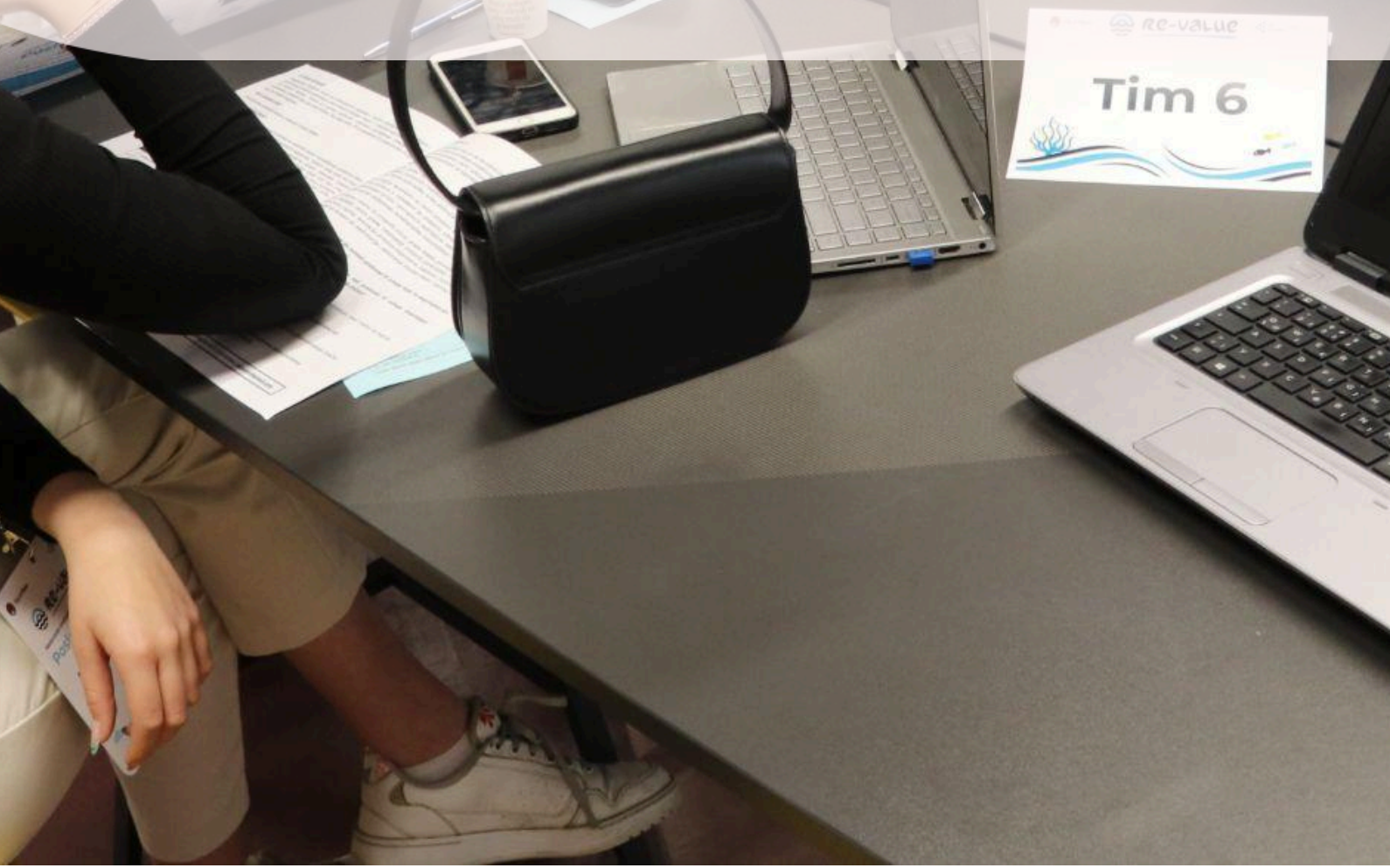
Re-Value

Re-Value Innovation Camps Report 2

Re-Value Deliverable D8.5

Upskilling and Capacity Building with Youth through Innovation Camps



Report Information

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Authors: Emma Kiraly (Junior Achievement Europe)

Report contributors: JA country coordinators, Arianna Orlando (ICLEI Europe), Lies Debbaut (Stad Brugge), Roberta Pasini (Municipality of Rimini), Municipality of Ålesund, Burgas Municipality, Cacais Ambiente, Constanța, İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Písek Municipality, City of Rijeka, Annemie Wyckmans, Dirk Ahlers, Anne Sunniva Bratsberg Nygren (NTNU)

Task contributors: NTNU – Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Municipality of Ålesund, City of Bruges (Stad Brugge), Burgas Municipality, Municipality of Rimini, Cascais Ambiente, ADI-ZMC, İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Písek Municipality, City of Rijeka, ICLEI Europe, VITO, Alma Mater Studiorum-Università di Bologna, LNEG, IZTECH, University of Nova Gorica, IFLA Europe, Sørsida, Augment City, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", JA Europe (with JA country coordinators), Municipality of Constanța, Ecoten, Teatret Vårt, Sladovna Písek

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Executive Summary

JA Europe, together with all 9 Re-Value cities, is implementing yearly Innovation Camps in each city to specifically target youth, teachers and, potentially, parents. The goal is to build awareness and skills to shape local planning and design, and more broadly climate neutrality processes. Moreover, the Innovation Camps aim to promote active citizenship while addressing systemic challenges associated within the waterfront cities (Ålesund, Bruges, Burgas, Rimini, Cascais, Constanța, İzmir, Písek, Rijeka, Rimini).

Participants in the Innovation Camps engage in structured workshops and interactive activities, designed to increase their understanding of environmental complexities in Waterfront Cities and enhance creativity and problem-solving skills in the context of climate mitigation. The program cultivates innovative thinking and collaboration, providing immersive experiences that bridge theoretical knowledge with practical applications.

The camps are aligned with city-specific roadmaps to maximise their relevance to local climate neutrality objectives. Feedback mechanisms, including surveys and focus groups, are employed after each event to assess outcomes and refine approaches, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with project goals.

In each Re-Value city, Junior Achievement is collaborating with local stakeholders to identify concrete opportunities for enhancing the local environment with higher quality and lower GHG emissions. Re-Value is activating local ecosystems to promote co-creation among the next generation of citizens and professionals, particularly targeting pupils and adolescents.

The Innovation Camps are planned in three rounds in each city, from M3 (March 2023) until M48 (December 2026), followed by one closing European event. Innovation Camps are organised per year in line with the cities' roadmaps to ensure the highest value of input to the Re-Value project.

This report outlines the methodology and components for organizing the Innovation Camps and highlights the results and outcomes of the first 2 rounds of the implementation.

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1 Challenge-based Learning, Active Citizenship

An Innovation Camp is a structured, immersive educational program that empowers secondary school students to develop innovative thinking, critical problem-solving skills, and collaborative competencies. Grounded in a challenge-based project learning framework, the Innovation Camp employs a learner-centered approach that emphasizes skills and competence development through real-world problem-solving. As a pedagogical tool, Innovation Camps promote creativity and adaptability, equipping young learners with the skills necessary to navigate and address multifaceted issues in a rapidly evolving world. This methodology emphasises experiential learning and co-creation, enabling students to connect theoretical knowledge to practical applications while actively exploring innovative ideas.

By integrating hands-on activities, interactive workshops, and mentorship opportunities, Innovation Camps[1] encourage an active learning environment where students of all ages can openly explore new ideas to help solve big problems. The Junior Achievement Network has long-standing expertise delivering Innovation Camps[2] to address different business challenges.

Within the Re-Value project, the Junior Achievement Network's established Innovation Camp approach is adapted to focus on topics such as local climate mitigation and adaptation challenges. Delivered in collaboration with municipal stakeholders across nine cities, the Innovation Camps actively involve students in addressing systemic environmental and societal challenges, cultivating their sense of agency and inclusion in local decision-making processes.

By utilizing a challenge-based project learning approach, the Re-Value Innovation Camps align with learner-centered educational practices, empowering students to develop competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, and innovation. These camps promote active citizenship and bring often-underrepresented voices to the forefront, ensuring diverse perspectives contribute to sustainable community solutions.

The below report is building-up on the previously prepared Innovation Camps Report 1 (D8.3).[3]

1.1 Methodology

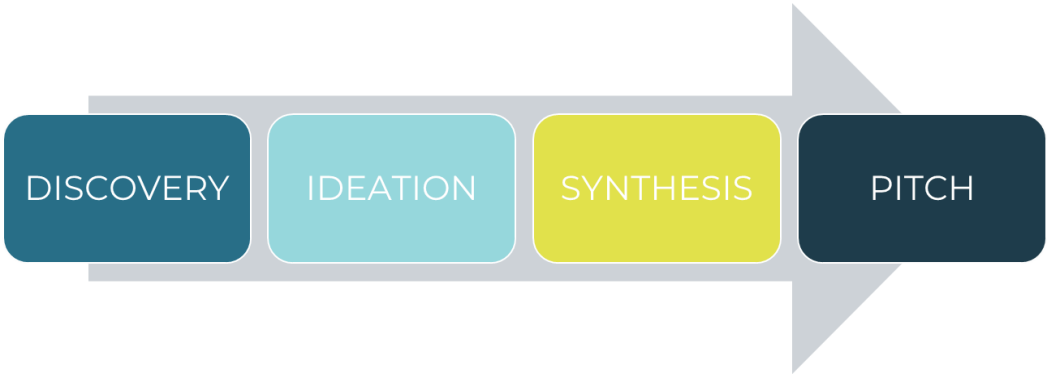
Innovation Camps are an intensive creative learning experience focusing on problem-solving over a short period of time (contact hours between 8 - 12). They are based on the existing format of JAE (Junior Achievement Europe) and described in internal guidance documents and ebooks, with a summary below. The focus areas of each Innovation Camp are based on a real contemporary challenge.

The flow of the activities curriculum is carefully crafted to provide a comprehensive learning experience in a team setting. It comprises a variety of interactive activities workshops, discussions, and project-based tasks activities. The group activities Workshops may include sessions on design thinking, ideation techniques, prototyping, and presentation skills. The activities are designed to stimulate creativity, promote critical

[1] https://www.jaworldwide.org/experiences
[2] https://www.eitdeeptechtalent.eu/courses/junior-achievement-innovation-camp/
[3] https://re-value-cities.eu/documents/innovation-camps-report

thinking, and enhance problem-solving abilities, while also addressing specific learning outcomes aligned with the camp's theme.

Throughout the camp, students actively participate in a range of workshops and activities that encourage exploration and hands-on learning. For instance, students might engage in brainstorming sessions where they generate and refine innovative ideas related to the theme. They could also partake in design challenges, where they collaborate in teams to prototype solutions and present their concepts. These interactive activities promote teamwork, communication, and adaptability while nurturing their creativity and problem-solving skills. Students go through four stages of learning and after pitching the potential business solution in a competition set-up, a winning team receives a recognition, award and a potential learning continuation to further develop the business idea.



1.2 Innovation Camps in Re-Value

Junior Achievement Europe is using a project-based learning experience[4] to connect not only local decision making processes with young people but also challenge the younger generation to come-up with solutions on climate issues defined by local municipalities involved in the Re-Value project. Following the guidance and facilitation of JA, public authorities are also encouraged to think about what challenges they shall define not only to engage students but also to consider the possibility that the proposed solutions are adapted in the future. The collaboration between municipalities and Junior Achievement is also focusing on identifying different stakeholders to be engaged in the process to provide knowledge and expertise on some complex aspects of urban planning.

1.2.1 Planning and Preparation

The success of the Innovation Camp depends on meticulous planning and preparation. The organising team collaborates with municipal partners in each Re-Value City to define the camp's objectives, taking into account the educational goals, the target age group of secondary school students, and the available resources. Key considerations include selecting a suitable venue, securing necessary materials and equipment, as well as establishing a budget to ensure a seamless execution of the camp. The national/local JA chapters lead the process in the cities.

[4] https://www.jaworldwide.org/experiences

1.2.2 Theme Development

Choosing an engaging and relevant theme is crucial to capturing the students' interest and aligning the activities with educational objectives. The theme should inspire curiosity, stimulate innovative thinking, and encourage interdisciplinary exploration. For example, a theme centred around sustainable development might encompass areas such as renewable energy, waste management (circular economy), sustainable mobility, or eco-friendly technologies, allowing students to address real-world challenges.

1.2.3 Mentoring and Facilitation

Mentors, facilitators and experts from the municipalities play a vital role in guiding and inspiring students throughout the camps. Mentors provide expertise, support, and personalised guidance, encouraging students to explore their ideas, refine their projects, and overcome obstacles. Facilitators ensure a positive and inclusive learning environment, promoting active participation, facilitating discussions, and encouraging students to reflect on their experiences. This mentorship and facilitation allows students to develop self-confidence and gain valuable insights from experienced professionals.

1.2.4 Showcase and Share

At the conclusion of the camp, students have the opportunity to showcase their innovative projects. This could involve presenting their prototypes, delivering pitches, or exhibiting their creative solutions to a panel of experts, peers, and parents. The evaluation process considers not only the final outcome but also the students' ability to articulate their ideas, demonstrate their understanding of the camp's objectives, and reflect on their learning journey. Constructive feedback is provided to recognize achievements, encourage growth, and highlight areas for improvement.

Participating in the Innovation Camp can have a transformative impact on students' education. By engaging in creative problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration, students develop essential skills and competences that are highly valued in today's rapidly changing world. The camp also serves as a platform for students to expand their network, build confidence, and explore potential career paths related to innovation and entrepreneurship. At the same time, municipalities have the chance to co-create solutions with the local youth, ensuring that these are developed with the people who will be affected by them. To ensure the sustainability and scalability of the program, considerations for future iterations may involve partnering with educational institutions, seeking sponsorships, and exploring opportunities for ongoing engagement and mentorship beyond the camp. In conclusion, the methodology of the Innovation Camp for secondary school students incorporates careful planning, theme development and local cooperation to achieve its ambitions.

2 First Round of Innovation Camps 2023

The first Innovation Camps in collaboration with Re-Value took place in Fall 2023. The following section provides an overview of the initial discussions, scope of participation, themes, and activities for the first round of Innovation Camps in nine participating cities: Ålesund (Norway), Bruges (Belgium), Burgas (Bulgaria), Cascais (Portugal), Constanța (Romania), İzmir (Turkey), Písek (Czech Republic), Rijeka (Croatia) and Rimini (Italy).

The following focus areas were defined for the first round of the Innovation Camps:

City and date	Participants	Thematic area
Ålesund (Norway) 29/09/2023	120	The Irresistible Everyday-City – combined with theatre play
Bruges (Belgium) 26/10/2023	131	Science and technology urban planning
Burgas (Bulgaria) 18/09/2023	50	Lake integration – increased sustainable tourism
Cascais (Portugal) 13/12/2023	50	Sustainable mobility, car-free centre
Constanța (Romania) 28/10/2023	63	Science and technology urban planning
İzmir (Turkey) 23/11/2023	54	Urban planning
Písek (Czech Republic) 21/11/2023	47	Smart City – water in the city, free time in the city, sustainable city
Rijeka (Croatia) 22/11/2023	49	Sustainable development of seas and the blue economy
Rimini (Italy) 10-11/10/2023	46	Sustainable mobility

2.1 Ålesund (Norway)

The partnership between the local JA chapter – Ungt Entrepenørskap – and the Municipality is well established, and this became more evident in the Innovation Camp planning phase. The two partners held several meetings to organise the first Innovation Camp, and accompanying activities, from an early stage of the project.

In 2023, the performing arts festival Høstscena took over the city. One of the Re-Value partners, Teatret Vårt, participated with their play “A Play for the Living in a Dying World” about the exploration of what people can do to stop our own extinction as humankind. The play was considered as an inspiration for the Innovation Camp’s discussions on sustainability, resilience, and the role of the arts in addressing global challenges.

The 2023 Innovation Camp focused on the city district Sørsida, with themes such as "sustainable construction sites" and “creating an irresistible everyday city." Local partners provided mentorship and served as jury members. Presentations were part of the performing arts festival Høstscena, gaining significant attention and media coverage. Winning groups presented their solutions to the municipal management group, and the idea was implemented in 2024 by the municipality to create a green island in the area.

Local Re-Value partners were involved from the planning phase of the Camp already, and acted as speakers, mentors and in the jury at a later stage, alongside other relevant actors.

The local early planning of the Innovation Camp was proactive and engaged from all partners, leading to a strong collaboration. The Sørsida area being the focus case, the event location and a – publicly owned – company made this camp special and supported with setting the tone early on.

Picture: Ålesund Innovation Camp 29/09/2023, youth are working in teams to address the defined challenge (left), Ålesund city leads (right). Photos: Ungt Entreprenørskap/JAE

2.2 Bruges (Belgium)

The progress made in Bruges already during the planning phase of the project demonstrated significant promises. The in-person meeting with the municipality established a robust partnership, while the outlined plans for school engagement and program development marked key milestones. The careful selection of schools and the Sci-Tech urban planning theme ensured a targeted and impactful approach.

The project in Bruges concentrated on urban planning within the domain of science and technology (Sci-Tech). This focus aimed to explore innovative solutions and approaches to urban development and circularity challenges in the region. By addressing these challenges, the project sought to contribute to the sustainable transformation of Bruges’ urban environment in the Kaaidistrict, particularly in creating climate-neutral strategies.

The team actively engaged with local schools, emphasizing practical and in-depth learning experiences. Students from various disciplines participated in activities centered on the redevelopment of the Kaaidistrict, focusing on climate neutrality and circularity. These activities included city tours and workshops, which provided hands-on learning opportunities and ensured a deeper understanding of urban planning and circularity challenges and potential solutions.The project involved the same group of youth in Bruges across all engagement rounds. This method allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of city development processes, while ensuring a long-term commitment to exploring innovative solutions for achieving a climate-neutral city.

By combining practical learning with strategic engagement, the Bruges project not only deepened participants' understanding of urban development challenges but also empowered youth to actively contribute to the city's sustainable transformation.

Picture: Bruges Innovation Camp 26/10/2023, youth are in action (left), introduction of the area (right). Photos: VLAJO / JAE.

2.3 Burgas (Bulgaria)

The first Innovation Camp in Burgas focused on the theme of biodiversity and eco-based solutions, aligning with the strategic planning priorities of the Burgas Municipality. This initiative capitalized on an existing partnership between the municipality and Sofia University, leveraging their collaboration on a European project. The camp was organised alongside a doctoral conference involving students specializing in geological studies and geo-mapping as experts. Participants included students from 10 high schools in Burgas, many of whom were unfamiliar with key local biodiversity hotspots, such as the Atanasovsko Lake. This Salt Lake, a significant migratory route for birds and a hub of biodiversity, became the centerpiece for exploration and idea generation.

This event built upon a strong institutional collaboration between students from the specialty "Geospatial Systems and Technologies" at the Faculty of Geology and Geology and PhD students from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and the municipality. This was further enriched by the participation of the European University Alliance “Transformation for Europe.” Doctoral students from universities in Katowice, Alicante, and Trieste joined their peers from Bulgaria, creating a diverse, interdisciplinary environment that promoted knowledge exchange and international cooperation. Students embarked on guided field trips to the lake, where scientific knowledge met real-world observation. The involvement of PhD students from the international program brought global perspectives to local challenges, deepening discussions on biodiversity and sustainability. This synergy between academic mentorship and youth engagement created an atmosphere of curiosity and empowerment.

Technology played a key role in the learning process. Using digital twin tools, students collected and interpreted environmental data, gaining insights into how emerging technologies can be applied in ecological monitoring and spatial planning. Despite weather challenges—such as strong coastal winds that grounded drones—participants adapted quickly, using alternative equipment to collect data and conduct three-dimensional mapping of the lake’s terrain. These hands-on activities helped reinforce the link between environmental science and digital innovation.

Much of the camp’s collaborative work took place in a renovated educational facility located in a repurposed fishing village, now serving as a creative hub for local learning initiatives. In this vibrant setting, students worked in teams to develop eco-based solutions, drawing inspiration from their fieldwork and guided by doctoral mentors from across Europe.

The diverse academic backgrounds of the PhD students, particularly those specializing in geospatial systems and environmental technologies, allowed for mentorship that was both practical and forward-looking. As mentors, they provided insights not only into scientific methods but also into how digital tools can support sustainable urban and ecological planning.

One highlight of the program was a session held at the Burgas Library, where Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stelian Dimitrov, Director of the National Center for Geospatial Systems and Technologies, gave a compelling talk on the role of digital twins in climate adaptation. His presentation transformed complex scientific concepts into a relatable narrative—explaining the evolution of life on Earth and how human activity is shaping future climate trajectories. He emphasized the vital role of scientists in producing data to support sustainable planning at every territorial scale. Students were grouped into eight teams and tasked with developing innovative ideas to address biodiversity and climate-related issues. This challenge, designed by mentors from Junior Achievement, pushed students to apply their learning creatively and collaboratively.

The first Innovation Camp in Burgas was a great challenge-based learning for youth exposing students to the rich biodiversity of their region but also by connecting them with international scientists, digital tools, and new ways of thinking about environmental responsibility. It reinforced the importance of collaboration across disciplines and borders, and inspired a new generation to see their local ecosystems not just as landscapes, but as opportunities for innovation and stewardship.

Key highlights of the first camp included:

- Field Trips: High school students, guided by doctoral students and local NGOs, explored the Atanasovsko Lake, gaining firsthand knowledge of its biodiversity.
- Technology Integration: Students used advanced digital twin technology to map and analyze the lake.
- Collaborative Spaces: Activities were hosted in a newly renovated educational space in an old fisherman's village, where students developed and pitched their ideas.
- Mentorship Synergy: Doctoral students, including international participants, acted as mentors, enriching the experience for high school students.

The event left a lasting impression, contributing to the establishment of deeper connections between participants and their local environment while inspiring innovative solutions for biodiversity preservation.

Picture: Burgas Innovation Camp 18/09/2023. Photo: JA Bulgaria.

Picture: Field trip Atanasovsko Lake (left), presentation of the area (right). Photos: JA Bulgaria.

2.4 Cascais (Portugal)

The project established a strong collaboration with the environmental department of the Cascais Municipality, solidifying a productive partnership through several meetings. These discussions focused on logistical aspects, defining the scope of activities, and aligning on shared goals for the Innovation Camps. The collaboration emphasised addressing key environmental challenges through student engagement and innovative solutions. To ensure a localised impact, the schools near the identified areas and most affected by these issues were engaged in the planning and participation. This approach encouraged students to develop solutions directly relevant to their communities. The municipality was chosen as the venue for the first Innovation Camp, providing an immersive and impactful environment for participants.

The project also integrated economic sustainability into its framework, ensuring that the solutions proposed not only addressed environmental issues but also considered their feasibility and long-term community benefits. The Business Model Canvas methodology and the Dreamshaper digital tool were used to guide students in refining their ideas, considering aspects such as resources, feasibility, and audience. Students worked on creating practical prototypes and applied the Business Model Canvas as a foundational framework for their ideas. Additionally, experts from the municipality and the Lisbon Lab in Science were involved to provide mentorship and technical support, enriching the students' learning experiences.

Key highlights:

- Practical Methodology: The combination of design thinking and prototyping encouraged creativity and active student participation.
- Participation Challenges: Due to limited teacher availability, the event relied on the involvement of four schools, highlighting a somehow smaller network of participating institutions.
- Student Engagement: Feedback underscored the effectiveness of the hands-on approach, making the experience highly engaging and impactful.

Despite logistical challenges, the first Innovation Camp successfully laid the groundwork for future iterations, demonstrating the potential of interactive methodologies in engaging students with sustainability-themed challenges.

Picture: Cascais Innovation Camp 13/12/2023, LEGO Serious Play creative ice breaking session. Photos: JA Portugal.

2.5 Constanța (Romania)

Picture: Constanța Innovation Camp 28/10/2023, youth are working together with their mentor. Photos: JA Romania

Constanța, the Re-Value project marked the first collaboration between the local Junior Achievement chapter and the municipality. During the preparatory phase, key objectives and potential focus areas were identified, setting the direction for the partnership and ensuring alignment with the city's priorities.

The Innovation Camp emphasised science and technology (Sci-Tech) to expose students to innovative technologies and their applications in addressing urban planning challenges. Hosted at the University of Constanța, the academic environment promotes creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration among participants. A list of high schools was compiled for participation, with selection beginning at the start of the school year to ensure broad engagement.

Students tackled urban planning challenges with a focus on practicality and aesthetics, proposing solutions for Constanța's development. The inclusion of Sci-Tech themes enriched the educational experience, introducing advanced concepts and tools to help students create innovative and realistic solutions.

The event concluded with a structured, single-day format for presentations, which students appreciated for its clarity and focus. Teams, formed across various high schools, advanced collaboration and exchange between students from diverse educational backgrounds, further enhancing the learning experience.

The first Innovation Camp demonstrated the value of collaboration between Junior Achievement, the municipality, and local schools, successfully engaging students in meaningful discussions about urban challenges. Feedback from participants and partners highlighted the potential to refine future camps by narrowing the thematic focus and tailoring activities to address specific local needs.

Building on the lessons learned, the project team plans to continue integrating Sci-Tech into the program while enhancing mentorship opportunities and providing more time for student preparation. With the ongoing support of the municipality and active involvement of schools, future Innovation Camps in Constanța are expected to deliver an even greater impact, connecting the students to their community's development.

Picture: Constanța Innovation Camp 28/10/2023, youth are pitching their idea to a jury (left), the winning team with their certificate (right). Photos: JA Romania

2.6 İzmir (Turkey)

The Re-Value project in İzmir successfully established collaborative partnerships with JA Turkey, the İzmir Municipality, and the İzmir Institute of Technology, marking a significant milestone in integrating technological innovation and entrepreneurship into urban development challenges. JA Turkey, renowned for strengthening innovation and entrepreneurial skills among young people, brought valuable expertise to the project. Previous Innovation Camps conducted in collaboration with Eurochamber and local municipalities served as a strong foundation and source of inspiration for these initiatives.

Despite delays caused by elections and changes in local administration, the project maintained momentum through the support of the Provincial National Educational Governance. This partnership facilitated engagement with schools and educational stakeholders, ensuring continuity and alignment with the project's objectives.

The first Innovation Camp in İzmir was a central event that laid the groundwork for subsequent initiatives. During the planning phase, the project team designed a comprehensive program focused on clear objectives, impactful learning outcomes, and detailed logistical planning. The camp engaged students from

diverse fields, such as architecture, environmental engineering, and urban and regional planning, who collaborated to address key urban development challenges.

University students formed teams. The teams first received some training and then interviewed the people of İzmir on the streets and listened to their problems regarding the city. They created business models by producing innovative and environmentally friendly solutions to the problems they received from the field. At the end of the day, the teams made their presentations and presented their ideas to the jury members.

Picture: İzmir Innovation Camp 23/10/2023, youth are in action. Photo: JA Turkey.

2.7 Písek (Czech Republic)

Since the beginning of the project, the municipality and Junior Achievement established a strong collaboration which served as a basis for the 2 rounds of the Innovation Camps.

As part of the project, a student company programme was being prepared to engage and empower 16-17-year-old students. The focus was on nurturing their entrepreneurial skills and providing them with practical experience in running a business. This preparation involved selecting several schools within the region, including both new schools and existing ones. By involving a diverse range of schools, the project aimed to promote regional collaboration and create a supportive ecosystem for student entrepreneurship.

The project also extended its focus to include the older population, initiating discussions to harness their wisdom and experiences. These intergenerational dialogues aimed to generate innovative ideas for enhancing public spaces in the region, ensuring a broader societal impact. Public discussions were planned to allow the community to contribute their perspectives, enriching the overall project outcomes.

The first Innovation Camp, held in October 2023, focused on advancing the concept of a Smart City in Písek. Students explored innovative technologies, sustainable solutions, and urban development strategies to reimagine their city's future.

The camp was divided into three phases:

- Introduction and Inspiration: Students attended motivational sessions at the Creative Center of Písek. These sessions served as a catalyst for idea generation.
- Guided Exploration: Participants engaged in field visits to identify challenges in the city's leisure environments, focusing on areas that could benefit from improved urban planning and innovation.
- Project Development and Presentation: Students worked in teams to develop and present solutions aimed at enhancing Písek's urban and leisure spaces.

While the camp faced challenges in securing sufficient student participation, it successfully engaged 47 students from various schools. These participants demonstrated creativity and problem-solving skills, contributing ideas for improving the city's public spaces.

The project extended its scope beyond Písek to include the wider regional area. By involving diverse groups—from students to older community members—the project aimed to create a holistic approach to urban development. The collaboration between JA Czech Republic, the municipality, and regional stakeholders has set a strong foundation for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in Písek. The first Innovation Camp showcased the potential of integrating technology and sustainable practices into urban planning, while the student company programme is poised to empower the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Picture: Písek Innovation Camp 21/11/2023, presentation of the concept of Smart City (left), Cena Publika public award (right). Photos: JA Czech Republic.

2.8 Rijeka (Croatia)

The Innovation Camps in Rijeka, Croatia, organised with logistical support from JA Serbia, represented a collaborative effort to engage high school students in entrepreneurial and creative problem-solving. The municipality's support and collaboration have been instrumental in ensuring the success of the project in Rijeka. However, the municipality's limited experience in working directly with schools and students meant that JA Serbia played a significant logistical role. Efforts were made to position the activities as city-led

initiatives, with JA Serbia operating as a supportive, behind-the-scenes partner. 20 schools were invited to participate.

The project has established the City Hub as the central hub for project activities in Rijeka. This dedicated space served as a creative and collaborative environment for students. The project organised team-building activities for the participating students. Additionally, students were guided in developing a comprehensive business plan that addresses the identified challenges and opportunities in the blue economy. Finally, they had the opportunity to showcase their ideas and proposals through presentations, further refining their communication and presentation skills.

The first Innovation Camp was a significant success, engaging students from eight high schools. Activities were split between two key venues:

1. City Hub: Students worked in teams to develop business plans and refine their ideas with the help of mentors. For many participants, this was their first experience in a co-working environment which exposed them to a professional setting.
2. City Hall: The presentation phase of the camp took place in an elegant setting, where students showcased their ideas to a jury.

The camp provided students with valuable skills in teamwork, problem-solving, and business development, leaving a strong impression on participants and stakeholders.

One of the key areas of focus in Rijeka was the sustainable development of seas and the blue economy. With a specific emphasis on Rijeka's port, the Innovation Camp aimed to explore innovative solutions and strategies for leveraging the region's maritime resources. By addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with the blue economy, the project seeked to contribute to the sustainable growth and prosperity of Rijeka. The Chamber of Commerce played a vital role in the project, providing mentorship and guidance to the students. Their expertise and industry knowledge was invaluable in shaping the students' understanding of entrepreneurship and business development.

Picture: Rijeka Innovation Camp together with Re-Value consortium members. Photo:JA Serbia.

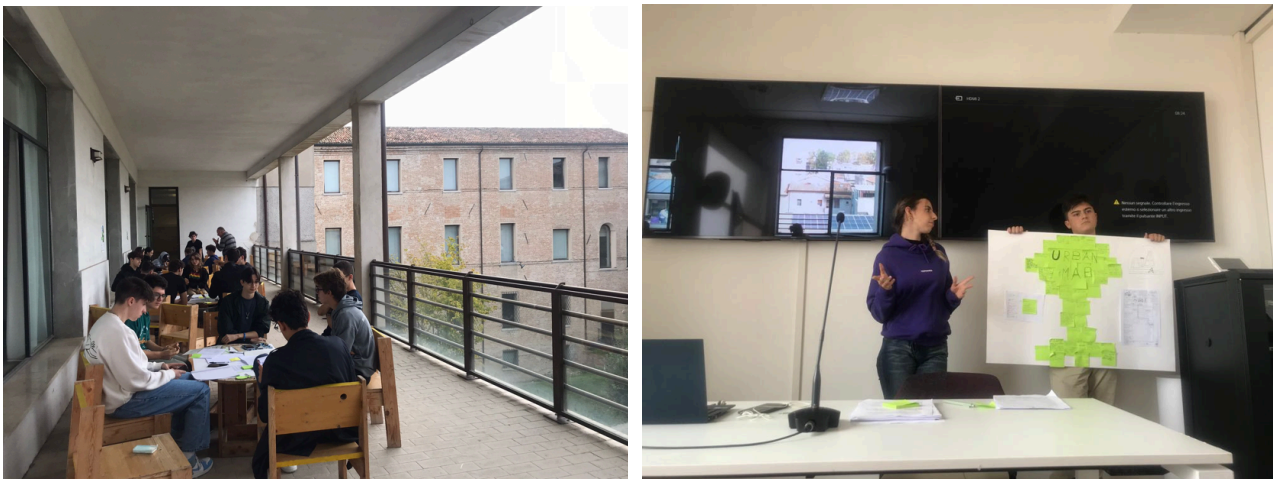
The establishment of the City Hub and the focus on the sustainable development of seas and the blue economy demonstrates the project's commitment to addressing local challenges.

2.9 Rimini (Italy)

The project identified key themes for the Innovation Camp, including waste management, plastic pollution, and sustainable mobility. These challenges aimed to educate and empower students to develop solutions addressing urban sustainability and mitigating the effects of climate change. A specific challenge on cycling mobility, proposed by the municipality, highlighted the active collaboration between project stakeholders.

The first Innovation Camp, held in Rimini in October 2023, involved 46 students from ITTS Belluzzi Da Vinci school. Pre-camp training sessions prepared participants for the event, ensuring a solid understanding of the challenges. Students worked on solutions related to the Parco del Mare, a municipal project focused on revitalizing the urban coastline. The proximity of the schools to the challenge area contributed significantly to the students' sense of familiarity and connection with the project. The students demonstrated a strong understanding of local issues, which was reflected in their enthusiastic participation and innovative responses to the challenges. During the Innovation Camp students demonstrated strong familiarity with local issues, contributing to impactful and innovative responses. Teachers played an active role in supporting students, ensuring high engagement and collaboration.

Feedback from participants and stakeholders was positive, with follow-up focus groups conducted to refine future initiatives. This initial camp successfully laid the foundation for the project's goals by combining strong municipal collaboration, engaged participants, and meaningful challenges.



Picture: Rimini Innovation Camp 10/10/2023, team work (left), idea presentation (right). Photos: JA Italy.

3 Second Round of Innovation Camps 2024

The established partnerships in the participating cities have demonstrated the significant value of collaboration between municipalities, educational institutions, and community stakeholders. These partnerships have enriched the overall community experience, building new connections between public authorities and youth. By bridging the gap between decision-makers and younger generations, the project has created platforms for open dialogue and innovation, ensuring that the voices of youth are actively considered in shaping sustainable urban environments.

City and date	Participants	Thematic area
Ålesund (Norway) 05/11/2024	124	Transform Kiperviktorget or Dronning Sonjas Plass into youth-friendly spaces in a sustainable and innovative way
Bruges (Belgium) 14/03/2024	130	Science and technology urban planning – 4 urban challenges within Kaaidistrict
Burgas (Bulgaria) 06/06/2024	52	New European Bauhaus, with an emphasis on connecting people to the sea and enhancing community spaces
Cascais (Portugal) 21/11/2024	50	Sustainable water use efficiency in urban settings (individual and/or collective)
Constanța (Romania) 17/01/2025	55	Science and technology urban planning (to improve both the aesthetics and functionality of the Constanța Peninsula area with minimal interventions)
İzmir (Turkey) 07/10/2024	63	Urban planning, applied AI solutions for the defined challenges of the city
Písek (Czech Republic) 18/11/2024	55	Tactical Urbanism
Rijeka (Croatia) 24/04/2024	32	Sustainable tourism
Rimini (Italy) organised the IC in Riccione (Italy) 13-14/03/2024	39	Sustainable mobility

3.1 Ålesund (Norway)

The Innovation Camps in Ålesund have served as a platform for engaging youth in urban planning and sustainability initiatives. Despite logistical complexities and tight timelines, these camps successfully

involved a wide range of participants, creating opportunities for collaboration between the municipality, schools, and Junior Achievement (JA). The initiative emphasised student involvement in addressing real-world challenges while promoting a deeper understanding of climate neutrality and urban development.

The planning phase of the second Innovation Camp required extensive coordination with the municipality and schools. Invitations were sent to schools in early summer of 2024, followed by several information meetings and continuous updates through email. To ensure alignment, mentors and the jury participated in preparatory meetings to clarify roles and expectations. The preparation also included a city tour for nearly 150 participants, divided into five groups, to familiarize students with urban challenges and provide inspiration for their solutions.

The team decided to rent a concert venue in the city center for the kick-off day and arrange transportation for students and teachers. The second implementation round was implemented throughout 4 days:

- **Day 1**: The kick-off included keynote speeches on urban planning, climate neutrality, and youth engagement, followed by a city tour to provide context and inspiration for the mission.
- **Days 2-3**: Students brainstormed and refined their ideas, supported by six mentors who provided guidance and feedback. Prototypes and presentations were prepared and submitted.
- **Day 4**: The final day featured pitches from all 21 groups at the City Council Hall, judged by a jury of municipal leaders, local organisations, and private sector representatives.

Winning Solutions:

- **Interpool**: A park with a heated harbour bath powered by district heating.
- **Lystorget**: A multifunctional space with a laser tag track and a basketball court/ice rink.
- **Container Café**: A youth-run café using repurposed containers and offering equipment rentals for nearby activities.

Feedback from students highlighted their appreciation for working in groups, presenting in a professional setting, and seeing their ideas recognized.

3.1.1 Key Changes from the First Round

- **Target group:** The second camp expanded to vocational and upper secondary students, maintaining the focus on urban challenges.
- **Stronger mentorship integration:** Mentorship was a key feature, with municipal representatives providing guidance directly related to urban planning and sustainability.
- **Increased media visibility**, with a national broadcaster featuring the camp on local news.
- **Format adaptation** based on feedback, allowing for more structured preparation and guidance.

3.1.2 Areas for Further Improvements

- **Logistics**: Late decisions on mission details created tight schedules for preparation.

- **Communication**: Ensuring clear communication of roles and expectations for all stakeholders, including teachers and city tour hosts, proved difficult at times.
- **Teacher Involvement**: While many teachers actively supported the students, engagement varied, highlighting the need for more consistent involvement.

The third Innovation Camp is planned for the fall of 2025, targeting university-level students majoring in marketing and innovation. Approximately 20-30 participants are expected, with plans to align the final event with the Annual Conference. This new focus aims to deepen the impact of the initiative by engaging older students with a more advanced understanding of urban challenges.

The Ålesund Innovation Camps provided students with the skills and platforms to contribute meaningfully to their city's development. By addressing climate neutrality and sustainability, the camps have not only educated participants but also built stronger ties between the municipality and the community. With ongoing refinements and a clear vision, the initiative is set to make a lasting impact on both the participants and the city of Ålesund.

3.1.3 Roadmap Integration

Innovation Camps in Ålesund have been directly tied to the city's urban transformation efforts, particularly waterfront redevelopment of Kulturhavna (The Cultural Harbour) within the Sørsida urban regeneration project, where student solutions are considered within the broader municipal planning process to enhance public spaces and climate-neutral infrastructure.

Picture: Prototype of a team (left), pitch presentation (right). Photos: Municipality of Ålesund..

3.2 Bruges (Belgium)

The second Innovation Camp was held in March 2024, engaging a consistent cohort of 130 fifth-year secondary school students from five schools in Bruges. This camp is the second in a series of three, each aiming at equipping students with the tools to critically engage in the co-creation of sustainable urban futures. The initiative specifically targets the redevelopment of the Kaaidistrict in Bruges, positioning it as a testing ground for aligning climate neutrality ambitions with integrated urban planning strategies.

Building on the foundation laid during the first camp, this second iteration deepened the exploration of urban circularity by focusing on four key domains: food systems, energy, water management, and local economies. The Re-Value project facilitates this educational innovation by emphasizing a multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary learning environment. The innovation camp employed design-based learning methods. Students worked in interdisciplinary teams to develop actionable concepts for circular transformation. The program combined ideation sessions, iterative prototyping, expert consultations, and pitch rounds, enabling students to critically assess and refine their proposals. These activities were aimed not only at fostering creative thinking but also at enhancing the students' capacity for systems thinking and collaborative problem-solving within a real-world urban context.

In March 2024, 130 fifth-year secondary school students from five Bruges schools participated in a collaborative initiative to shape the sustainable future of the Kaaidistrict in Bruges. This effort, part of the Re-Value project, focuses on aligning climate neutrality with urban planning to make waterfronts integral to the city's transition towards sustainability.

The project engaged students from diverse educational backgrounds, including well-being sciences, architectural education, technological sciences, economics, and social sciences, providing a multidisciplinary approach. Through three structured days of innovation, students explored circularity themes in food, energy, water, and the economy, and proposed solutions that integrate sustainable practices with urban development.

Over three days, students worked in mixed teams. Activities included pitching initial ideas, receiving expert guidance, and refining their concepts for urban development and circularity.

- **Idea Pitches:** Teams presented research and initial ideas to experts, municipal representatives, and an external jury.
- **Entrepreneurial Inspiration**: Four entrepreneurs and experts of the city shared their journeys in integrating zero waste and sustainability into their businesses and ambitions.
- **Spatial Planning Insights:** The City of Bruges provided an in-depth explanation of the challenges in connecting the Kaaidistrict to the city center, urging students to propose solutions.

Students then refined their ideas based on the HOW, NOW, and WOW framework, selecting the most promising concepts for further development. The jury awarded prizes to teams excelling in each circularity theme:

- **Food Circularity:** The Tastemakers
- **Energy Circularity:** Energy's
- **Water Circularity:** The Aqua Brothers
- **Economic Circularity:** Team Bas

Students received team assignments addressing critical urban challenges in the Kaaidistrict:

- **Optimizing Open Spaces:** Propose ways to fill open spaces while adhering to circular principles for water, food flows, energy, and materials.
- **Bridging the City:** Develop ideas to improve the mental and physical connection between the Kaaidistrict and the city center, enhancing the cycling experience.

- **Visible Circularity:** Suggest ways to integrate circularity into the streetscape, making sustainable practices more apparent and accessible.

After the second Innovation Camp, students revisited the Kaaidistrict for further research and idea development, culminating in team-building activities, including a visit to a local chocolatier as a reward for their efforts.

The Innovation Thinking days demonstrated how engaging youth in urban planning can yield fresh perspectives and innovative solutions. By combining expertise from the Re-Value project, municipal representatives, and educators, students were empowered to tackle complex challenges in sustainability and climate neutrality. This initiative not only inspired students but also provided valuable input for the city's vision for the Kaaidistrict, showcasing the potential of youth-driven collaboration in shaping sustainable urban futures. The next phase will build on these ideas, incorporating them into the district's development plans.

3.2.1 Key Changes from the First Round

- **Refinement of Themes and Challenges**
  In the second round, the focus was more structured, with students working on four clearly defined urban challenges related to circularity in food, energy, water, and the economy within the Kaaidistrict. Compared to the first round, where the approach was more general, this iteration ensured that students worked within thematic areas that were directly relevant to the city's sustainability and urban planning efforts.
- **Enhanced Collaboration and Entrepreneurial Inspiration**
  The second round introduced a session where four entrepreneurs and experts of the city shared their experiences and insights on zero waste and sustainability in their businesses. This addition provided students with real-world examples and inspiration on how sustainability principles could be applied in practice. The involvement of external experts and municipal representatives also played a larger role in providing spatial planning insights and guiding students through the ideation process.
- **More Structured and Applied Learning Approach**
  The methodology evolved to include the HOW, NOW, and WOW framework for evaluating and refining ideas. This structured decision-making tool helped students filter their initial concepts and focus on the most viable solutions. Additionally, there was a greater emphasis on moving from theoretical discussions to practical, applicable solutions that could be integrated into the city's urban planning regarding circularity. The second round also introduced team assignments that focused on optimizing open spaces and improving connectivity with the city center.

3.2.2 Areas for Further Improvements

- Moving from theoretical concepts, ideas to more realistic and catinable ideas for the city
- More in depth onboard teachers in order to ensure the support of the teams.


Picture: Challenge presentation to the group of students in Bruges. Photos: VLAJO / JAE.

3.2.3 Roadmap Integration

The Innovation Camps (all 3 rounds) focus on the Kaaidistrict, where students develop solutions that integrate sustainability and circularity principles into the area's transformation, supporting municipal ambitions for a circular economy, a green-blue environment, renewable energy and mixed-use development. The real challenge lies in ensuring that the ideas generated by students transition from theoretical proposals into actionable policies. Bruges has a strong structured approach to urban planning, but more mechanisms are needed to integrate the Innovation Camp outcomes into formal decision-making processes.

3.3 Burgas (Bulgaria)

Building on the success of the first round, the second Innovation Camp in Burgas was held in June 2024, closer to the end of the school year, facilitating better recruitment and participation. Familiarity with the first camp led to increased interest, drawing over 50 students from eight schools. The camp had an emphasis on connecting people to the sea and enhancing community spaces.

Key developments in the second camp included:

- **New Venue**: Hosted at Burgas Free University, the camp utilized the university's expansive spaces and engaged faculty mentors to guide students.
- **Thematic Focus**: Students explored business solutions related to ecological sustainability and tourism. Ideas included eco-friendly BBQ models and innovative coastal development projects.
- **Enhanced Recruitment**: Positive word-of-mouth from the first camp led to higher engagement from schools and teachers.
- **Strategic Alignment**: The camp aligned with Burgas Municipality's broader strategy for youth engagement and environmental planning.

This second edition expanded the scope of innovation, encouraging students to think creatively about integrating sustainability with urban and coastal development.

The Burgas Innovation Camps demonstrated a strong partnership between Junior Achievement and the Burgas Municipality, aligning with goals for youth engagement and sustainability. Plans for the third Innovation Camp in spring 2025 aim to build on previous experiences by involving municipal youth volunteers and utilizing the newly established International Youth Centre. Future activities will further integrate local youth in addressing less popular urban areas, creating a vibrant, inclusive, and innovative community-driven approach to sustainable development.

During the practical panels, the participants were divided into 8 teams. Their job was to develop a business idea for the development of tourism, sports or educational activities to incorporate the close relationship of the person-nature-sea. Mentors from the Regional Information Center - Burgas navigated the process by directing young people to innovative solutions in the field of entrepreneurship and the new European Bauhaus.

The organized event annually allows for the strengthening of the relationship of education, entrepreneurship and exchange of good team ideas.

3.3.1 Key Changes from the First Round

- **Earlier Scheduling for Better Student and Teacher Participation**
  One of the key lessons from the first round was the challenge of scheduling the Innovation Camp during the academic year. In response, the second camp was scheduled earlier—in June instead of later in the year—which made recruitment significantly easier. Since both students and schools were already familiar with the format and the first edition had generated interest, participation increased, and engagement levels were higher from the start.
- **Shift in Focus to the New European Bauhaus Values**
  While the first Innovation Camp in Burgas focused primarily on biodiversity and nature-based solutions, the second round shifted its approach to urban aesthetics and connectivity, aligning with New European Bauhaus values principles. This change encouraged students to think beyond environmental conservation and incorporate design, culture, and social impact into their solutions, creating ideas that blend sustainability with usability in urban spaces.
- **Expanded Collaboration with Burgas Free University**
  The second round introduced a new venue: Burgas Free University, a key local academic partner. This shift allowed students access to a more structured learning environment with faculty mentors and larger spaces for collaboration. Additionally, the university's involvement meant that students received guidance from academic experts in sustainability and urban planning, refining their ideas with professional input.
- Stronger link with the broaden goal of the municipality
- Establish clear follow-up mechanisms for student proposals to be tested or implemented in city projects.

Organisation for the third Innovation Camp is underway, with tentative scheduling in June 2025. The 3rd Innovation camp will focus on generating ideas and concepts for the development of interactive exhibition space dedicated to climate change, sustainable lifestyle and urban conservation. The exposure space will be

distinguished as the Community Urban Laboratory for transformation and inclusion. This participation space will be an instrument for the inclusion of citizens in urban planning and design, promoting a more inclusive climate adaptive and environmentally friendly process of urban development, which reflects the diverse needs of the population of Burgas.

3.3.2 Roadmap Integration

By targeting the coastal urban landscape, Innovation Camps in Burgas encourage students to develop solutions that balance biodiversity preservation and economic revitalization, feeding directly into the municipality's environmental strategies and waterfront planning.

Picture: Challenge presentations after the team formation. Photo: JA Bulgaria

Picture: Team Building Activity. Photo: JA Bulgaria.

Picture: Winning Team. Photo: JA Bulgaria.

3.4 Cascais (Portugal)

The second Innovation Camp shifted toward a more theoretical and business-oriented approach, focusing on equipping students with entrepreneurial skills to tackle sustainability issues. This iteration emphasised

in-depth exploration of business concepts while maintaining the overarching theme of green mobility and environmental sustainability.

Key developments in the second camp included:

- **Theoretical Focus**: A more business-centered approach catered to developing structured, actionable ideas.
- **Mixed Feedback**: While some teachers appreciated the emphasis on business concepts, others preferred the hands-on nature of the first camp, signaling a need for a balanced methodology in the future.
- **Continued Participation**: The camp again relied on two of the same schools due to limited resources and a smaller teacher network, though the involvement of the municipality helped sustain participation.

This camp demonstrated the importance of refining methodologies to balance theory and practice, ensuring sustained engagement from both students and teachers.

The two Innovation Camps in Cascais have highlighted both successes and challenges. While the hands-on approach of the first camp and the business-oriented focus of the second each had merits, feedback suggests a need for a more flexible, fun, and student-oriented methodology in future events. **The third Innovation Camp, planned for March 2025**, aims to combine elements of both approaches to better align with participant preferences and enhance engagement. Continued collaboration with the municipality of Cascais will play a critical role in expanding the network of participating schools and addressing logistical challenges.

3.4.1 Key Changes from the First Round

- In the first round, the camp focused on design thinking and prototyping, allowing students to physically create and test solutions.
- The second round shifted towards a more business-oriented approach, emphasizing structured idea development and the Business Model Canvas.
- Feedback from teachers showed mixed reactions, prompting the need for a balanced methodology in future editions, combining both practical and theoretical elements.

3.4.2 Areas for Further Improvements

- Establish clearer pathways for student proposals to be tested, piloted, or integrated into municipal projects, ensuring real-world impact beyond the event.
- Enhancing school and teacher engagement: improve early coordination with schools to secure stronger teacher involvement, ensuring that the Innovation Camp is better integrated into the academic schedule and curriculum.

Picture: Participants of the 2nd Innovation Camp in Cascais. Photo: JA Portugal.

3.4.3 Roadmap Integration

Cascais incorporates its Innovation Camps into the Guia, Ribeira das Vinhas, and Carcavelos Beach projects, leveraging green infrastructure and coastal resilience planning. Yet, the camps primarily focus on awareness-building rather than direct urban design integration including sustainable urban mobility, water usage. The integration can be linked for the third round.

3.5 Constanța (Romania)

The second Innovation Camp narrowed its focus to the Peninsula region of Constanța, the city's historical center. Students were tasked with developing ideas to improve the area for both tourists and residents while preserving its authentic aesthetic.

Despite challenges such as coinciding school holidays and multiple elections, the Innovation Camp successfully adapted by spreading activities over a longer period. This allowed students to work individually, receive ongoing mentorship, and refine their ideas.

Key highlights:

- **Refined Focus:** The challenge centered on balancing functionality and heritage preservation, with students addressing issues such as the lack of public toilets that blended with the area's historical atmosphere.

- **Guided Tour Integration:** Students participated in a guided tour of the Peninsula region, which provided contextual understanding and inspiration for their solutions.
- **Extended Format:** Unlike the first camp, this iteration included multiple stages, such as problem exploration, guided tours, project development, and final presentations, although all work culminated in a single-day event.
- **Strong Collaboration:** Discussions with the municipality resulted in actionable feedback and plans for future iterations, focusing on specific attractions in Constanța for even more targeted challenges.

Picture: Participants of the second Innovation Camp (left), winner team (right) JA Romania.

Despite logistical hurdles, including scheduling conflicts with schools, the second camp improved upon the first by refining its thematic scope and incorporating immersive learning experiences.

The Constanța Innovation Camps demonstrated the effectiveness of iterative refinement and collaboration. The first camp established a broad foundation, while the second honed in on specific challenges in the city's historical center. Future camps will build on these successes by focusing on detailed, actionable projects related to key attractions in Constanța. Plans for the next camp include maintaining the guided tours, leveraging peer-to-peer feedback, and integrating even more targeted themes to enhance the impact of student contributions.

3.5.1 Key Changes from the First Round

1. **More Focused Urban Challenge**
    - In 2023, the Innovation Camp had a broader urban planning scope, allowing students to explore general urban development themes.
    - In 2024, the focus was narrowed to Constanța Peninsula, emphasizing heritage preservation, urban aesthetics, and sustainable infrastructure, making the challenge more concrete and relevant to the city's ongoing redevelopment efforts.
2. **Introduction of Guided Site Visits**
    - The second round incorporated guided tours of the Peninsula District, where students could observe real urban challenges firsthand and interact with municipal representatives.
    - This change ensured that students had a deeper understanding of the area's urban and cultural dynamics, leading to more informed and practical proposals.
3. **Extended Problem-Solving Phases**

- Unlike the first round, which had a single-day format, the 2024 Innovation Camp introduced multiple preparatory phases, including preliminary research, mentorship sessions, and structured project development stages.
- This allowed students to refine their ideas over a longer period, resulting in higher-quality, well-developed solutions that align with the city's urban planning strategies.

3.5.2 Roadmap Integration

Constanța faces challenges in embedding its camps into urban policy due to the Peninsula District's cultural and infrastructural decay. Although the city aims to include youth perspectives, there is a risk that proposals remain conceptual rather than actionable.

3.6 İzmir (Turkey)

The second Innovation Camp took place in October 2024 and involved 63 students, including seven winners from the first camp who were directly invited to participate. This iteration expanded on the foundation of the first camp, focusing on the theme "ReValue Your City with AI." To prepare students for this focus, the camp included targeted AI training sessions, conducted by an expert from İzmir Municipality who also had an architectural background. These sessions equipped participants with tools and methodologies to incorporate AI into their problem-solving processes.

Key features of the second camp included:

- **Integration of AI Tools**: Students utilized AI technologies, including tools like ChatGPT and advanced design software, to refine their ideas and create innovative solutions.
- **Targeted Themes**: While the first camp had a broader focus, the second narrowed its scope to **climate-neutral ecosystems** and sustainable urban development, encouraging more specific and actionable outcomes.
- **Practical Engagement**: All participants worked on their computers in teams, applying AI-driven approaches to generate creative and viable solutions for urban challenges.

The involvement of students from relevant academic disciplines ensured that participants were well-prepared and deeply engaged with the problems at hand. The use of AI not only enhanced the technical quality of their solutions but also introduced them to cutting-edge methodologies applicable to real-world scenarios.

The second Innovation Camp was a success, with participants delivering innovative solutions that combined sustainability with technological advancements. The continuity between the two camps—achieved by revisiting the problem pool and solutions from the first camp—added depth and focus to the second iteration.

Picture: Teamwork with their mentor (left), AI generated image illustrating a possible solution (right). Photos: JA Türkiye (left), Source: MidJourney (right).

Plans for the third Innovation Camp are underway, with tentative scheduling in October or November 2025. The upcoming event will build on the learnings from the second camp, further refining the use of AI tools and narrowing the focus to generate even more impactful solutions. This iterative approach aims to continuously improve the quality and applicability of the ideas generated by participants, contributing to the city's climate-neutrality goals.

The collaboration between Junior Achievement, İzmir Municipality, and the High Technology Institute has proven to be a valuable model for engaging youth in sustainable urban planning through the integration of technology and innovative methodologies.

3.6.1 Key Changes from the First Round

1. **Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Urban Solutions**
    - While the first round focused on general climate-neutral urban development, the second round introduced AI-driven urban planning tools to help students generate and refine ideas.
    - AI training sessions were provided by experts from İzmir Municipality, equipping students with digital tools to create data-informed solutions.
2. **Stronger Continuity Between Innovation Camps**

- In 2024, students were given access to problems and partial solutions developed during the first round to build upon previous ideas, creating a progressive development process rather than starting from scratch.
- This ensured continuity and deeper engagement, making the second round more productive and solution-oriented.

3. **More Specialized Student Participation**
   - While the first round had a mix of students from different disciplines, the second round specifically recruited students from architecture, environmental engineering, and urban planning.
   - This led to higher-quality solutions with stronger technical feasibility and urban relevance.

These improvements enhanced the Innovation Camp's strategic alignment with İzmir's smart city and climate-neutrality goals, ensuring that youth-driven solutions were more advanced, structured, and applicable to real-world urban planning challenges.

3.6.2 Roadmap Integration

İzmir aligns the camps with its Alsancak District redevelopment and Climate City Contract, reinforcing participatory governance. The challenge lies in ensuring that youth-led solutions transition from ideation to execution.

3.7 Písek (Czech Republic)

The second Innovation Camp, held in November 2024, built on the framework of the first camp while introducing enhancements to improve the overall experience:

1. **Continuity and Learning:** Students applied knowledge gained from the first camp, with returning participants demonstrating notable improvements in presentation and problem-solving skills. Approximately 45% of students were new participants, ensuring fresh perspectives while maintaining continuity.
2. **Expanded Mentorship Model:** A new approach was introduced where mentors rotated among teams, offering expertise in specific areas. This change was well-received by students, who benefited from diverse insights and feedback throughout the event.
3. **Focus on Tactical Urbanism:** As in the first camp, tactical urbanism remained the central theme. Students worked on broader challenges within this framework, selecting specific areas in Písek to address and tailoring their solutions to fit local needs.

The event maintained the three-phase structure but incorporated refinements based on feedback from the first camp. Students demonstrated creativity and teamwork in addressing urban issues, producing more polished and comprehensive presentations.

The Innovation Camps in Písek successfully engaged students in addressing urban challenges through tactical urbanism, emphasizing practical learning and innovative thinking. Both camps highlighted the importance of hands-on experiences, such as guided tours, in connecting to local issues. The introduction

of rotating mentors in the second camp proved to be a valuable enhancement, enriching the learning experience.

Looking ahead, the third Innovation Camp is planned for **November 2025**. The project team aims to build on these successes by refining the format further, ensuring continued collaboration with schools and expanding participation to include new students while maintaining a connection with returning participants. These efforts will continue to nurture problem-solving and presentation skills, empowering students to contribute meaningfully to the development of their city.

Future activities will continue to leverage community input, promote regional collaboration, and provide engaging opportunities for students to think critically and creatively about the future of their cities. The project's emphasis on inclusivity and intergenerational dialogue ensures a wide-reaching and meaningful impact on the community.

3.7.1 Key Changes from the First Round

1. **Implementation of a Rotating Mentorship Model**
    - In 2024, a new rotating mentorship system was introduced, allowing students to interact with multiple mentors rather than working with a single advisor.
    - This provided broader expertise and diverse perspectives, helping students refine their solutions more effectively.
2. **Stronger Continuity and Returning Participants**
    - About 45% of the students who participated in the first round returned for the second round, creating a more experienced student base.
    - This continuity improved the quality of project ideas, as returning students applied knowledge gained from the first camp.
3. **Enhanced Focus on Tactical Urbanism**
    - The first round explored broader urban issues, while the second round had a more targeted approach to tactical urbanism, emphasizing quick, low-cost interventions to improve public spaces.
    - This shift aligned better with municipal urban design strategies, ensuring that student proposals were more practical and implementation-ready.

These refinements strengthened Písek's Innovation Camps by making mentorship more dynamic, fostering continuity among students, and sharpening the urban focus toward actionable solutions

3.7.2 Roadmap Integration

Písek connects its Innovation Camps to Portyč and Mezimostí Waterfront revitalization, aiming to improve connectivity and flood resilience. However, sustaining youth engagement beyond the camps to influence long-term planning remains a challenge as the possible contributions from youth are not yet defined or visioned.

3.8 Rijeka (Croatia)

The Innovation Camp in Rijeka, held on April 24, 2024, marked the second implementation of this initiative under the Re-Value project. The event aimed to engage high school students in addressing urban challenges while strengthening entrepreneurial skills and teamwork. Despite some challenges, the collaboration with the City of Rijeka was highly successful, resulting in a well-organised and impactful event.

The City of Rijeka and JA Serbia worked closely to plan the Innovation Camp, ensuring roles were clearly divided and deadlines were met. The municipality actively supported the event by providing:

- **Jury Members**: Experts from the local development agency, financial institutions, and private sector organisations. Panel of judges consisted of Mr Nenad Antolović (Director of the Rijeka Development Agency PORIN), Ms Ivana Datković Škoda (Director of the Youth Office at Erste Bank), and Mr Dorjan Cindrić (Project Manager at Exevio d.o.o.).
- **Mentors**: Professionals who guided students through the ideation process.
- **Media Coverage**: Promoting the event and its outcomes.
- **Opening Remarks**: Delivered by Deputy Mayor Sandra Krpan, showcasing the city's commitment to engaging youth in urban innovation.

The event followed a similar format to the previous camp, with the working sessions held at RiHub, a coworking space owned by the city, and the final presentations hosted in the Town Hall, lending a formal and professional atmosphere.

Challenges:

- **Participant Withdrawals**: A few students withdrew on short notice, leaving insufficient time to find replacements.
- **Timing of Events**: Hosting the second camp within the same academic year (following the first camp in November 2023) may have contributed to fewer participants, with only 30 students (prepared for 50) forming eight teams.

Winning Ideas:

- **1st Place: "Sea Tours" App**: Developed by a team from the Salesian Classical Gymnasium, Tourism School Opatija, and Construction School for Industry and Craft Rijeka. The app connects boat owners with tourists to explore the Rijeka aquarium, emphasizing sustainability with electric boats and accessibility for people with disabilities.
- **2nd Place: "Bura"**: Proposed boats offering hospitality services while promoting Rijeka's cultural heritage. Developed by students from the Construction Technical School Rijeka and Tourism School Opatija.
- **3rd Place: "Rijeka Beach Revival"**: A web portal providing information on Rijeka's beaches and local events, developed by students from the Salesian Classical Gymnasium, Economic School “Mija Mirković” Rijeka, and Construction School for Industry and Craft Rijeka.

The Innovation Camp welcomed representatives from NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) and Marco Acri from the University of Nova Gorica, highlighting the international dimension of the Re-Value project. Their presence enriched the event by contributing global insights to local challenges.

The second Innovation Camp in Rijeka successfully engaged youth in creating sustainable and innovative solutions for the city. The collaboration with the municipality ensured a well-organised event that brought together students, mentors, and experts. Despite challenges related to timing and participant withdrawals, the event demonstrated the potential of young people to contribute meaningful ideas for urban development.

Looking ahead, lessons learned from this iteration—such as optimal scheduling and participant recruitment—will be incorporated into future camps to maximise impact. The strong partnership between JA Europe, JA Serbia, and the City of Rijeka continues to position this initiative as a cornerstone for youth-driven innovation in sustainable urban planning.

3.8.1 Key Changes from the First Round

1. **Increased Municipal Involvement and Support**
    - In the second round, the City of Rijeka played a more active role, with the Deputy Mayor opening the event and municipal representatives providing mentorship and jury participation.
    - The event received greater media coverage, increasing public awareness and engagement compared to the first round.
2. **Refinement of the Business-Oriented Approach**
    - While the first round focused more on urban development concepts, the second round had a stronger business-oriented approach, requiring students to develop market-ready solutions.
    - Student teams worked on business plans and sustainability models, making their proposals more actionable and investment-ready.
3. **Expansion of Thematic Focus to Sustainable Tourism**
    - The first camp tackled general urban innovation challenges, while the second round introduced sustainable tourism as a key focus.
    - The winning idea, a Sea Tours app, aimed to improve accessibility and connectivity within the Rijeka *akvatorij* (“the water area”), emphasizing eco-friendly transport and inclusive tourism.

These changes helped align the Innovation Camp more closely with Rijeka’s economic and urban planning priorities, making student-driven ideas more practical and impactful for the city’s development.

3.9 Rimini (Italy)

The second Innovation Camp shifted its focus to schools in Riccione, a city close to Rimini but less directly connected to the challenges of the Parco del Mare. While the students from Riccione responded well to the methodology and appreciated the experience, their awareness of the local challenges was somewhat lower

compared to their counterparts in Rimini. Despite this, the students adapted well and developed meaningful solutions, showcasing their ability to engage with unfamiliar issues.

Teacher involvement during the second camp was less robust than in the first. Educators were less active in transmitting the potential value of the activities to their students, which slightly impacted the overall engagement levels. Additionally, the mix of schools included both practical and theoretical institutions, with the latter facing challenges in integrating the Innovation Camp into their standard curricula. These logistical and structural differences highlighted the need for more tailored approaches to school recruitment and teacher engagement.

Key Insights and Challenges

- **Connection to Local Challenges**: The proximity of schools to the challenge area (Rimini vs. Riccione) significantly influenced student familiarity and engagement with the issues.
- **Teacher Involvement**: Active teacher participation in the first camp contributed to stronger student engagement, whereas less involvement in the second camp highlighted the importance of educator buy-in.
- **Logistical Barriers**: Recruiting schools in Rimini was challenging due to the abundance of extracurricular activities, making scheduling difficult. The differing priorities of practical and theoretical institutions further complicated engagement efforts.

The **third Innovation Camp, scheduled for March 6th and 7th, 2025**, will return to Rimini to capitalize on the stronger connection between schools and the Parco del Mare. Preparations are already underway, including teacher and student training sessions to ensure participants are well-prepared for the event. The location is nearly confirmed, and efforts are being made to refine the recruitment process and address past challenges.

The municipality remains committed to focusing on the Parco del Mare, ensuring continuity in the themes and challenges presented to the students. By incorporating lessons learned from the first two camps, the project aims to promote even greater engagement from both students and teachers, while maintaining the innovative and collaborative spirit of the initiative.

3.9.1 Key Changes from the First Round

1. **Shift in School Participation and Location**
    - The first Innovation Camp primarily involved schools from Rimini, allowing students to work on urban challenges related to their own city, particularly Parco del Mare.
    - In the second round, schools from Riccione participated instead, leading to a weaker local connection to the urban challenges and a lower initial awareness of the issues.
2. **Variation in Teacher Engagement**
    - The first camp saw strong teacher involvement, with educators actively supporting students and helping them understand the urban development process.
    - In the second camp, teachers were less engaged, which impacted students' ability to fully grasp the potential of their work and align their projects with municipal goals.
3. **Challenges in Recruiting Schools Due to Scheduling Conflicts**

- The second camp faced greater difficulties in securing participating schools, as many had competing extracurricular commitments.
- This highlighted the need for better timing and early coordination with school administrators to ensure full engagement in future rounds.

These changes indicate that while the Innovation Camp methodology remained effective, future editions in Rimini should return to a stronger local connection, re-engage teachers more actively, and improve recruitment strategies to maximize impact.

4 Ålesund as a Model Implementation City for Innovation Camps

The city of Ålesund has emerged as a leading example of how Innovation Camps can be successfully integrated into urban planning and development. The municipality, in collaboration with Junior Achievement, has demonstrated a strong commitment to engaging youth in shaping the city's future. Through well-structured partnerships, strategic planning, and an iterative learning process, Ålesund has positioned Innovation Camps as a key element of its climate-neutral urban development planning . A defining feature of Ålesund's approach is its ability to align Innovation Camps with broader urban planning goals. The camps have been strategically designed to focus on the development of the Sørsida district, an area undergoing significant transformation. By incorporating urban planning challenges into the Innovation Camp format, students were actively involved in addressing real-life urban development problems. This provided a direct link between youth engagement and municipal priorities, ensuring that young people's ideas and solutions were not only heard but considered within the city's planning process.

4.1 Success Factors in Ålesund

Several factors have contributed to Ålesund's success in implementing Innovation Camps:

1. **Strong Municipal Engagement and Collaboration**

The municipality of Ålesund has played an active role in the design and execution of the Innovation Camps. Regular meetings between JA Norway and municipal representatives ensured alignment with city planning goals. The involvement of municipal officials in mentoring, jury assessments, and final presentations reinforced the legitimacy of the students' work and demonstrated a genuine interest in their ideas.

2. **Integration with Local Initiatives**

Ålesund leveraged existing local events and initiatives to enhance the impact of the Innovation Camps. The first round of camps was integrated with the performing arts festival Høstscena, where students presented their solutions as part of the festival program. This not only increased visibility but also provided students with a real-world platform to showcase their work. Additionally, the Sørsida Development company, a municipal urban development agency, served as the "client" for the Innovation Camps, ensuring a direct link between student proposals and municipal decision-making.

3. **Iterative Improvements and Adaptation**

Ålesund's Innovation Camps evolved based on insights gained from previous rounds. The second round in 2024 introduced modifications based on feedback from the first camp, such as refining the structure of the city tour to make it more engaging and informative for students. The Innovation Camps also expanded their focus by incorporating elements of climate neutrality and sustainability within urban design, reflecting the evolving needs of the municipality.

4. **JA Norway`s approach**

A crucial element has been the strong leadership and management of JA Norway, which has provided structured guidance, expertise, and logistical support throughout the planning and execution of the Innovation Camps. With years of experience in youth entrepreneurship education, JA Norway has been instrumental in designing an engaging, hands-on learning experience that connects students with real-world urban challenges. Their ability to allocate resources efficiently—ensuring access to mentors, educational materials, and event infrastructure—has allowed the camps to run smoothly and maintain high levels of student participation.

The success of the initiative has also been bolstered by regular meetings between JA Norway and the municipality of Ålesund. These meetings ensured alignment between the city's urban development goals and the educational objectives of the Innovation Camps. The municipality actively participated in every stage, from selecting the urban challenges for students to tackle, to providing expert mentors, jury members, and logistical support. This close collaboration ensured that student ideas were taken seriously and considered within the city's broader planning strategies. Teacher preparation was another key factor. Before each Innovation Camp, teachers received detailed training sessions, equipping them with the necessary tools to guide students effectively. This preparation allowed teachers to integrate the camp's themes into their curriculum, ensuring continuity in learning beyond the event itself. By fostering a strong network of teachers, municipal representatives, and JA Norway experts, Ålesund created an ecosystem where students could receive well-rounded support, helping them develop viable and impactful solutions.

Another important element is resilience and flexibility of the team in adapting to the needs of both the municipality and participating schools. The ability to adjust timelines, resources, and methodologies ensured that the Innovation Camps were truly co-created with local stakeholders rather than imposed as rigid programs. This responsiveness allowed organizers to accommodate municipal priorities, such as shifting focus areas within urban planning, while also addressing the practical realities of school schedules and student needs. By thinking outside the box and remaining adaptable, Ålesund ensured that the camps remained relevant, engaging, and seamlessly integrated into the city's broader vision for sustainable urban development. Through this multi-stakeholder approach, Ålesund has successfully embedded the Innovation Camps within its urban planning processes, ensuring that the events are not isolated exercises but meaningful contributions to the city's development.

5. **Comprehensive Student Engagement and Support**

The Innovation Camps in Ålesund successfully engaged students across different levels of education. While the first two camps targeted lower and upper secondary students, the upcoming third Innovation Camp will involve university-level students majoring in marketing and innovation. This expansion ensures that students at different stages of education contribute to urban planning discussions, fostering a multi-tiered engagement model.

6. **Structured Learning and Clear Objectives**

The success of Ålesund's Innovation Camps can be attributed to their well-organized structure and clearly defined learning objectives, ensuring that students were fully engaged in each stage of the process. The camps began with kickoff events, where municipal representatives, urban planners, and sustainability experts provided students with an overview of the challenges at hand. The challenges presented are specific

to the city and this helped contextualize the project, equipping students with essential knowledge about climate neutrality and urban development.

A critical component of the program was the city tour, where students were taken to key locations within Ålesund to directly experience the urban spaces they would be working on. This interactive experience allowed them to observe existing infrastructure, identify problem areas, and consider potential improvements based on real-world conditions. Municipal representatives and planners accompanied the tours, providing insights and answering questions, which helped students develop a more practical understanding of the issues.

Once students had a strong foundation, they moved into the mentorship phase, where municipal officials, architects, and business leaders worked closely with them to refine their ideas. Unlike traditional classroom learning, this hands-on guidance encouraged students to think critically, collaborate effectively, and create solutions that were both innovative and feasible.

The final presentations, held at the City Council Hall, provided students with an opportunity to present their ideas to an expert jury composed of municipal officials, sustainability experts, and local business representatives. The event was structured to mimic a real-world pitch session, giving students a platform to articulate their vision and demonstrate the impact of their proposed solutions. The involvement of high-profile stakeholders reinforced the importance of their work, further motivating students to take ownership of their ideas and contribute meaningfully to urban development discussions.

Through this structured and immersive learning experience, Ålesund successfully created a program where students were not only introduced to theoretical concepts but also actively participated in shaping the future of their city.

7. **Public Recognition and Media Coverage**

Ålesund has successfully positioned the Innovation Camps as high-profile events. The final presentations received media coverage, including stories published by the national broadcaster. The presence of city officials and business representatives at the final pitch events further validated the students' contributions.

4.2 Integration with Urban Planning

Ålesund stands out for its ability to seamlessly integrate the Innovation Camps into its urban planning framework in a structured and collaborative approach (from JA and municipality). Key differentiators include:

- Early and Consistent Municipal Engagement: Unlike some cities where engagement with municipal stakeholders was sporadic or delayed, Ålesund maintained a steady partnership from the outset.
- Increased visibility: The collaboration with Høstscena (local art festival) ensured that the first camp reached a wider audience, during the second Innovation Camp the collaboration with local TV ensured to provide visibility for the event.
- Linking Camps to Concrete Urban Development Goals: By focusing on the Sørsida district, the camps had a clear, tangible objective that aligned with municipal development plans.

Building on the success of the first two Innovation Camps, Ålesund is now preparing for its third round, which will target university students. The goal is to further refine student contributions to urban planning by leveraging their expertise in marketing, innovation, and sustainable development. There are also discussions about incorporating the final presentations into a major urban planning conference, BraBy (translated as "Good City"), further embedding youth perspectives into the city's long-term planning efforts.

Ålesund serves as a model city within the Re-Value project for effectively embedding Innovation Camps into its urban development strategy. The strong partnership with the municipality, strategic integration with local initiatives, and iterative improvements based on past experiences have created a replicable framework for other cities. By fostering meaningful youth engagement, Ålesund is not only empowering students but also ensuring that their ideas contribute to shaping a sustainable and climate-neutral future for the city.

Learning from Ålesund's experience, the remaining Innovation Camps in each city will focus on incorporating key elements of its model—such as strong municipal collaboration, strategic alignment with local initiatives, and structured youth participation. Knowledge transfer will occur between cities, enabling local Junior Achievement teams and Re-Value partners to adapt and apply successful practices from Ålesund to their own contexts.

5 Conclusion and Next Steps

The second round of Innovation Camps in 2024 built on the successes and learnings from the 2023 first round while addressing the needs of the municipalities and introducing experimental elements to enhance the experience:

- Tailored Challenges: Feedback from the first round highlighted the importance of connecting challenges closely to local issues. For example, in Rimini, challenges focused on cycling mobility and enhancing the Parco del Mare, proposed directly by the municipality, ensured relevance and alignment with local priorities.
- Expanded Mentorship Models: Some cities, such as İzmir and Písek, experimented with rotating mentors. This allowed students to interact with experts specializing in various fields, such as AI tools for urban planning or tactical urbanism, enriching their solutions with diverse perspectives.
- Integration of New Methodologies: In cities like Constanța, AI-based tools were introduced to help students conceptualize and visualize their ideas more effectively, marking a significant evolution in the project's technological approach.
- Community Engagement: Public exhibitions, such as those organised in Rijeka, showcased student solutions in front of the City Hall, fostering wider community awareness and appreciation for the initiative.
- Flexible Formats: Based on logistical challenges faced during the first round, the camps in some locations were spread over multiple phases. For instance, guided tours to project sites were conducted in Písek and Constanța, helping students gain contextual understanding before tackling their challenges.

These adaptations ensured that the second round of Innovation Camps was not only more impactful but also more aligned with local needs and challenges.

Innovation Camps are a powerful tool for engaging youth in local decision-making processes, particularly in the context of striving towards climate-neutral cities. By involving young people in these initiatives, cities can harness fresh perspectives and innovative ideas that can drive sustainable urban development. Engaging the target group—youth—in such activities not only informs them about climate neutrality but also emphasises their roles and responsibilities in shaping their cities' futures. This approach builds a sense of ownership and commitment among young participants, empowering them to contribute to the transition towards more sustainable urban environments.

In each of the 9 cities the development of the Innovation Camps went on well, led especially by local forces, with central support from JA Europe. Each national or local JA chapter built-up an engaged collaboration with the municipalities. As the insights from the planning shows, the theme and areas of focus are defined by the municipalities and are in line with their objectives for the project.

About Re-Value – Re-Valuing Urban Quality & Climate Neutrality in European Waterfront Cities

The Re-Value partnership consists of nine European waterfront cities and selected European organisations that work to make the urban transition irresistible for everyone. This is done by demonstrating how climate neutrality and urban quality can be aligned, by re-valuing the cities' connection to their waterfronts, strengthening co-benefits and mitigating potential adverse impacts.

Ålesund (Norway), Bruges (Belgium), Burgas (Bulgaria), and Rimini (Italy) demonstrate how integrated urban planning and design can be optimally deployed to achieve climate neutrality and significantly reduce GHG emissions by 2030. In addition, Cascais (Portugal), Constanța (Romania), İzmir (Turkey), Písek (Czech Republic), and Rijeka (Croatia) learn, replicate and develop their own participatory story-building, data-driven scenarios and financial and partnership models on integrated urban planning and design to accelerate their journeys to climate neutrality.

The partnership is coordinated by Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and is funded by the European Union's Research and innovation funding programme Horizon Europe.

Learn more about the partnership and the outcomes on re-value-cities.eu.

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