Hellenic Integration Index (2023)**, more than **65%** of migrants report feeling shut out of civic decision-making.
- 3

MOTG's contribution is to actively **elevate migrant perspectives** within the Human Library activities. By creating space for **lived experiences of exclusion and discrimination**, MOTG helps ensure these narratives **inform policy conversations** and deepen **public understanding of systemic inequalities**. This work strengthens a **shared European identity** grounded in participation, intercultural dialogue, and the protection of fundamental rights.



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MOVEMENT
ON THE GROUND

Work packages

WP3 - ToT 2

Training of Trainers on Migrant Inclusion

MOTG role in ToT: provide tools/knowledge and expertise to ensure ethical, trauma-sensitive engagement practices.

WP7 - HL Lesvos: Gender Equality

WP13 - HL Athens: Migrant Inclusion

WP19 - HL Lesvos: European Values and Active Citizenship

→ Representation of both realities (first arrival: Lesvos- vs long term presence: Athens).

Why MOTG?

For a decade, MOTG has been present in Greece, working alongside refugee communities with consistency and care. Our **Camp to CampUs** methodology guides everything we do: we do not empower people; we build environments where people can empower themselves. This means co-creating solutions, sharing agency, and recognising refugees not as passive recipients of aid but as partners in shaping their own futures.



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MOVEMENT
ON THE GROUND



University
of
Ioannina



CHOOSE
LOVE



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Donostia

ABOUT US

Global Network

A non for profit cooperative founded and part of part of the Impact Hub Network since 2013.

Our Mission

Promoting social innovation, sustainability and regeneration, and civic participation through coworking and community programmes.

Key Initiatives connected with COTAF

ERES Gipuzkoa - Diverse entrepreneurship and storytelling

The Break Donostia and Hub Emprededoras - Gender equality

LandU - Sustainability in rural strategies trough Theory U.



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INVOLVED TEAM



Nerea Gonzalez

Programs and Projects Lead.
ESG and circular innovation
consultant. Entrepreneurship
mentor and facilitator.



Aida Solores

Communication lead.
Facilitator, mentor and
consultant. Expert in Theory U,
storytelling and women
entrepreneurship.



Joxean Hernandez

Co-founder at IHD.
Responsible of the COTAF
Project. Facilitator, mentor
and cultural transformation
consultant.



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Donostia

OUR ROLE IN COTAF

Active Work Packages

WP 3. ToT3 – European values and Active Citizenship

We will offer trainers the tools, skills and mindset to translate European values into meaningful dialogue and democratic participation at local level.”

WP12 – Human Library on Migrant Inclusion

We will design, organise, facilitate and evaluate a Human Library event focused on migrant and ethnic communities, creating safe spaces for dialogue between “books” and “readers” from our city.

WP18 – Human Library on European Values & Active Citizenship

This second event will invite local citizens to engage in conversations around European values such as solidarity, democracy, and participation.



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Impact
Hub
Donostia

INVOLVED PARTNERS



DONOSTIA
SAN SEBASTIÁN

MTA
IRUN Lab



KUTXA
FUNDAZIOA



Deusto
Universidad de Deusto

ASMOZ.
FUNDAZIOA

TABAKALERA





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Liepāja

ABOUT US

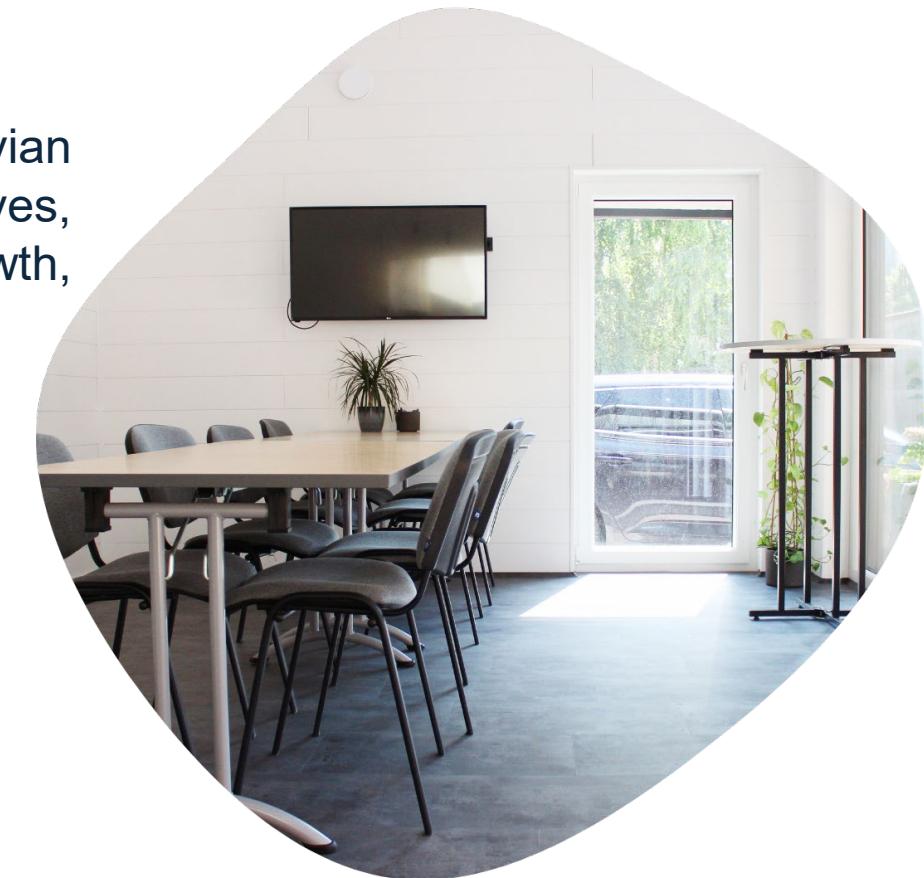
Impact Hub Liepāja promotes the sustainable development of Latvian society and encourages participation in innovative and creative initiatives, inspiring individuals and the community as a whole toward self-growth, entrepreneurship, and sustainable thinking.

1st and the only one Impact HUB in Baltic countries! Since 2021

Impact Hub Liepāja is a canva. Paint it Your way!

CREATING AND STRENGTHEN CHANGEMAKERS:

1. YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS
2. NON GOVERMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
(NGO GROWTH INCUBATOR)





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Liepāja



Europe → Latvia → Liepāja





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the European Union



Liepāja

Cooperation

NGO support institutions



Impact Hubs international



Cities and educational departments

Liepāja

EU funding programs



Liepāja



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Liepāja

Role in the COTAF

Digital storytelling and social entrepreneurship in youth engagement and media literacy sectors.

Contribution by:

- 1. Hosting Human Library events** with a focus on youth and ethnic minority inclusion. Creating multimedia content for the COTAF digital archive.
- 2 Applying its expertise in digital campaigns** to raise awareness and amplify narratives.





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Liepāja

Team

Salvis Roga
Board Member/ Project Manager



Patrīcija Anna Brūna
Youth community Manager





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ABOUT US

HUB Mladá Boleslav is a place where generations connect, strong stories emerge, and people with ideas that create a positive and sustainable impact on society are supported — right in the heart of Mladá Boleslav.

At HUB Mladá Boleslav, we bring together people from the worlds of non-profit organizations, public administration, science and research, business, as well as educators and individuals who care about making a positive change in society



Antonín Ferdan
• DIRECTOR



Ondřej Havlík
• PROJECT MANAGER

Founded by:



A place where you are never left to face challenges alone.



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LEVEL - A (DONÁTORI/FOUNDERS)



LEVEL - B (COOPERATIVE PARTNERS)



LEVEL - C (SUPPORT PARTNERS)



LEVEL - D (DELIVERY PARTNERS)



City of Mladá Boleslav



HUB MB





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Our Role in COTAF

Expert topic: Incubating, inclusive entrepreneurship and community innovation.

CORE EVENTS:

- Human Library events
- Final conference hosting

OUR EXPERIENCE

54 HUMAN LIBRARIES

E-learning on UDEMY

2 publications/manuals

256 HUMAN BOOKS



HUMAN LIBRARY

9 international TC's

7.540 READERS

13 EU COUNTRIES



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Budapest

ABOUT US

Impact Hub Budapest provides home for a diverse community and supports positive social change with incubation programs, coworking space memberships and events.

Founded in 2016.

We offer incubation programs and connect entrepreneurs and innovators to large organisations, partners, investors, and the public sector.

Actively providing opportunities for the underserved and underprivileged people of Hungary, including projects targeting youth and young women in rural areas and women coming from 3rd countries.



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Budapest

Our Space



Budapest, 7th district,
Wesselényi utca 2022 -





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Budapest

Our business model



Coworking

50 members
22 hosts
260 membership passes
20+ countries

Events

350 events hosted
7 spaces managed
Over 1,000 visitors

in 2025

Programmes

5 running
entrepreneurial
programmes
targeting women, youth
and third country
nationals



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Budapest

Bea Bedő

Co-Founder, CEO,
Financial Manager



Viktória Sőregi

Head of Program





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ADMINISTRATIONS PROVIDING FORMAL LoS



Liепāja •

 ZUGLÓ



MESTNA OBČINA KOPER
COMUNE CITTA DI CAPODISTRIA



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MANAGEMENT

- **Yunus Foundation Italy** coordinates the consortium and relations with the **Agency**:
 - **Common guidelines** for project management, communication and reporting
 - **Regular online meetings**
 - **Lump sum funding**
 - Each **Work Package has a responsible leader**
 - **Shared platform** to keep everyone aligned in a transparent way





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M&E - Common monitoring and evaluation framework

linking objectives, activities and expected results.

- **Quantitative indicators** measure outputs (e.g. number and type of events),
- **Qualitative Indicators** outcomes for participants (e.g. changes in perceptions, level of engagement, etc.) and results at community and policy level.
- **Standardized data collection tools** (report templates, pre/post questionnaires, attendance sheets, short interviews).
- **ToC - based & informed**



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- The **quality of outputs** is supported by an internal **peer review process among partners** and by regular activity progress checks.
- **Risk management** is based on a **shared risk register**, updated during the main project meetings.
- Data is collected in a **disaggregated** way (e.g. gender, age, background) to monitor the inclusion and participation of the different groups involved.



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TRAINING INTRO

- **Purpose:** Provide a capacity-building workshop for project facilitators and stakeholders focusing on human library methodology and storytelling techniques through a pre established curriculum. Ensuring that all partners have the skills and knowledge to effectively implement the Human Library events.
- **Target groups:** Project Facilitators, Stakeholders.
- **Expected outcome:** a trained cohort of facilitators confident in applying the methods and themes effectively in their local events.
- **Strategic link with Human Libraries:** Equip trainers with skills and knowledge to implement successful Human Library events, broadening the awareness of a variety of important contemporary issues while fostering dialogue, empathy, and mutual understanding among local citizens.



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TRAINING 1



SAVE THE DATE

TRAIN THE TRAINERS - SESSION 1
10.00 - 12.30 CET

An introduction to the Human Library approach, its core values, and **how it works in practice**. We will explore roles, formats, and key steps for **designing safe and meaningful Human Library events**.



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TRAINING 2



SAVE THE DATE

TRAIN THE TRAINERS - SESSION 2
10.00 - 12.30 CET

A practical session on **how to facilitate groups**, support open and respectful dialogue and create welcoming spaces for diverse participants.

We will **share tools** to handle sensitive topics, tensions, and emotionally charged situations with care.



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TRAINING 3



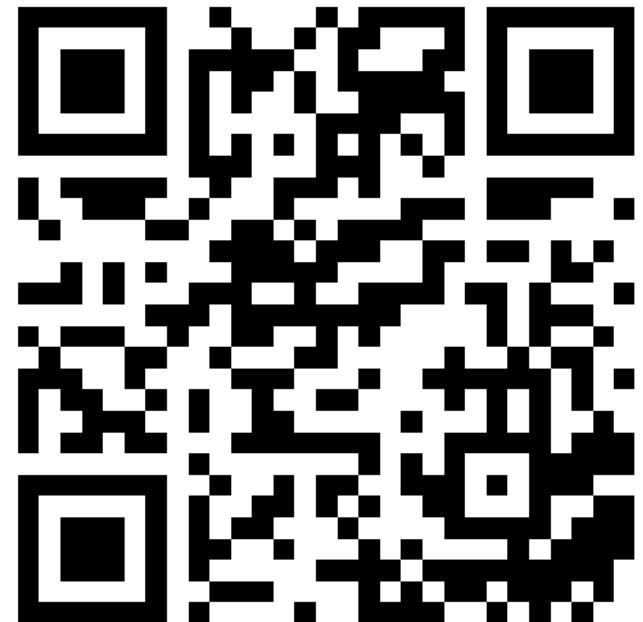
SAVE THE DATE

TRAIN THE TRAINERS - SESSION 3
10.00 - 12.30 CET

A workshop on how to document results, collect feedback, and **turn experience into shared good practices**. We will also explore how Human Library activities can connect with local policies, services, and long-term **strategies against discrimination**.



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SCAN ME!

Word Cloud

***Which word (or multiple words)
would you choose
to the describe the change
you wish the Human Library
to create in your City?***

<https://app.wooclap.com/events/COTAF/live-session>



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Thematic Deep Dives

***A Brief opportunity for all
the Partners to expand on
themes which are key to
COTAF.***

Impact Hub Istria (Slovenia)

Human Library: concept, methodology and value for intercultural dialogue

Movement on The Ground (Greece)

Migration & inclusion: lessons from frontline and community-led resilience

Impact Hub Donostia (Basque Country)

EU values and active citizenship: strengthening democratic participation

Fondazione Yunus Italia (Italy)

Gender Equality and socio-economic empowerment: intersectional approaches to civic participation

Impact Hub Latvia

The importance of international and transnational political dialogue for inclusive policymaking

Impact Hub Prague / Mladá Boleslav (Czech Republic)

Incubating inclusive entrepreneurship and community innovation

Impact Hub Budapest (Hungary)

Social sustainability: long-term educational impact and community transformation



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Istra

The concept:

- People become living books
- Personal stories instead of abstract and generic debates
- Safe & moderated dialogue
- The focus is on listening, not convincing and debating





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Istra

Why it works?

- Break stereotypes through direct contact
- Builds empathy and mutual recognition
- Makes complex issues human and relatable
- Creates trust in diverse groups





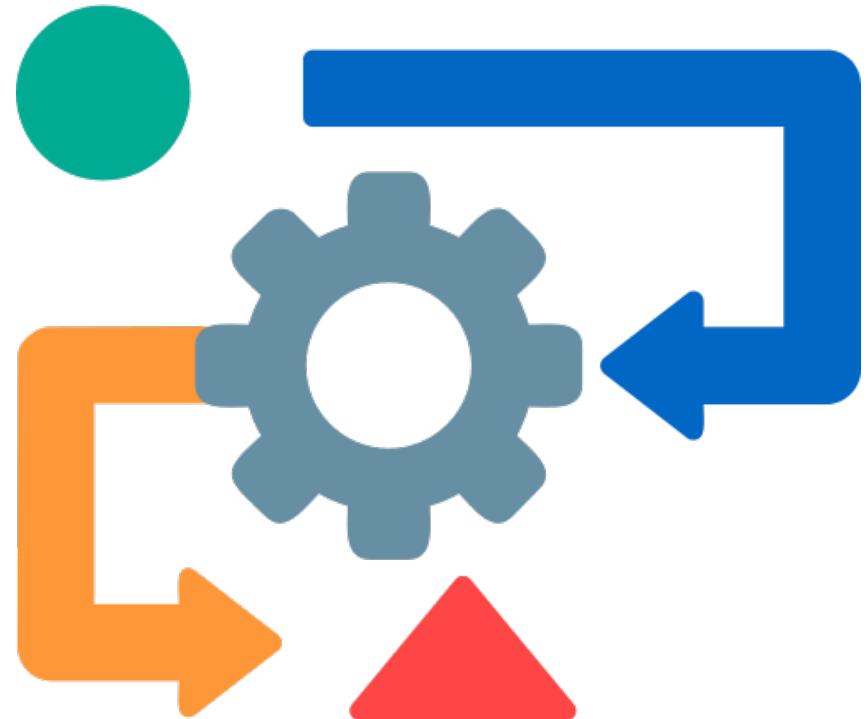
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Istra

How it works?

- Trained facilitators set the rules
- Small groups or guided sessions
- Voluntary participation
- Respect, confidentiality and safety





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Istra

From Dialogue to Impact

- Reflection and collective learning
- Links to policy and community action
- Local and transnational relevance





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Istra

What is the added value

- Gives voice to the marginalized
- Strengthens social cohesion
- Builds a shared sense of belonging





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Istra

THANK YOU!

Start with listening, end with change.



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**MOVEMENT
ON THE GROUND**

Migration & inclusion: lessons from frontline and community-led resilience

Who are refugees, and why is essential that their voices are heard?

Refugees are people who have been violently uprooted from their homes/ home-countries for multiple different reasons. People with a lived experience of traumatizing and undignified journeys and loss.

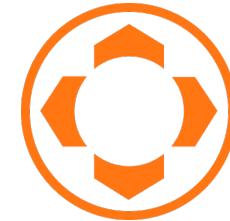
In order to understand the collective experience of more than 120 million forcibly displaced people, we must use **trauma-sensitive methods** that do not guide or shape their stories.

Refugees should lead the conversation, with their voices heard on their own terms and **without risk of re-traumatization**.

Their lived experiences reveal systemic failures and provide crucial insights that can inform policy and advocacy.



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**MOVEMENT
ON THE GROUND**

Migration & inclusion: lessons from frontline and community-led resilience

How to gather fragments of their lived experience?

Constructivist Approach

Bottom-up method that centers the refugee as the storyteller.

Use photovoice, where participants discuss the meaning of a photo or an object they brought from home.

Interactive activities:

- Construct life maps and discuss them
- Construct mental maps and discuss each person's use of the city-scape and attachment to place - Discuss how refugees connect with new places/communities
- "What would you take with you if you left home not knowing is you would return?" exercise.



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Donostia

DEEP DIVE INTO OF TOT 3 - european values and active citizenship

European values and active citizenship are needed to ensure that diverse societies can live together with dignity, trust and democratic stability.

4 key reasons:

- To protect human dignity and fundamental rights.
- To strengthen trust and social cohesion in diverse societies.
- To prevent exclusion, polarisation and democratic disengagement.
- To empower people to participate actively in their communities.



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DEEP DIVE INTO OF TOT 3 - european values and active citizenship

Values

Human dignity and equality

Diversity and non-discrimination

Freedom and solidarity

Dialogue

Having a voice and being heard

Dialogue, trust and participation

Civic engagement at local level

Human Library

Story-based learning

Listening as a key tool

Creating safe spaces for dialogue



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GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES TO CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Who is taking part today... and for who, for reasons of gender and economic conditions, is it harder to be here?

People experiencing gender inequalities and socio-economic disadvantage face higher barriers to participation.

An intersectional approach invites us to recognize these barriers and to design processes that actively reduce them.



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GENDER EQUALITY IN EU

- **Political Representation:** Women's presence in EU national parliaments has increased, reaching **33.4% in 2024** (up from **27.8% in 2014**), but we are still far from parity.
- **Education Paradox:** On average, women in the EU are more highly educated than men (the tertiary education gap is in their favor), yet they remain significantly underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), accounting for only **17.9%** of graduates in these fields, compared with **42.4%** of men.
- **Gender-Based Violence:** A fundamental barrier to equality and participation is safety. Around **one in three women in the EU (30.7%)** has experienced physical or sexual violence in adulthood, with higher rates among women with disabilities.



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SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN EU

- **Employment Gap:** The male employment rate in the EU (**80.8%**) exceeds the female rate (**70.8%**) by **10 percentage points**.
- **Gender Pay Gap:** Women earn on average **12.0%** less per hour than men. This gap is shaped by sectoral segregation and the “**glass ceiling**.”
- **Care Work as a Barrier:** The main reason women work part-time (nearly one third of employed women) is **caregiving** (caring for children or dependent adults), a factor that is marginal for men. This limits women’s ability to build income and participate fully in economic life.
- **Digital Segregation:** Despite the digital transition, the share of women ICT specialists remains very low compared to men (**male/female ratio of 4.15**), limiting women’s empowerment in future-oriented sectors.



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CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN EU

- **Geography of the Gap:** There is no single Europe-wide trend, but rather strong national differences. In **Greece** and **Hungary**, civic participation remains predominantly male: in Greece, **48% of men** are engaged versus **36% of women**; in Hungary, **25% of men** versus **18% of women**. In some Southern European countries, women often show higher engagement rates—for example **Spain: 57% of women** engaged vs **40% of men**; **Italy: 52% of women** vs **48% of men**.
- **“Visible” vs. “Solidarity” Activism:** Men tend to dominate public and more confrontational political activities, such as demonstrations. Women consistently surpass men in solidarity-based engagement and in providing financial support to NGOs across all partner countries.
- **The “Time” Factor:** A key barrier to active participation (e.g., in-person volunteering or politics) is the lack of free time. Women in the EU still carry most caregiving responsibilities, which reduces the time available for “in-person” activism compared to men.
- **Online Interaction:** Digital activism also shows differences. In some contexts, men are more likely to express political opinions online or take part in consultations, while women use social media more to share solidarity-driven awareness campaigns.



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GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES TO CIVIC PARTICIPATION

- **The Economy–Participation Intersection:** Women's disproportionate care burden not only limits economic earnings, but also reduces the “available time” for active civic and political participation.
- **Multiple Vulnerabilities:** An intersectional approach shows that discrimination does not affect all women in the same way. Security policies and hostile rhetoric hit minority women, migrants, and human rights activists harder, limiting their ability to organize and demonstrate safely.
- **The Education–Power Gap:** Despite women's high levels of tertiary education, they struggle to convert this cultural capital into decision-making positions (political and economic leadership), highlighting structural and cultural barriers that education alone cannot dismantle.
- **Conclusion:** Real equality requires tackling economic independence (by reducing the care gap) and safety in civic space at the same time—protecting the most vulnerable voices from intimidation and legal restrictions.



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Inclusive policymaking

- **The problem:** In governments around the world, policy and public service initiatives are often given the go-ahead based on assumptions and biases.
- **Why it matters:** A build-first approach can lead to poor public service provision for citizens.
- **The solution:** A multidisciplinary research-design-test-build approach to make public services that work and deliver value.

Equalities considerations must become part of the day-to-day thinking of policymakers, they must see it as a basic tenet of good policymaking.



Diversity adds value to the policy design process



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Expert topic: Incubating, inclusive entrepreneurship and community innovation.

1. The problem:

In regions outside major metropolitan areas, there is a **lack of inclusive environments** that systematically support the creation and growth of entrepreneurship and innovation **across generations and sectors**.

Ideas often emerge in isolation, without access to mentoring, know-how, funding, or real-world testing opportunities. Non-profits, businesses, public institutions, and young people operate **next to each other rather than together**, resulting in underused human potential, weaker regional economies, and talent outflow.

1. Why it matters:

This matters because without such environments, regional potential remains untapped and long-term development is compromised.

1. Solution:

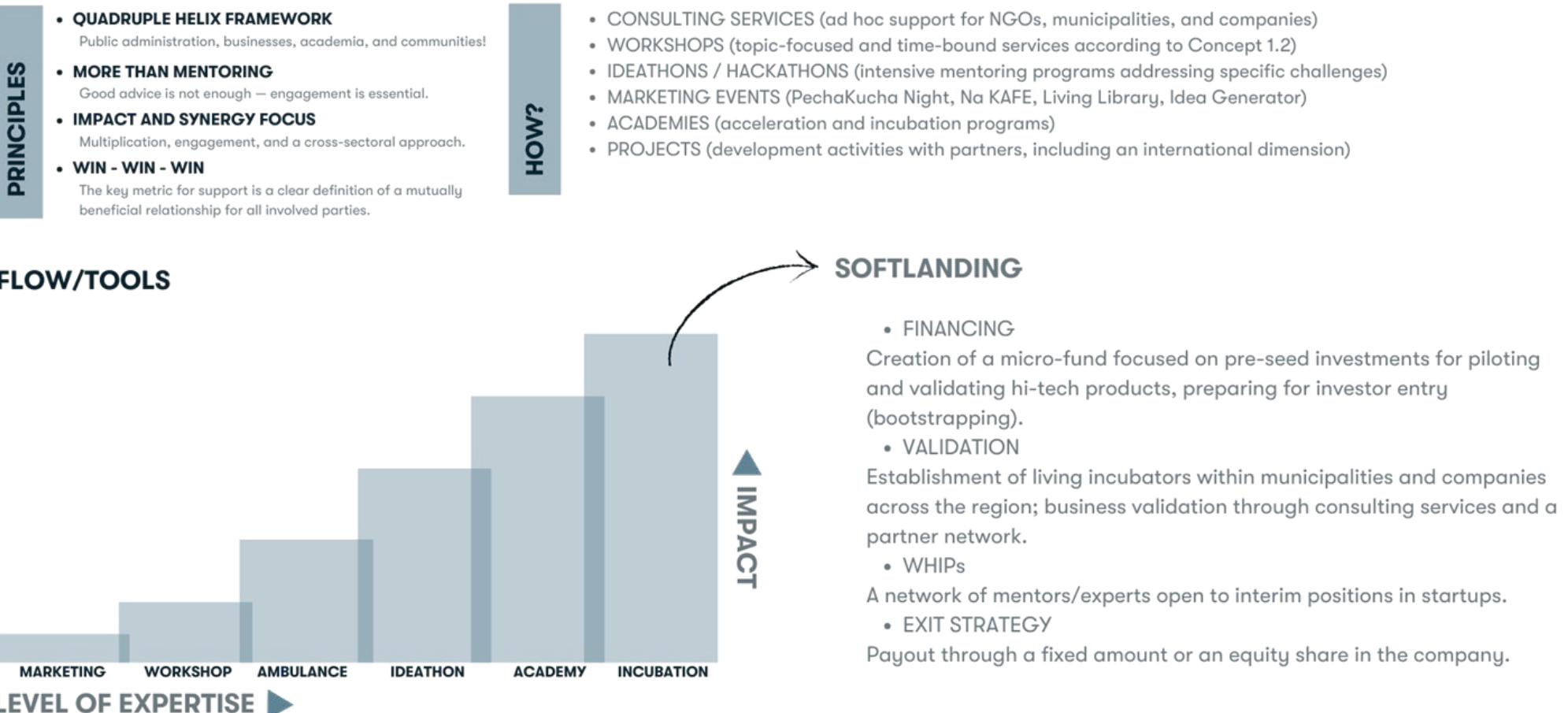
We create an inclusive space/programmes that connects people, ideas, and resources to turn local challenges into sustainable entrepreneurial and community-driven solutions.



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OUR PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK





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Social sustainability: long-term educational impact and community transformation

COTAF goes beyond traditional education by facilitating **transformative learning through lived experience and dialogue**, rather than classroom instruction alone:

Human Libraries as Experiential Learning

The Human Libraries model invites individuals to share personal stories in facilitated dialogues. This practice encourages empathy, reduces stereotypes, and fosters deep listening

This form of learning aligns with broader educational sustainability goals that emphasize skills, values, and attitudes that support inclusive societies.

Train-the-Trainers Program

The project invests in capacity building by training facilitators in *inclusive methods, trauma-informed approaches, and evaluation skills*, which enhances local abilities to sustain reflective civic education long after project funding ends.

Narrative-Driven Civic Awareness

By turning personal narratives into policy dialogues, participants learn not only to share experiences but also to connect lived realities with democratic processes, reinforcing civic literacy and critical engagement over time.



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The activities contribute to **social sustainability at the community level** by building bridges across diverse groups and tackling systemic barriers:

Fostering Inclusivity & Belonging

By spotlighting voices often unheard (e.g., migrants, women, youth, survivors of violence), COTAF nurtures inclusive civic spaces where diverse community members can feel recognized, heard, and valued.

Civic Dialogue & Democratic Participation

Structured dialogues and policy labs co-created with citizens and policymakers help communities translate experiences into actionable insights—strengthening local governance and democratic participation.

Community Resilience & Shared Futures

Through its vision of cities as “living laboratories of solidarity and civic imagination”, COTAF contributes to social cohesion, mutual understanding, and community resilience—key facets of long-lasting social sustainability.



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Synthesis & Narrative Closing

Help shape the future of COTAF

Your perspective matters. Take a few minutes to complete our final questionnaire and help us turn today's discussions into concrete action.

What we are asking you:

- How do today's thematic contributions connect into a shared, inclusive narrative?
- What common vision should guide COTAF over the next two years?
- How can each stakeholder actively contribute and collaborate going forward?

👉 QUESTION BOX

Click here to share your insights:

<https://forms.gle/uWEC9vnKf1xv99Eu7>



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**Follow our socials to stay tuned for
next events!**

<https://www.cotafeuproject.info/>



COTAF – Connected Towns for a Shared Future



@Connected Towns for a Shared Future



COTAF – Connected Towns for a Shared Future



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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

***BE HUMAN.
SEE, LISTEN, SPEAK, UNDERSTAND.***

Through this project and Our Human Libraries, we aim to **create spaces where people can truly listen and be heard**, so we can come together, better understand one another, and move beyond fears, stereotypes, and prejudice.

Join us: listen, and, if you wish, share your story.

It's our way of building **more inclusive and compassionate communities**, and help us shape a **shared path of empathy**.