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The Urban Lab of Europe !

The Mares de Madrid Project Journal N° 5

Project led by the City of Madrid



**JOBS & SKILLS
IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY**



The MARES DE MADRID initiative

The 2008 economic crisis has produced relevant and lasting impacts in Madrid. Social polarisation and spatial segregation dynamics have escalated, further strengthening the income divide between the north and the south/ southeast. The MARES DE MADRID initiative aims at promoting new urban-based social and solidarity economies able to effectively contribute to the fight against structural unemployment.

A comprehensive approach of actions is being deployed, based on four pillars:

- Activating recovery processes, prototyping and co-designing of decommissioned public spaces.
- Launching skills labs able to involve individuals, neighbourhoods and the civil society.
- Fostering territorial economic innovation processes through social economy formulas and improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the existing productive assets in the city.
- Encouraging the articulation of locally-based productive ecosystems allowing able to increase employment and employability at the local level.

The initiative involves four city districts, Centro, Villaverde, Vallecas and Vicálvaro, through the opening of four spaces called M.A.R.E.S. Every MAR will be specialised: M (mobility), A (food), R (recycling), E (energy) and S (social and care economy, shared by the four MAR). The MAR support new economic activity and the creation of stable jobs by deploying business models, principles and values of the social and solidarity economy. Furthermore, by recovering abandoned or disused public assets and making them available for the creation of new productive initiatives Mares de Madrid contributes also to the regeneration of neighbourhoods.

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Partnership:

- Ayuntamiento de Madrid
- Agencia para el Empleo de Madrid (AE) - Public Agency
- DINAMIA S. COOP. MAD (DN) - Private Company
- Grupo Cooperativo Tangente (TNG) - Private Company
- SIC ARQUITECTURA Y URBANISMO SLP (SIC) - Private Company
- Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas (VIC) - NGO
- Todo por la Praxis (TxP) - NGO
- Fundación Acción contra el Hambre (ACH) - NGO
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mares de Madrid initiative has now ended and such end happens in the context of a difficult and challenging local political transition. As a new administration takes over the government of the city, the future of the policy is yet to be settled. The four Mar will no more managed by the initiative's partners and the many economic projects that have been developed will no more be supported by the many services it provided. It is therefore a challenging and transitional moment for a project that, as we have seen across the issues of this journal, has shown high ambitions and an equally high level of complexity in its operations.

In this fifth issue of the journal we intend to give the sense of and to offer insights into:

- the overall quantitative dimensions - the number of projects and their distribution based on their legal identity, the number of learning communities and events generated by them, etc - of the results of the different lines of work advanced by the project now that we can consider these dimensions as the final-ones (section 2);
- the complex relational dynamic between the territorial and sectoral focus of the project by looking at some key lines of work aiming at rooting the five Mar at the local level and at generating wider “ecosystems” at the urban level (section 3);
- the workings of a specific and especially challenging area of the initiative, that of “care”, that has been focusing on supporting new and innovative forms of organisation and provision of services in critical areas such as child education, home support.

2. THE PROJECT THROUGH NUMBERS (AT ITS VERY FINAL STAGE)

The Mares de Madrid initiative has officially closed in November 2019. It is therefore time for final balances and for its eventual transformation in a steady, consolidated policy within the operations of the city of Madrid. As we have learnt throughout its entire journey - and hopefully also through these very journals - Mares de Madrid has been a very complex, multidimensional operation organized around a variety of organisations and lines of work. This complexity is very relational in its own way, and the project can be fully understood - in its ambition, as well as in its innovative approach - only when looking at how different components and lines of work closely interacted at the level of the single Mar or at the level of the single economic project supported by the programme. And the numbers that I'm about to share - numbers that at this point are final - need to be put in this perspective, not as numbers that show the development of insular, syloed lines of work but as numers representing the different, integrated dimensions of the same program.

Starting with the more important indicator, i.e the number of economic projects that have travelled through Mares' operations, we are talking of a total of **332** entities that have received variable forms of support, **91** that have been fully incubated in one of the spaces and **48** that have been formally founded. Considering the social and solidarity economy focus of the initiatives, it is interesting to look at the different legal profile

of these new entities. Work cooperatives (**14**) and associations (**14**) have the largest share, followed by **9** insertion cooperatives, **5** service cooperatives, **3** labour cooperative and consumption cooperative each. These numbers give the sense on one side of how, within the social and solidarity economy, the legal identity and organizational profile of economic projects consistently variate - it is important to underline, for example, the role of associations - while on the other they give the sense of how besides the number of formalized entities there is a pipeline of economic projects that may become formal entities if effectively supported. Behind these final results there are, as we may remember, **2** spaces - the mar of Energy and of Food - that have been opened in their final design and 2 more - the *Mar of Recycling* and that of *Mobility* - that have opened in a provisional form (that of Mobility will be inaugurated at the end of the project). In these spaces, although not uniquely in these spaces, **770** events have been organised with roughly **13.300** participants. Many of these events belonged to one of the lines of work that we have come to know throughout the journals: from the laboratorios de competencias ciudadanas at the very beginnings of the process to the many events related to the workings of the **43** learning communities (comunidades de aprendizaje) that have been activated in the five sectors and also across the sectors; from the events related to the networking and coalition-

building activities promoted by the economic dynamization team that have involved **250** local actors in the four districts and beyond establishing **140** grounded collaborations to the many events related to the **54** transversal training activities aimed at supporting the economic projects. Looking at this numbers from a spatial and sectoral perspective we can learn relevant and interesting things,

The areas where there have been the results in terms of involving local actors have been the neighborhoods of Puente de Vallecas (**44**) and Centro (**43**) while in Villaverde and Vivalcaro figures have been lower, respectively at **30** and **27**. The numbers of incubated companies naturally diverge as the sectorial role played by each single Mar - sectorial in the sense of them being responsible of the development of an individual ecosystem in the five areas - led them to play a larger urban role that at times may have

been more important than the local role they played. Of the **332** economic projects that have been supported, **115** belonged to the area of food, **91** to the area of care, **40** to mobility, **38** recycling, **27** energy and **21** to more than one sector. Crossing these figures we can see that, for example, the Mar de Centro has had very high figures in terms of territorial collaborations - likely depending on the very organized social networks in this very dense neighborhoods - and lower numbers in terms of economic projects depending on the highest capital and knowledge intensity of the sector -while the Mar of Food conversely has had higher figures in terms of economic entities incubated. These figures contribute once more to illuminate one of the key critical dimensions of the project, the difficult equilibrium between its spatial and territorial dimension on side and its sectoral dimension on the other.



3. LOCAL ROOTS OR URBAN SPECIALISATION: THE FINAL DILEMMAS OF MARES

One of the key legacies of Mares de Madrid is the creation of a new kind of space - the four *Mar* - that combine and hybridize functions that were traditionally separated. But also the creation of other spaces, more specifically productive and production-related spaces - whose need has become evident while the economic projects were developing. Good examples of this trend are the *fab-labs* and the spaces related to the cyclo-logistics that opened in the last two years and that were discussed in previous issues of this journal.

But, as we know, Mares operations went well beyond the support of these *places* and dealt extensively with the wider *space* in which economic projects have built their own markets, relationship with other actors and development strategies.

In this perspective, one of the most critical key lines of work of Mares has been that of so-called “dynamization”. Along this line, an impressive amount of events - roughly 770 - have been organised since the beginning of the programme’s operations. In the first phase, the goal was to position the new spaces in the city by making them a point of reference for the development of their respective sectors. Later on, with projects emerging and consolidating, the effort has been more and more to involve the economic projects themselves in the programming of events that had to be aimed at supporting their own development.

As expected, the four *Mar* variably succeeded in this task, mostly due to a set of constraints ranging from their location to the degree of maturity of the respective economic sectors. In some areas - those of food and mobility, for example - the level of attention on the topic and of mobilization in the creation of grassroots economic projects had been very high since the crisis. In these areas *Mares de Madrid* acted in many ways as an avenue for the consolidation, formalisation and further developing of existing actors and their relations showing a high degree of “publicness”, in the sense of being able to generate many public events while in others the lower degree of maturity of both the interest and the maturity of the sector has also limited its ability to be as “public”.

Events - produced by the *Mar*, the projects themselves, the specific services or the Learning Communities - also became a way to strengthen the formation of ecosystems, i.e. the networks of actors that at different scales and with different roles participate to the production and consumption of certain products and services. And the variety of the legal profile - well beyond traditional social economy profiles - has shown to be a very important sign of success on this line, not differently from one other important trend in this area: a push of certain projects and entities to create new, higher level entities among themselves, a trend that we have discussed also in previous issues of this journal.

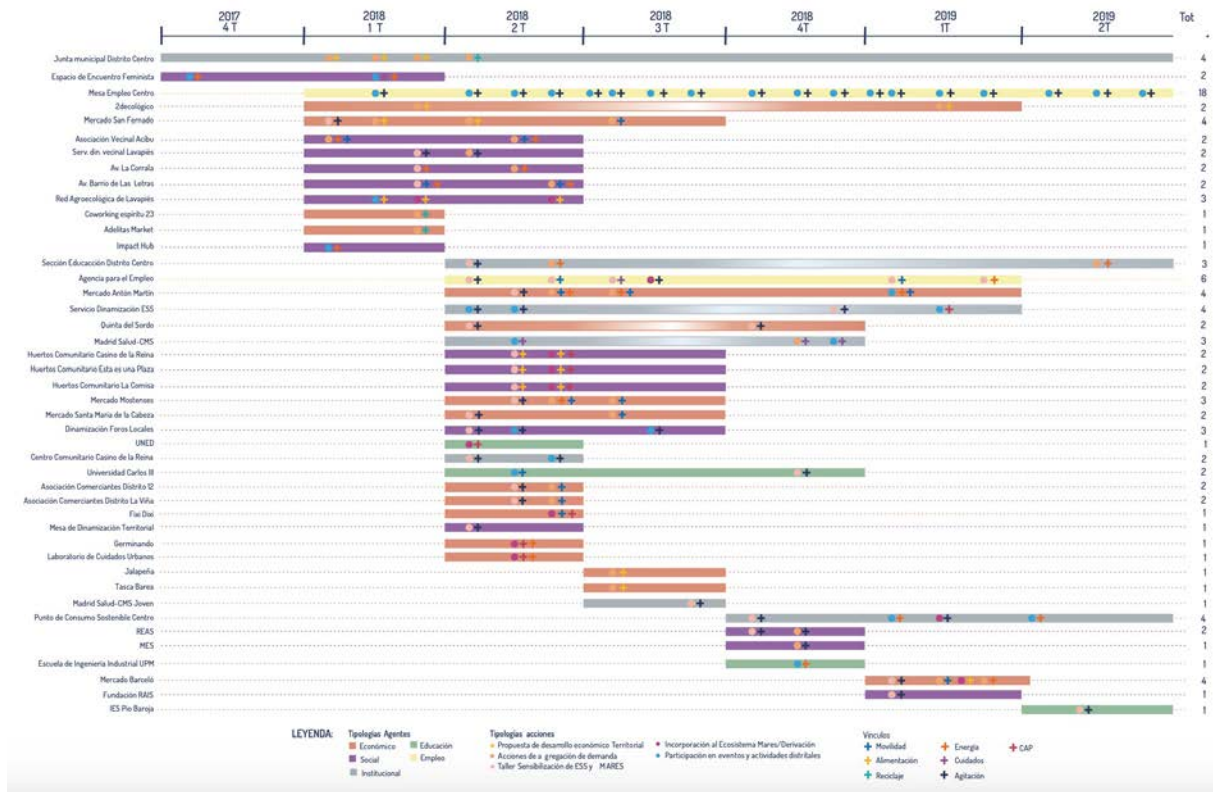
If the results in terms of sectoral specialization and city-wide generation of ecosystems have been strong, the complex relationship between the territories of reference - the four neighborhoods in which the Mar are located - and the dynamic of the economic projects has proved to be way more challenging. If the four Mar have succeeded in becoming strategic points of reference for the economic sectors and the implied communities of practice at the regional if not the national level, their ability to act also as neighborhood level actors appears to be more uneven. Most economic projects do not proceed from the neighborhoods involved and also the kinds of job profiles they offer do not closely resemble the professional profiles that are most likely to be present there. One response to this challenge was the investment on training as this dimension, this is the opinion of several project partners, should probably have been stronger since the beginnings of the project. In some cases - it is the case the A3Calles project that is discussed more extensively below - formal training has in fact been key in developing and certifying the workforce. Accordingly, with the time passing, the program has invested more in building collaborations and connections with one of the partners of the project, the Agencia para el Empleo (Employment Agency), and with centers

for vocational training while at the same time working of the innovative training approach represented by the learning communities.

In a sense, what has been detected is a sort of trade-off between innovation and territorialisation, as the fact that leaders of most projects were coming from social groups very high in cultural capital has insured a high level of innovation but has had troubles in rooting the projects in local contexts that, although in variable dimensions, were characterised by lower professional profiles.

Given these limitations, most of the activities of the line of work focusing on developing the relationships between the Mar and their neighborhoods - the line of so-called “territorial agitation” - have been focusing on sensibilizing the local contexts to the issues and themes of the program. And, as soon economic projects reached some maturity, the focus moved towards the potential role of these local actors as potential acquirers of their services and product generated. Neighborhood groups, markets, schools, restaurants have been among the typical local actors that have been targeted in this sense with the idea of creating situations and opportunities of encounter at the local level.

DIAGRAMA DE PROCESOS DEL DISTRITO CENTRO



4. THE GREATEST CHALLENGE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY IN THE AREA OF CARE

The national and local context

The area of Care was one of Mares de Madrid's area of intervention with the most ambitious transformational potential and with a decisively spatially transversal nature. The main goals of Mares in the area were on the one hand to apply gender and feminist approaches throughout the operations of the entire programme while on the other to promote in the four intervention districts the creation of new economic initiatives able to generate decent and quality employment in an area of the labour market where informality and exploitation are particularly entrenched.

When looking at some of the data regarding the status of this economic sector the strategic, transformational character of the goal becomes fully clear both in terms of the expansion of the demand of these services and of the current work and social conditions of this highly gendered industry. According to the population projection statistics of the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE), the dependency rate, which reflects the percentage of the population under 16 or over 64, in relation to the population aged 16 to 64, will rise from 53.5% to 62.2% in 2031. Always according to INE, women give 4h4m of their time to domestic and family tasks, 2h15 minutes more than what men give. This unbalance becomes particularly dramatic in households

with children, where on average women spend double the time - 4 hours and 37 minutes - men spend - 2 hours 34 minutes - taking care of family needs. This divide is so dramatic to clearly undermine the participation of women to the labour market as in 2015 27.6% of women aged 25 to 54 employed with one child who worked were on a part-time schedule as compared to 5.8% of men. Not surprisingly, in that same year, the main reason alleged by women to work part-time was the lack of affordable and adequate services for the care of children (53.3%), while 70.5% of men claimed other reasons.

The gender character of this economy is confirmed also when we look at what happens when these needs are taken care by acquiring services on the market. Always INE suggests that at least 10.2% of households with an elderly person have hired somebody to take care of her/him. And among the ones hired, the portion of women is clearly overwhelming: in 2017, the 90% of the 600.000 employed in this sector are women. On top of this, another dimension - that of nationality - shows the multi-facet condition of vulnerability to which these workers are exposed. On one side, native women are mostly concentrated in the older demographic cohorts and are normally associated to low formal qualifications, while on the other immigrant employees are mostly concentrated between the

ages of 30 and 39 and have on average a higher qualification. These trends clearly point to a future in which care workers will be more coming from an immigrant background and having a higher qualification.

The economic crisis has had a relevant impact on these dynamics, by destroying informal jobs that by definition are more sensitive to economic slumps - in 2015 roughly 31% of all workers in the sector were informal - and in other cases by reducing hours given the growing impossibility of families to cope with a full-time salary. At the same time, efforts to regularize workers have somehow contributed to the decline of working hours as families have had to face the payment of social security dues while keeping the same purchasing power they had before regularization.

Faced with these challenges, *Mares de Madrid* aimed to affirm on one side the universality and social meaning of the work of care - making it visible, and making visible especially the decisively gendered character of this work - by also claiming its nature of satisfaction of social right that should be protected and enhanced by the state. And on the other, considering that one key factor of precarization and informalization of this work is the highly individual nature of the job relations -. to support form of collective organization of both givers and recipients of care built around the forms of the social and solidarity economy.

Workers and consumption cooperatives, labor societies, insertion companies, professional associations can improve the conditions and the qualities of services by pooling services, having a more effective relationship with the social security and other state agencies, investing in training.

The strategy

The design of the Mares strategy in the area of care presented some peculiar challenges as compared to the strategies of the other four areas. The first one was the fact that differently from the others, this area did not have one specific space to refer to, but it had to be active in all four spaces. Not just by implementing the sectoral strategy but also by insuring that all four spaces were “care spaces, free of sexist violence, in which an inclusive and non-sexist language is used in signaling, where symbolic barriers are avoided” (Mares de Madrid, 2019). A second challenge was that it had to deal, as we have seen, with social groups that are especially vulnerable and subject to exploitation and precarization practices more than the other four areas, where quite often the economic projects involved more socially articulated groups with a significant presence of the new urban middle classes. The third challenge is that it had to work with an economic sector that in large part it already existed - that of home care and services - with the aim of surely bringing quality and innovation but also dignification and protection of essential human and social rights.

Assuming these challenges, the design of the strategy moved from an in-depth analysis of the emerging needs of care and the available response - public, private and community-led at the local level - with specific reports on the four neighborhoods covered by the initiative. Based on these analyses, three priority areas of intervention were identified: domestic workers and home care; parenting, childhood and adolescence; biopsychosocial health; empowerment of women.

Considering the breadth of these issues, we do not have the space here to cover all the dimensions of the strategy and of its implementation. To give some insights, before discussing one concrete example of the new economic projects developed under the umbrella of the Mar of Care, we can present what happened in an area of particular relevance and innovation, that of parenting support initiatives.

In this area the focus has been in particular on the development of so-called “groups of shared child-care” (“groups of crianza compartida”, GCC). A GCC is a group of families that mutually self-organise to respond to the care needs of their children. Such groups are based on some overarching characteristics such as the sharing of a space where the activity is implemented, the collective property of the activity, a governance model built around the idea of self-management with all participants participating to decisions, a very close and collaborative relationship between the families and the workers and the proposal of innovative and progressive pedagogical models and styles.

The set-up of GCCs has responded to several challenges and changing structural conditions in cities. One is the lack of available places in public child-care centers - as for example in the Centro district, there are 2700 kids between 0-3 and only 324 places available - a situation that also tends to create a certain social homogeneity as there are few places and they are mostly given to families that are most in needs. Another is the growing dissatisfaction among certain social groups with the traditional education models that are offered at public institutions. Besides these challenges, also other key dimensions are important in the development, in Madrid and in other places in Spain, of “spaces of shared child-care”. The rearticulation of family structures and

child-rearing habits towards the idea of the “tribe”, i.e. networks of people who take care of kids beyond the traditional family is one of them. But also the growing need of a more flexible and collaborative organisation of these services, as the balance and time setting of work-family balances have been dramatically changing in recent years, again especially for certain social groups (professionals, independent workers). GCC intend to respond to these needs and challenges by favoring mutualism among families, strengthening the relationships among them and by rooting child-care services in localised networks so as to balance the dispersion of urban life.

The development of a successful learning community focusing on “Early Childhood Education and Shared Parenting” has been critical in the development of projects in this area, as it has both worked as a device to attract people potentially interested in setting-up new groups and as a way to structure models to implement them. Mares, also thanks to a handbook developed by the learning community has structured a organised path to support the formation of new GCCs. The path identifies a first phase in which an initial conceptualisation of the initiative by a small number of families takes place (5), a second in which the group can access the forms of support insured by Mares and insure the inclusion of some more families (up to 10) and a final phase in which the projects can be finalised with the full support of the specific services. In this phase, Mares supported the projects in particular by offering training and mentoring in four main areas: the legal identity of the new entity, its economic sustainability, the pedagogic model offered, the community management model. These four areas pose multiple challenges that have to be deeply explored as to check the sustainability of every

single project: renting a space may be very expensive and there may therefore be the need to sub-rent it to other activities part of the time, depending on the kind of activity and its public or private nature a whole range of regulations should be complied to, the nature of the organisation as an association or as a consumption cooperative may present many other different challenges and so on.

During the Mares operations support to many new GCC projects has been offered. Supported entities include the *Farfala* parenting group, *La casita de la Dehesa* forest school project, and the *4semillas* cooperative aimed at starting up a parenting space, the Impronta group that has been turned into a cooperative, and Arbol de la Cueva that won a public bid for the management of a public school for the next four years with the support of the specific services of Mares de Madrid.

The experience made with these entity has also been critical to identify some common challenges in the set-up of GCC, especially the challenge of finding in urban dense and extremely pricy environments spaces that are both of enough quality and economically accessible for cooperative projects that can live out of members contributions and of a limited range of paid offerings for non-members.



A good example of implementation: the cooperative As3CALLES

Among the most relevant economic projects incubated within the Mar of Care, A3Calles is a consumption cooperative managed *by* and *for* families of the working-class neighborhood of Vallecas and focusing on a range of home services, from cleaning to support to dependent individuals with the aim to expand the service in the future also to dependents with functional diversity. The project moved from the evidences gathered in the context of the needs' territorial analysis carried out from the Mar in collaboration with an already existing cooperative, Abierto Hasta el Amanecer on the needs to dignify the working conditions related to care in the districts of Vallecas and the organizational experience of cooperatives of home services. In the Madrid's context, as we have seen, to dignify this work dealt in particular with objective of making it emerge from the shadow economy insuring

a better integration of the worker also within social security systems and higher salaries.

To achieve this goal, it was necessary to propose a different business model in which a close solidarist relationship between workers and recipient of services was to be built. This is why the legal form to be chosen since the beginning has been that of the consumer cooperative as the idea was “approaching the social and solidarity economy with the aim of making visible excluded and underpaid groups” (Mares, 2019). This legal form allowed a “community care” management model, in which the participation of families, users and working people was central while allowing also a more equitable and structured model of relationship with public institution as possible buyers of services. This model, however, also allows the active participation of workers as they are member of the cooperative as well, creating a governance in which all parts are involved on an equitable footings so as to embody the principle of a community, solidaristic, workers-recipients centered model of service provision.

The local character of the cooperative is strategic in this perspective. Not only because of the local pride in Vallecas’ cooperative legacy as the area saw the first cooperative founded in Spain and because the neighborhood scale has been the key dimension of analysis. But also because localising the market it is possible to establish deeply embedded social relationships between recipients and providers while improving the quality of the services lowering transportation costs that can be very high when workers have to travel from one end to another of the city if not even the metropolitan area. The set-up of relationships of collaboration with other local actors has been very important as well, as many general doctors - who are strongly rooted in the

local community - have for example supported the development of the cooperatives, while also local social services providers have been important in this sense. However, no formal relationships - in the form of a procurement contract - have been established with the District as the main institutional actor who has been really engaged with *A3calles* is the the Employment Agency that has planned a training programme aimed at supporting the cooperative’s workers. It is important to underline that the cooperative’s promoters advocate for a strong public engagement as they frame care for children and dependent individuals as a social right that should see a way larger fiscal and policy engagement from the state.

But let’s look now at the numbers and prices of *A3Calles*. As of now the cooperative is formed by one member who works full time, two members who work part time for 18 families that are members of the cooperative as long as three more cooperatives that employ other workers. The large majority - up to 95% - of all workers involved are women above 45 years old and many among them come from Latin America. Some of these workers work part-time in the underground economy and the expansion of the demand intercepted by the cooperative is a concrete way to have these workers to completely leave the shadow economy.

One key challenge of the project is equalise prices across different groups of workers. In the mainstream economy of care - that is hegemonized by traditional, large capitalistic companies - the price of cleaning is higher than that of care. *A3calles* has instead set the price of both services at 12 euros per hour, a decisive but for the latter that in the shadow economy can be paid as low as 7 euros while cleaning can be paid roughly 10 euros.

Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020.

UIA projects will produce a wealth of knowledge stemming from the implementation of the innovative solutions for sustainable urban development that are of interest for city practitioners and stakeholders across the EU. This journal is a paper written by a UIA Expert that captures and disseminates the lessons learnt from the project implementation and the good practices identified. The journals will be structured around the main challenges of implementation identified and faced at local level by UIA projects. They will be published on a regular basis on the UIA website.



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