



New EU project pilots solutions to drive Inclusive Health and Wellbeing in Small and Medium Size cities

Four peripheral small and medium size cities (SMSCs) – Cordoba (Spain), Riga (Latvia), Lucca (Italy) and Nitra (Slovakia) – will take the leadership to test visionary and integrated solutions to foster Inclusive Health and Wellbeing (IHW).

IN-HABIT, a newly-launched EU H2020 project, will mobilise undervalued resources (culture, food, human-animal bonds and environment) in each of the four pilot cities to increase IHW, with a focus on gender and diversity. The integrated approach will combine technological, digital, nature-based, cultural, and social innovations in selected urban public spaces, focusing on underserved areas and vulnerable target groups in each city. The project will deliver innovative concepts to analyse health and wellbeing as urban commons, develop social business providing livelihood opportunities and promoting healthier lifestyles, deliver an app to measure impact and boost behavioural change, and more. These solutions will be co-designed, co-deployed and co-managed with and by local stakeholders.

The IN-HABIT project responds to Europe's research and innovation (R&I) gaps in catering to the needs of peripheral SMSCs. Most urban R&I in Europe is located in Central and Nordic countries and in large cities, while 65% of the urban population live in cities with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants. IN-HABIT will work to advance knowledge on the health and wellbeing R&I needs of peripheral SMSCs, define frameworks for the collection of data at city-level, and elaborate data to monitor both the city-level evolutionary trajectories and the impact of policy actions. A systemic urban planning framework will also be developed based on innovative gender and diversity approaches for boosting IHW. The results will enhance the understanding of how peripheral SMSCs work in practice, while driving IHW in the four pilot cities. *"IN-HABIT will provide evidence on how the integration of 'hard' and 'soft' solutions, infrastructure-based and social innovations contribute to inclusive health and wellbeing,"* said Mar Delgado, Project Coordinator, Universidad de Córdoba.

The Cordoba pilot will create a happiness zero emission corridor connecting the Las Palmeras neighbourhood with the Medina Azahara UNESCO site, and transform the district's central square into a green and creative area. Luis Maya, President of Las Palmeras Neighborhood Association, described IN-HABIT as:



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"the change and the future of our neighborhood. It is a project that can bring hope and wellbeing to a hopeless quarter making real the wishes we reflected in the Action Plan we drafted 3 years ago."

In Riga, a multifunctional food hub will be created in the area of the Āgenskalns local market. *"I am particularly glad that initiatives of this project will take place in Āgenskalna market,"* said Alija Turlaja, Former President of the Riga Neighbourhoods Association and the Deputy of the Riga City Council. *"Together we can go towards self-sufficient neighbourhoods and much healthier people in our cities."*

Lucca will become the first Human-animal (Hum-an) smart city in Europe. Alessandro Tambellini, Mayor of Lucca, said, *"Lucca is a city that has managed to maintain a high quality of life with a cohesive social fabric: a small territory where important businesses, agriculture, housing, tourism, entertainment, cultural heritage and areas of natural and scenic interest coexist. The IN-HABIT project is a great opportunity and Lucca will make its contribution through the development of green spaces and places dedicated to the human-animal relationship, pet-therapy, and new services designed to facilitate the presence of animals at work, in leisure, and in children's education, as an element of health and wellbeing for our future."*

In Nitra, a Reversible Multifunctional Open-source Urban Landscape will be created along the 8 km cycle road connecting the Dražovce district with the city centre. *"I am very pleased that health, specifically mental health, is addressed in the IN-HABIT project and at the same time we are opening topics of architecture, urbanism and connection,"* said Marek Hattas, Mayor of Nitra. *"IN-HABIT will have a really big impact on our cities and I'm especially glad that the project connects the non-profit sector, citizens, activists, universities and local governments."*

To ensure solutions that truly work for the cities and their inhabitants, IN-HABIT will put people at the centre of its strategy, creating Public-Private-People Partnerships composed of citizens, policymakers and urban planners, (social) businesses, and researchers. To foster mindset and behaviour changes, the project will engage with children and youngsters, identify local champions, and promote new women role models. In addition to local stakeholders in each city, IN-HABIT will collaborate with institutions at the European and international levels. Ugo Guarnacci, Project Adviser, European Commission, Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, explained that: *"IN-HABIT is about creating a vision on how diversity, equity and inclusion can be pivotal elements to foster health and wellbeing in cities. The project will engage citizens, especially from marginalised groups, and deploy innovative solutions. The beauty of projects like IN-HABIT is their potential to show the added value of EU Research and Innovation across scales."*



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The project's kick-off meeting from the 13th to 15th of October 2020 has brought together twenty-one partners from across the European Union and Colombia, committed to making IHW a reality in SMSCs.

For more information or to get involved, visit our website:
<https://www.inhabit-h2020.eu>



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