



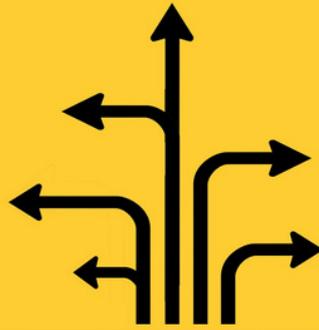
TALENTMAGNET

E-NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 3 • OCTOBER 2021

For talent friendly cities

WE'RE HALFWAY THERE



HALFWAY
EDITORIAL

Danilo Ceh



Fifteen months of the project have already gone and the consortium has created important outputs and achieved great progress with the Practical Guide to Talent attraction and retention and the training for writing the Local Talent attraction and retention plans. The most important activity in this period happened this September: the partnership of project TalentMagnet met in person for the first time at the 3rd SC meeting, in Nyíregyháza. Until this meeting, we only had online meetings, which are – as we all know – not the same as meetings in person.

From my perspective as LP manager, I think all partners enjoyed this first “normal” meeting. We had the chance to get to know each other better and now we know who is on the other side of the screens.

The Municipality of Nyíregyháza organized a great event with a lot of interactive sessions and extra programs. I think this was a huge step for all partners to start working even more closely with each other within the project.

A representative from the TalentMagnet project participated in the Young Bled Strategic Forum which is also co-organised together with the priority area 10 of the EUSDR, we presented the topic of our project, which was a great step to work together with PA.

Now, it's time for pilot city partners to START hard work: to draft their strategy, to organise talent clubs, and to implement their pilot action, so the “ball” is in their court now. Up to this point, knowledge providers have done the majority of the work, from now on they will mainly support the work of city pilot partners in implementing their plans.

So all stakeholders stay »tuned« and support city partners in their work.

TALENTMAGNET
E-NEWSLETTER 3

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LET'S CREATE TALENT
FRIENDLY CITIES TOGETHER!

 **Interreg** 
Danube Transnational Programme
TalentMagnet

PROGRAMME CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

NICE TO MEET YOU!

What are the factors young talent find essential in a talent-friendly city? What can local stakeholders do to attract and retain young talents? Representatives of young generations tend to move to bigger cities because of promising job opportunities and a vivid lifestyle. However, they usually have a strong emotional bond to their hometowns. Small and medium sized cities of the Danube Region can build on this emotional attachment and capitalize on the positive characteristics of cities to magnetize talents back when they are about to settle down.

The TalentMagnet partnership has already mapped up the state of the art in the field of talent attraction and retention, the findings of which local stakeholders - representing companies, academia, NGOs and public administration - and talents have just confirmed during the first in-person meeting of the TalentMagnet project in the city of Nyíregyháza, Hungary. It turned out that one of the most challenging tasks for the municipalities is to create innovative policies, new job opportunities and a functional business environment in order to stop the outflow of the skilled youth. Furthermore, the invited young talents also highlighted that personal and career development opportunities, and a welcoming support system are of utmost importance.

Based on the main findings of the panel discussion with local talents, we can conclude that it doesn't worth holding back talents from moving out from the city to gain new knowledge and experience in the capital or even abroad. In fact, we should encourage them to do that, and afterwards persuade them to come home and use what they have learnt for the benefit of their hometowns. To achieve this, comprehensive and coherent marketing and development strategies are needed with a strong emphasis on city branding.



OUR FIRST IN-PERSON MEETING

NYÍREGYHÁZA, HUNGARY

These were some of the key lessons learnt at the first in-person transnational meeting of the TalentMagnet project - being implemented in frames of the Danube Transnational Programme - that took place on 14-15 September 2021 in Nyíregyháza, Hungary. At the meeting, the majority of partners and representatives of the pilot cities participated and were involved in the interactive sessions and discussions.

In the second half of the project lifetime, the focus will be on the pilot cities of the project. These cities will need to start to work on establishing the supportive local environment for talent attraction and retention, involving all players of the quadruple helix. Luckily, several tools developed within the project will be provided for them in order to support their efforts. The TalentMagnet toolkit will also be at the disposal of any other city interested in preparing local talent attraction and retention plans.

WPT1 activities during the 2nd period were aimed at finalizing deliverables for the upcoming tasks within Activity A1.2 Methodology Development, Interactive mid-term and Awareness-raising workshops and Activity 1.3 Designing LTARP: partners will use the methodology and the learnings from the training course to design LTARP in their local community.

D.T1.1.1 Baseline study

D.T1.1.4 Good Practice Catalogue

D.T1.1.5 Slide deck on the main findings of the baseline study

D.T1.2.1 Practical Guide on Preparing and Governing Talent Attraction and Retention Plan

D.T1.2.2 Training materials

Concise Baseline study summarizes state of the art regarding talent attraction/retention in small and medium-sized cities. Baseline study gives clear view on the state of the art field (policies, priorities, future plans), including primary research with mapping of relevant stakeholders, identification of specific needs for improvement of the relevant legal regulations at national and institutional level and partner-level situation analysis (analysis situation of young people in the cities, and private sector). It defines key terms, activities being done by various cities in this field across Europe and documented best practices.. Baseline study also analyses key elements and trends of global talent mobility and multilevel governance.

Good Practice Catalogue Includes results of related research, definitions of key terms, activities being done by various cities in this field across Europe, and documented best practices from the knowledge providers. Catalogue also capitalises the results of three projects with similar topic (EDU LAB, Youmning, Attractive DANUBE). It also contains the material to support stakeholder engagement, dissemination and policy work.

Slide deck on the main findings of the baseline study serves as a tool which can be used for multiple purposes: partners can use it to present the findings to local stakeholders, and the partnership can also use this tool to support the dissemination process.

Practical Guide on Preparing and Governing Talent Attraction and Retention Plan is a guide with clear methodology in order to help the pilot partners to prepare their Local Talent Attraction and Retention Plans. Practical Guide summarizes global challenges related to competition for talent, while giving a portrait of talent attractiveness of a place. It guides pilot partners in getting to know their target group and how to build partnership. It also proposes various intervention activities in order to attract/retain talents.

Training materials was a two day training course delivered to create common understanding and enable pilot partners to apply the planning methodology for their local talent attraction and retention plans as well as local interactive mid-term and awareness-raising workshops.



ACHIEVEMENTS IN WPT 1

1

BASILINE STUDY

Summarizes state of the art regarding talent attraction and retention in small- and medium-sized cities

2

SLIDE DECK

Tool for the main findings of the baseline study

3

GOOD PRACTICE CATALOGUE

Activities being done in various cities in this field across Europe, and documented best practices from the knowledge providers

4

PRACTICAL GUIDE

With clear methodology in order to help the pilot partners to prepare their Local Talent Attraction and Retention Plan

FOR MORE DETAILS

[CLICK THE PICTURE](#)

WORK PACKAGE T1 METHODOLOGY AND PLANNING

WP LEADER: EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR
EDUCATION EV
GERMANY

WHAT WE
ACHIEVED
SO FAR
JULY 2020-
OCT 2021



ACHIEVEMENTS IN WPT 2

1

GENERAL INFO

A.T2.1. Toolkit development: The main objective is to create various tools to attract and retain talents

2

LOCAL TALENT CLUB

It reflects the „customer focus“ of our approach and facilitates the direct involvement of the most important target group of the project: young talents.

3

URBAN HACKATON

It is a methodology of intense interactive events that involve local professionals from public and private sectors - and young people to jointly solve problems

4

TALENTMAGNET APP

It will have functions that on the one hand provide useful information about talents, and on the other hand are appealing and interesting for them.

FOR MORE DETAILS

CLICK THE PICTURE

WPT2 activities during the 2nd period were aimed at preparing some deliverables of the forthcoming periods within the 2.1 activity (Toolkit development). The basic tasks are the following:

D.T2.1.1 Local Talent Club

D.T2.1.2 TalentMagnet App

D.T2.1.3 Urban hackathon

The Local Talent Club is a flexible and loose community of talented young people with the purpose of strengthening their attachment to place - to the city and the local community. The Local Talent Club reflects the „customer focus“ of the TalentMagnet approach and facilitates the direct involvement of the most important target group of the project: young talents who live and work in the city, and who are from the city but study or work elsewhere. In the recent period, the draft guide for establishing the Local Talent Club was elaborated. Nyíregyháza has already organized its first Talent Club as a Pilot Talent Club. The main topic was about „What do young people think of Nyíregyháza. What should be improved to become more attractive to young people?“. This event serves as a model for other city partners.

The TalentMagnet smartphone application developed for iOS and Android will have functions that on the one hand provide useful information about talents, and on the other hand are appealing and interesting for them. EMFIE is responsible for this task, and they have created several great ideas about the application so far. During this period, an online survey was conducted among the partners to collect their ideas to the app. After this idea generation process, partners can vote on functions of the app in 3 main categories (Local identity, attachment to place; Talent exploitation; Engagement and fun). Another task was created by EMFIE to make the application more motivating, by sending motivation pages on national languages.

An innovative new tool is developed that engages talented young people to get involved in addressing pressing local challenges and identify possible solutions - thus further strengthening their links and attachment to the city, while also helping the stakeholders to better understand their specific needs and expectations. This new tool is „Urban Hackathon“. The term hackathon itself comes from the construction of two words: hacking and marathon. It is essentially an event of any duration, which originates from the tech world. The goal of a hackathon is to get together for a short, intense period of time to work on a project or to solve a specific problem. In case of the TalentMagnet project, partner cities have to organize a 12-hour Urban Hackathon - an intense interactive event that involves local professionals from public and private sector as well as young people to jointly solve problems in various thematic areas (for instance environment, climate-resilience, social inclusion, mobility, or even talent attraction and retention itself, etc.). In the recent period, the draft guide for organizing Urban Hackathon was elaborated by NYHMJV.

WHAT WE
ACHIEVED
SO FAR
JAN2021-
OCT2021

WORK PACKAGE T2
TALENTMAGNET TOOLKIT
WP LEADER: MUNICIPALITY OF NYÍREGYHÁZA
HUNGARY

The activities of the WP3 start NOW!

The Activities in T3 were presented at the first in-person TalentMagnet Transnational Meeting on 14-15 September 2021, in Nyíregyháza, Hungary. The objectives of this WP3 are to pilot and consolidate the developed TalentMagnet tools and convey specific proposals on local, national, and even transnational levels to the policymakers. The main direct target group of TalentMagnet project involves the local authorities.

The activities are the following:

- AT3.1 Delivery of Pilot Actions
- AT3.2 Assessment of Tools
- AT3.3 Preparation of Policy Proposals

Delivery of Pilot Actions: partners will experiment with talent attraction and retention solutions, good practices, and tools developed in T1 and T2. Centre for European Perspective will provide guidance and support to the pilot actions with UR, IOS and design standard documentation requirements, templates, and guidance to document all pilot actions. The role of partners will be to select the pilot territories involved at the local level; to implement TalentMagnet Tools in the pilot actions; evaluate the work; provide the feedback to other involved partners in their transnational pilot in order to promote peer learning and at the end, to ensure all the knowledge gathered from the activity is documented.

To assess the tools developed in T2, the partnership will develop the TalentMagnet templates and carry out the survey in order to get feedback from the stakeholders and talents. Each pilot partner will test the tools on the local level, evaluate the work and provide feedback to other partners involved.

To retain talents, it is important to have the framework conditions in the field of legislation, funding, etc. To improve the favourable policy environment, partners will prepare local and transnational policy proposals to the involved local governments and to the relevant ministries.

In the end, relevant organisations will sign Transnational memorandums of understanding for sustaining a new multilevel governance model.

All the main outputs of WP3 will be designed and documented to be applicable by other organisations, cities, and regions. The documentation of the pilot actions and the results of the evaluation will be available on the TalentMagnet project's website. The local authorities will implement the pilot actions, and the experiences will also be used by other local public authorities in the region.



ACHIEVEMENTS IN WPT 3

1

OBJECTIVES OF THE WP3

Piloting and consolidating developed TalentMagnet tools & conveying specific proposals on local, national, and transnational levels to the policymakers.

2

TARGET GROUP

Local authorities - pilot actions will be implemented by the local authorities by partner cities

3

ACTIVITIES

3 main activities - delivery of pilot actions, assessment of tools and preparation of policy proposals.

4

SUSTAINABILITY

Relevant organisations will sign Transnational memorandums of understanding for sustaining a new multilevel governance model.

FOR MORE DETAILS

[CLICK THE PICTURE](#)

WORK PACKAGE T3 PILOT ACTIONS AND POLICY INTEGRATION

CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE
SLOVENIA

WHAT WE
ACHIEVED
SO FAR
JULY 2021 -
OCT 2021

PARTNERS' TALENT BOOSTERS

SUCCESS STORIES OF MENTORS FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP

TALENT BOOSTER OF NYÍREGYHÁZA (HUN)

Meet Zsolt. He is a teacher, an innovator, a maker - but most of all he is a relentless local patriot continuously working on discovering and nurturing talent in Nyíregyháza. He is a master teacher at Bánki Donát Polytechnical School, where he started his career 30 years ago as mathematics-physics and IT teacher. Discovering and raising talent has always been an important mission for him: "I am the head of Bánkirobot Team - a study group focusing on robotics. I am also one of the initiators of BánkiHUB - a digital innovation ecosystem in secondary education, as well as the founder and technical leader of the Digital Community Maker Space operating at the Nyíregyháza Vocational Training Centre." His students in the past 30 years have proved their talent by winning various prestigious Hungarian and international innovation and scientific awards. I am convinced that most young people are talented in something - it is our task as teachers to recognize and nurture their talent. Bánkirobot team is widely known, has a good image and attracts ambitious kids. I believe that everyone is different, therefore the talent development approach needs to be tailored to the specific needs of the individuals.

Nyíregyháza is a liveable, quiet small town, maybe even a little too quiet sometimes - but still, it is a nice place to be a resident. While there are some talent development initiatives, their number is low and most of them work in isolation without cooperating and joining forces. As a start, we need to develop cooperation between the already existing talent development initiatives. We need to establish a coordinating body - maybe a local talent development and management association. We also need to organize various events focusing on and showcasing the results of the development and innovation work of young people.



TALENT BOOSTER OF VELENJE (SLO)

Islam Mušić is a professor at the School Center Velenje, where he teaches young people computer science. With his experience, he also helps young startups in our city and region. Developing startups is his great love, because he enjoys finding solutions.

"When I talk to people about entrepreneurship and ideas, I always try to listen behind the words they say. Because that's where the answer to their challenges lies. And most of the time, they already know the solution to their problem. I just help them find it".

He says the easiest way to get to know people and help them develop their talents or ideas is to put yourself in the role of an observer. That means you talk little and listen a lot and do not draw conclusions. And that's why many teams love working with him.

His advice to everyone is to realise that understanding is difficult, which is why most people jump to conclusions. If you are aware of this, you will find much better solutions, have less conflict with teammates, and your startup will be more successful.

Velenje is a small town and we all know each other. If we want to live in a happy city, we all need to take care of it. As Peter Drucker said so well, Culture eats strategy for breakfast. We all create the culture of the city. That's why I love working in my city, and I love hearing the success stories of my neighbors.

PARTNERS' TALENT BOOSTERS

SUCCESS STORIES OF MENTORS FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP

TALENT BOOSTER OF SZEGED (HUN)

Dr. Zoltán Pető is an associate professor at the University of Szeged and the leader of the Emergency Department in the city's Hospital. During his work, he pays special attention to detecting talents and developing them. He supports young talents in gathering experience abroad and then using what they have learnt for the benefit of their home town. His outstanding work for the development of talents is widely known and acknowledged.

As he sees it, recognizing talents is not an easy task since a lot of people have talents, yet not everyone wants it to be explored. "I look for open-minded people who are eager to learn, because talents usually want to achieve more and more, and they are always open to new challenges". When speaking about ways to exploiting talents, he mentions personal mentoring and being open to new ideas. Moreover, he encourages talents to gather experience abroad and then to use it when returning home.

Based on his opinion, "Szeged is a beautiful, open and receptive city that is full of students and creative energy, thus it's always blooming." He underlines the importance of the University of Szeged, which is the heart of the city from the aspect of talent-friendliness.



TALENT BOOSTER OF STUTTGART (GER)

Alina Afra is a teacher, consultant and mentor in Stuttgart, Germany. During the years, she was involved in many international projects, such as the MAV Volunteers' Training project which supports and qualifies volunteers to serve as mentors for migrants supporting them in their professional and social integration. Mrs. Afra was also integral part of the SMI project aimed at fostering the development of social, civic, intercultural, volunteering competences by providing representatives of both target groups with unique opportunities to integrate and reintegrate into the society. The WEMIN project, with the aim to promote the social inclusion of migrants and refugee women through comprehensive interventions addressing social, cultural, educational and professional aspects was the highlight of her work and had great impact. Mrs. Afra says: "Connecting cultures" is the philosophy I live by. I stand for diversity, tolerance, innovation, exchange and the discovery of the new talents which will help gain our society additional value."

During her career she has worked with many foreign students, migrants, and companies through various projects and interactive workshops in order to raise awareness of the importance of civic and intercultural dialogue by guiding young talents (especially women and migrants) in developing their social and volunteering skills for gaining additional career boost.

Stuttgart, as an industrial city, is a great place for young talents, says Mrs. Afra, especially in automotive and IT sectors. While working with both profit and non-profit sector, she has concluded, that Stuttgart offers a lot to young and talented migrants as well, considering it is the only city in Germany which has more foreign population than the local one.

„Creativity and talent are among the most important resources from which society, business and the economy will increasingly reap the fruits as humanity develops. In a time of such rapid changes which are happening in the 21st century, you cannot do things the way you did not thirty, but five years ago. That is why young, talented (especially women and migrants) people are a matter of survival for one system“, Mrs. Afra concludes.



PARTNERS' TALENT BOOSTERS

SUCCESS STORIES OF MENTORS FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP

TALENT BOOSTER OF ZENICA-DOBOJ CANTON (BIH)



Mirza Oruč (39) from Zenica, is an assistant professor at the Medical Faculty of the University of Zenica, in the study program Nursing, and through his work strives to discover and improve the skills and knowledge of young talents. During his professional development, he graduated and obtained his master's degree at the University of Zenica, and completed his doctoral studies at the University of Alicante, Spain. As part of his work, he actively participates in a large number of projects and extracurricular activities, such as the Tempus project CCNURCA, that have enabled a large number of our young students to gain professional experience abroad, as well as the Rugby School project and the organization of Kids Rugby Fest, within the Rugby Club Čelik, in whose activities so far several hundred boys and girls from Zenica-Doboj Canton have participated.

"Young people need to be enabled to develop individually through learning and the development of responsibility, by participating in everyday professional and social engagement.

As a student, I collaborated with mentors who encouraged me to do just that and taught me not to try to change the world, but the microenvironment around me. Our environment, not only Zenica-Doboj Canton, but the entire country, is an environment in which the exchange of ideas, information and experiences of others can be realized very quickly. Experience is something that is built over the years, through dedicated work and continuous learning, step by step. As someone who has had the opportunity to gain a lot of knowledge abroad, I certainly encourage my students to gain the same experiences during their schooling and try to apply everything they have learned in their environment in order to best develop their talent. Given the conditions we have around us, we must never forget that the best and hardest work is on ourselves, and such work must be continuously improved in order to discover what we are best at. Young people, talents, sometimes need very little support that will enable the realization of their wishes. The whole society, and especially the mentors, should support young people in discovering and developing their talents."

TALENT BOOSTER OF PTUJ (SLO)



Patricija Koler is a teacher at High school for economics, tourism and agriculture, stationed in Ptuj. For two decades she is mentoring young students on their path toward entrepreneurship. "Everyday I work with young students in high school. Working with young talents is a wonderful challenge for me!" Each year she helps young talents to establish practise firm, which is situated in local environment and focused on local challenges. They have established an excellent cooperation with other domestic and foreign practise firms. Under her mentorship practise firms have been chosen as best in the country for several years now. One of awarded practise firms are: Castle of opportunities (have a weekend in castle without smart phones), Youth touristic farm in Grajenščak (activities in nature for youth), Endepeni 1950 (touristic products about history in Ptuj), Adventurous little houses (little houses stationed on hill Panorama with thematic stays for youth), Cooperative Youth of Poetovio (offers of activities for youth). Practise firm are involving students for at least 2 years. They offer business solutions as an answer to problems or challenges that are involving youth in local environment.

"In developing and implementing practise firms I am actively involved, always seeking for possibilities to be visible in local environment and be successful at practice firm fairs, where youth from all over the world meet and exchange good practices." "Discovering the talent among young people is a two-way road. They speak, I listen! I try to comprehend their ideas, their views. Out of their ideas I help them to prepare development plans. And this is how we create opportunities for young talents!"

PARTNERS' TALENT BOOSTERS

SUCCESS STORIES OF MENTORS FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP

TALENT BOOSTER OF REGENSBURG (GER)

Regina Hellwig-Schmid is an artist, curator and cultural activist from Regensburg, Germany. During her career, she was involved in many arts projects, but also in women's rights and peace actions. For example, she initiated and organized „pax danubiana – International Art and Peace Performance” in 2000. She is the initiator of the “International Danube Conference for Art and Culture” 2001 and initiated the first “European Women's Parliament for Art” in 2009. She is founder of “donumenta” and curated and organized since 2002 regular art exhibitions in Regensburg highlighting artists from the Danube Region. She describes her job as follows: “Travelling, visiting of studios, academies, cultural institutions and NGOs, discussions with students and mid-career artists, cultural workers, and organizers of exhibitions and festivals. I am looking for a multi-disciplinary approach in film, theatre, visual art, literature etc., including the contact to institutions like the Goethe Institute, Cervantes, or Helvetia”. Interacting with policy-makers, stakeholders, media, and artists plays a major role in her profession. She encourages artists to improve their communication and networking skills for fostering their career. Regarding city development, Ms. Hellwig-Schmid emphasizes the need for cooperation with decision-makers and other authorities.

She states, “For your career, even if highly talented you need acknowledgment and support from private and official side. In my case, organizing artistic interventions in the urban space, I always needed official permissions and for my personal art performances and peace actions in the public space, it was necessary to announce and to discuss it with various city authorities.” Overall, she sees room for improvement in Regensburg city life and emphasizes the importance of cultural institutions. “I think young people in Regensburg enjoy a lot to have a variety of leisure opportunities, from cafes to discotheques. But Regensburg could be a much more modern city, it seems to be a very sleepy place in terms of contemporary art.” She argues “more cultural establishment, a visual art academy and new media are sorely missing” in the city.



TALENT BOOSTER OF VARNA (BGR)

George Angelov is a journalist and producer at the Bulgarian National Television. His programs on history and literature have influenced many young people in their career choices. He has translated more than 50 books from French and has twice won the “Knight of the Book” award.

Although, his professional commitments often took him to Sofia, he still does not leave his home city – Varna. “For me, Varna is a city that provides many opportunities for development and realization. Young people have the opportunity to study and build their future in a city that is constantly evolving and modernizing.” George Angelov holds regular meetings and talks with young people from Varna and the region, supporting young talents in their development in the cultural and creative spheres. The mentoring programme, which is conducted with his help and participation provides an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills designed for future professional development of young people.

“Communicating with young talents fills me with positive emotions and inspires me for new projects. It is a two-way process in which you provide your skills and abilities and receive in return the enthusiasm and creativity of young talented people.”



PARTNERS' TALENT BOOSTERS

SUCCESS STORIES OF MENTORS FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP

TALENT BOOSTER OF LIBEREC (CZE)

Stefan Andonovski works in μ FabLab which brings him lots of challenges in terms of crafting, designing, producing and repairing. Moreover, he acts as a mentor in various programmes and competitions within μ FabLab, such as Hackathons. These tasks are becoming part of his lifestyle. He loves building knowledge to the maximum. Stefan says that talent can be recognized if the person is mostly filled up with passion and it is making or creating something without skipping and giving up on the set up goal. This mindset plays an important role when choosing people for the μ FabLab programmes. Stefan is offering the young talents a place in his richly filled workshop so they can use any type of machine to make their ideas become reality in the form of functional prototypes. He is always ready to advise when technical obstacles show up. According to Stefan, Liberec is a welcoming, innovative and warm place for talents because of the many opportunities that the city offers. Besides that, it is a place that will enrich you with nature and clean healthy life filled with sport and outdoor activities :)



TALENT BOOSTER OF RUSE (BGR)

Ivan Kyurkchiev has been the Director of the Ruse State Opera since 2017. He comes from a musical family and started playing the violin at the age of 6. In the last year of his vocal and opera studies at the National Academy of Music in Sofia, he was selected for a two-year specialization at Milan's Teatro alla Scala. While in his second year in Italy Mr. Kyurkchiev won the 'Enrico Caruso' singing competition and was given the opportunity to live and work in the foreign country. He delivered opera performances in a number of Italian cities, as well as in Marseille, Bordeaux, Montpellier, Budapest, Prague, South America, etc. In the year 2000 Mr. Kyurkchiev founded the 'Opera by Verdi' artist management company which organizes tours for almost all Bulgarian opera houses in Europe and the United States.

"Talent is everywhere around us. The main question is: Do we notice talented people, do we value them, do we develop them? The good news is that every human being is unique and has been blessed with different abilities, talents and capabilities, both obvious and hidden. However, these are all manifested only when talent is exposed to certain accommodating conditions", claims Mr. Kyurkchiev. And goes on by saying: „How do we recognize talented young people? - We must have an eye for them. They will always exceed our expectations. Talents are consumed with and committed to what they do and make things work. Everything they deliver seems smooth and easy. Talents do not look for excuses - instead, they find ways. They are quick learners and easily adapt to new concepts and ideas, Talented people take initiative and always find time for personal development, as well as for helping others." Mr. Kyurkchiev believes that to help someone develop his/her talent, several key things are needed: (1) to give the talent a great leeway and room for expression, (2) to be able to inspire him/her (3) to appreciate what he/she does and (4) to acknowledge his/her achievements. The development of young talents in Ruse is a personal cause for Mr. Kyurkchiev. „It is our duty to retain young people in this beautiful city. Ruse Opera has always had wonderful young soloists and if we provide them with sufficient support, I am certain that Ruse would soon become a centre of opera tourism."

PARTNERS' TALENT BOOSTERS

SUCCESS STORIES OF MENTORS FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP

TALENT BOOSTER OF WEIZ (AUT)

Carina Zierer (29) from Weiz, had great successes in martial arts including a state championship title and a European championship title in kickboxing, as well as a world championship title in amateur kickboxing. She was the first Austrian to win two bronze medals at the Savate World Championships in Assaut and Combat. With the support of her coach Hrvoje Kissasondi, she founded the Fightclub 300 in Weiz. And now Carina trains and mentors many children and young people who wanted to try martial arts, who now go to training regularly and are already internationally successful. For her it is much more than just martial arts, especially at a young age, it is important to learn self-confidence, mindfulness and conflict management in addition to the physical benefits. "How I recognise a talent is by their ambition. And then working on their mental strength, working hard by training,



training and training as well as eating healthy and maintaining a healthy lifestyle will lead to success. But talents also need someone who recognises where your strengths and weaknesses lie and how you can work on them." says Carina. The Fightclubs joint projects with social institutions stand for strengthening self-esteem, more self-confidence and fun in sports. "In the beginning it was very difficult to assert ourselves and to be taken seriously, we had to knock on many doors: but the city of Weiz always had an open ear for us, and actively supported us at events and other club matters. Our successes were always appreciated and rewarded." The club's successes and the many events proved to be good publicity for the city. Recently, the first Savate World Championships in Austria were held in Weiz. Many of the foreign athletes were impressed by the event and also by the city of Weiz. It was a complete success for the association and for the tourism of the city as well. "Weiz" is now a household name for many martial arts athletes from our neighbouring countries, as many international sporting events are now held here.

TALENT BOOSTER OF UZHGOROD (UKR)

Couple Mykhailo and Iryna Godynets are founders and trainers of the Shidokan karate school in Uzhgorod. Both were Worlds Champions in this type of karate and they created their own School in Uzhgorod, Zakarpattia Shidokan Karate Federation, and even organized the World Open Shidokan Karate Championship in Uzhgorod, 2018. They are young but already inspired many younger fighters and team members. Out of nothing they created a mighty school well known not only in Uzhgorod but far beyond its borders. Among their students are many champions in different fight and age categories. "We are not looking for talents - says Iryna - first of all, we are looking for the person to have inspiration and sparkle in the eyes. We have so many highly talented youth in excellent physical condition and high potential, but without enough motivation, they are going nowhere. On the other side, you see a typical young person, who doesn't seem to be any special but has enough commitment and persistence, reaching



a much higher results and becoming champion". For Mykhailo and Iryna, it is crucial to give inspiration on their own example. "It is not enough to be only a trainer - they are telling - you need to have a possibility to spend time with your team, to talk not only about the sport and competitions but also about life and existential problems". So they are organizing camps for the wards, where they can train, play, and spend some time together. The other possibility to get closer is also during the traveling to the competition - "You need to support your team not only as a trainer, but you also need to be more for them, only this way you can achieve the best result. They really need your support and feel comfortable as team members". A couple loves Uzhgorod for many reasons, but mainly because their story started here. They also see a lot of possibilities for talents development - you can have access to many interesting additional classes in Uzhgorod. But as a Federation or Karate School, they don't receive any state support. Everything was done by their efforts and with the support of friends and team families. So we have room for improvement.

PARTNERS' TALENT BOOSTERS

SUCCESS STORIES OF MENTORS FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP

TALENT BOOSTER OF HARGHITA COUNTY (ROU)

Fodor Csanád - He is one of the best professional hockey players in the country. Csanád was born on 16th of November 1990 in Miercurea Ciuc, he is a Romanian hockey player who has been playing for SC Miercurea Ciuc since 2017. He was quickly recognised as talented due to his results. He became the first Romanian champion in 2014 and took second place in the MOL league. In 2015, he won the Romanian Hockey Cup with the club, and in 2017, he won the championship again. Csanád, although left his hometown, Miercurea Ciuc at a young age in order to capitalize his knowledge, but he still considered important to pass on the acquired knowledge at home, so he is currently playing in the team of his home town, Miercurea Ciuc. He is very active, he participates in community life, he also is mentoring junior hockey players, because he has an ability as a talent to see the talent in youngsters before others see it and find not just the best player on the junior team, but also the best role for each player.

In short, great talents can also be great talent agents. Csanád is a very open minded person, according to him the most important aspect in stopping the brain drain in our region is to boost diversity and creativity. About the exploitation of talent he said: "The environment often plays a significant role in this issue. A teacher, a parent or someone who has seen the aptitudes and talents of the child or young person can start focusing on enrichment and talent development. In hockey if a child shows any aptitudes, he or she will soon be put in an environment that is enriching -an advanced team, and they will move up at the pace of their knowledge, always challenging him. Talent development helps people exploit their potential. We need to focus on giving them a chance to do their best." We need to acknowledge that the needs of the talents are different. As Csanád mentioned, there is a well-established science of talent management, but unless you know how to apply it, this science is useless. And the most important part of this process is to never stop thinking about youngsters and talents. Csanád is a very direct person, young people can turn to him for advice, either in sports, endurance and work. He is a team player and a mentor who has been learning, fighting and playing with passion since he was a child, he shares this experience with others with a good heart.



TALENT BOOSTER OF APATIN (SRB)



Ivica Jurišin is a profesor of Geopgraphy and Tourism at high Technical school with dormitory in Apatin and Economic school in Sombor, city nearby. For a long time he works with children all the time trying to give them good support and wind in the back with their ideas and building them selfconfidence. "I motivate students by encouraging them to do extra effort and constantly following they development and progress and providing them feedback. The truth is, working with young talents upgrade me and my thinking as well. We learn from each other mutually."

All his working time he'd spent treating all the children equally and giving get them the same attention. He is motivating them by practice, advices, he speak to them about his travelling and working experiences. During the lectures and generally after working with them, he notice the students who simply stand out of the crowd. Those are the one who are always hunger of more knowledge, and always give 101% of themselves.

For Apatin he says that it is a beat of his heart. He thinks that, although not big, Apatin has considerable potential for the development of young people and their talents. He believes that the local self-government also provides great support to young people, which greatly facilitates the achievement of set goals and progress in further work.

„I invite them to stand out in every field, and when they do, I find it extremely useful and that makes me really proud! Everything makes sense at the end.“

PARTNERS' TALENT BOOSTERS

SUCCESS STORIES OF MENTORS FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP

TALENT BOOSTER OF LEOBEN (AUT)

Martha Mühlburger is the vice director of the Montanuniversity of Leoben and managing director of WPO-material cluster. She started her career at Ferrostaal in Essen, Germany and studied material science at the Montanuniversity of Leoben. After her study she worked for various big players in Germany and Austria before she became the managing director of the start-up center ZAT in Leoben. There she coaches and supports founders with technology-oriented business ideas since 1999. When asked how she recognizes talent in relation to the founders in the start-up center, she says „There is a wide range of potential founders - some come up with just an idea, others already have a finished functional prototype at hand. We proceed accordingly on an individual basis. Basically, we try to bring every idea to a certain level of maturity together with the potential founder. We put every project on the vibrating bench - with a team of experts who look at the concept from different perspectives. Only then do we go into implementation and inclusion in the ZAT can take place.“ The success factors for founding are different, but one thing is clear for her „If the entrepreneurial spirit of the founder does not fit, you cannot make anything out of the best product.“

To make Leoben more talent/founder-friendly, she explained that from the university's point of view, as a talent factory, she would like to see more continuity on this topic - more sustainability in the programs that are carried out with high quality standards over the long term. And she would like the universities to be encouraged by the ministries to take even more initiatives in the field of entrepreneurship, but that this will then also be appropriately anchored and paid for. Because entrepreneurship has long been a constant topic and an essential element in the innovation system.

TALENT BOOSTER OF VARAZDIN (CRO)

Davor Matačić is an accomplished principal of the Varaždin School of Music. He is also an educated and accomplished musician who performed in some of the most famous Croatian and European venues of classical music. Since 2002 he is involved in the work of the Varaždin School of music where he mentored numerous talents in developing their musical skills. Since becoming the principal of the school, his work involves not only work on developing talents, but coordinating all efforts the school makes to provide their students not only first-rate musical education, but access to quality general education as well.

The challenges he faces as an educational worker and mentor of talents is ensuring the conditions for his talents to have everything needed for personal and professional development in Varaždin so as not to lose them to bigger cities or other European countries. As he himself states - „This is a challenge that can't be accomplished with every talent as there will always be bigger cities and opportunities and some talents need to explore the world to reach their potentials, but we try to provide awareness of their home town and advantages it provides or could provide, so that talents can return one day as fully formed, successful individuals and work in mentoring new talents themselves. “

He also added that he is happy that all local administrations during his tenure as principal showed understanding and interest in developing the School of Music and making it possible for them to retain and attract young musical talents. He notes that branding Varaždin as a city of music and musical events will certainly help in talent attraction.

TALENT BOOSTER OF ZILINA (SVK)

Prof. Milan Gregor is innovation leader and co-founder of the CEIT (Central European Technology Institute)- university spin-off that grew into a major innovative player in the engineering industry within Central Europe. He achieved multiple awards, patents and he keeps supporting innovation in the companies of the region. International experience was a key to his success and inspired him to develop the academia-business model in Žilina. He is also a teacher at a local university and mentor to young people.

Professor Gregor claims that: “Young talented people are the source of innovation, which is a key driver in regional development.” It is important to focus R&D and innovation, not just direct investments - R&D develops the region. From the regional perspective it is a key to create a motivational environment that supports young talents and implementation of their ideas. These talents are often recognised during their studies at local university and environment that will keep them in Žilina should be created. He created company CEIT to commercialise results of the research from the university. They were able to keep the most talented students in the region by offering them a job with adequate salary, growth and excellent working conditions, which is the key condition for talent retention and attraction.

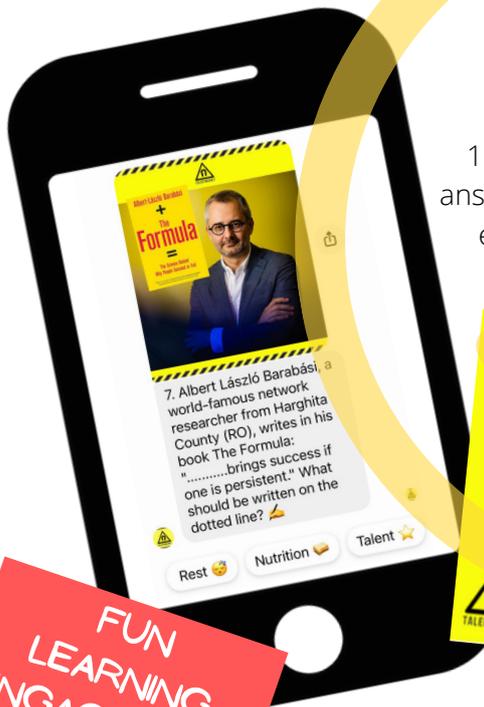
Young people are searching for quality infrastructure, affordable housing, culture, sport and nature - Žilina can offer these attributes. City should use its business ecosystem and support young innovative entrepreneurs that can develop high added value business. Žilina is opening up and transforming to more talent friendly city.

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