

# STORY TOOLING LABORATORY

“Tourism, Culture and Design”



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# 1. Introduction

Storytooling aimed to foster a European vision of the integration of young people around post-industrial heritage. It is part of a logic of innovation and inclusion through the experimentation of a transnational laboratory that aims to develop tools, skills and methods for the inclusion of unemployed and/or school dropouts, creating tailor-made inclusion paths for these young people. Under the impulse of the European Year of Youth 2022 and the New European Bauhaus, this laboratory aimed to create new heritage narratives developed by young people.

To operate, the project selected a group of creatives, with different expertise, to accompanying the participants in each country, leading the co-creation of five cultural and tourist prototypes. The goal was to allow young people to reappropriate their heritage narratives through immersion in their territory, guided experimentation and co-creation. Through this process, the project tried to discuss social and territorial inequalities and ensure the transmission of heritage narratives to future generations.

The Storytooling Laboratory is a tool to accompany the territories towards the transition of the cultural, creative and tourism sectors, which are levers of economic and social development. The project experimented with a methodology to connect young people to the territory, based on a field experience, a multidisciplinary and intersectoral approach, and the valorisation of the post-industrial and rural heritage.

Storytooling took place in five different territories, located in Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia. In common, they have a strong industrial and rural heritage presence and similar challenges related to rurality, loss of youth populations and unemployment, which served as a starting point for designing the methodology of Storytooling Laboratory.

To propose a methodology that can be adapted to diverse realities, it is also important to acknowledge the distinctive characteristics and needs of each territory. For that, we identified the major characteristics and constraints of our territories and defined five major territorial themes for intervention.

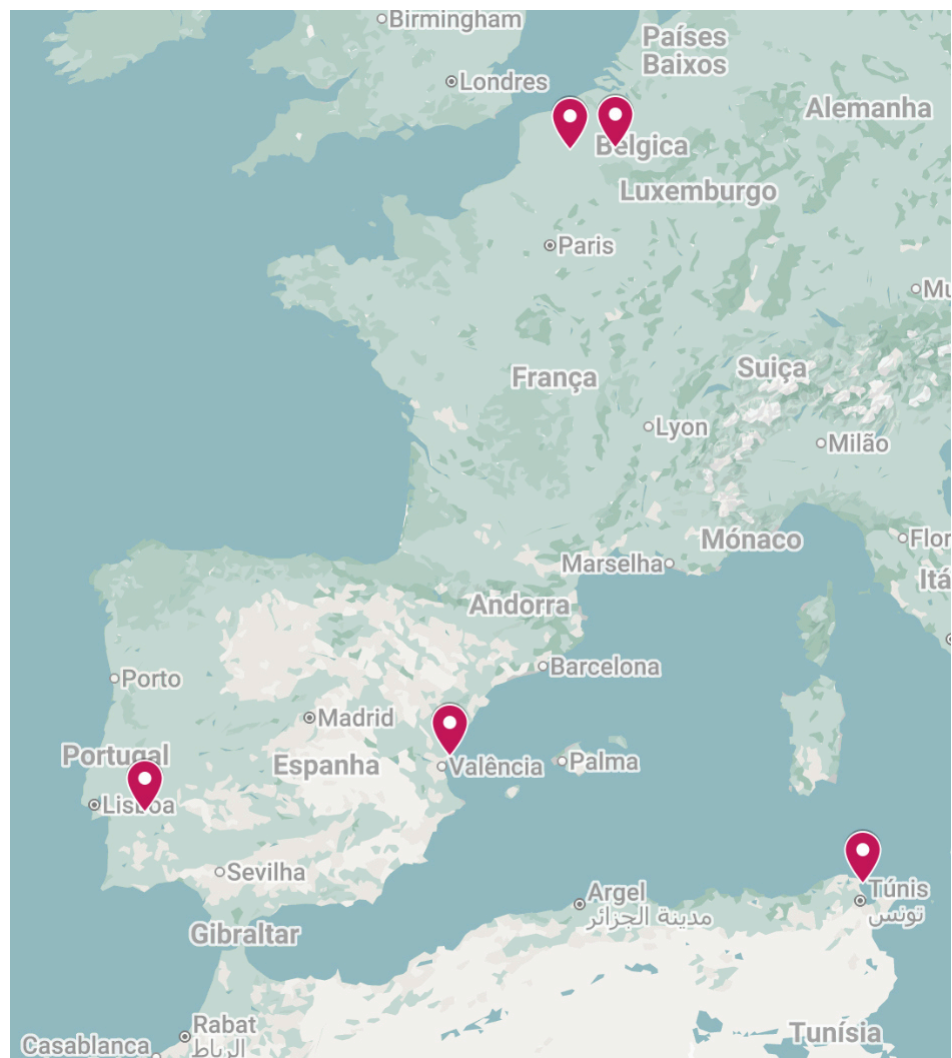


Figure 1. Localization of Storytooling partners.

## 2. Characterisation of the territories

### Common Challenges

|                                                                                 | Hainaut,<br>Belgium | Nord-Pas-de-Calais,<br>France | Alentejo,<br>Portugal | Puerto de<br>Sagunto/Alto<br>Palancia, Spain | Ghar El Meleh,<br>Tunisia |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Population ageing.                                                              | X                   |                               | X                     | X                                            | X                         |
| High unemployment rates.                                                        | X                   |                               |                       | X                                            | X                         |
| Migration of younger generations searching for better employment opportunities. | X                   |                               |                       | X                                            | X                         |
| Population stagnation and loss.                                                 | X                   | X                             |                       |                                              |                           |
| Depressed employment market/ lack of job opportunities.                         |                     | X                             |                       | X                                            |                           |
| High unemployment among young people (15-24).                                   |                     | X                             |                       | X                                            |                           |
| Difficulty in attracting younger residents and/or skilled workers.              | X                   |                               | X                     |                                              |                           |
| Densely populated area.                                                         |                     | X                             |                       |                                              |                           |
| Low population density.                                                         |                     |                               | X                     |                                              |                           |
| Widespread failure at school.                                                   |                     | X                             |                       |                                              |                           |
| Poverty among young holseholds.                                                 |                     | X                             |                       |                                              |                           |
| Environmental threats to fishing - a vital economic activity.                   |                     |                               |                       |                                              | X                         |

### 2.1. Belgium: Playground - UNESCO Heritage site Gamification

Grand-Hornu is a former industrial site, now dedicated to contemporary creation. Two cultural entities coexist on this prestigious site: the CID - Centre for Innovation and Design, and the MACS - Museum of Contemporary Arts. As part of the Storytooling Laboratory, sixteen students from the Lycée provincial Hornu-Colfontaine drew their inspiration from the history and architecture of the former colliery to design a project integrating playful elements into the gardens of Grand-Hornu. The aim of the project was to gamify a UNESCO World Heritage site.



Figure 2. Administrative district of Mons-Borinage. Source : Réseau Assuétudes Mons-Borinage (RAMBo). [www.ramboasbl.be](http://www.ramboasbl.be).

**Geographical characterisation**

Grand-Hornu is located in the Walloon Region of Belgium, specifically in the Province of Hainaut, near the city of Mons, within the Mons-Borinage area, a post-industrial region historically known for coal mining. It is part of a narrow depression stretching over 60 kilometres from the Borinage, west of Mons, to the east of Charleroi, where a significant portion of the province’s population is concentrated. The traces of former industrial and urban landscapes are omnipresent: slag heaps, industrial wastelands, rows of small houses from old mining towns, and a dense network of canals and railways. This unique industrial heritage is now a cultural hub that connects historical significance with contemporary art and design exhibitions.

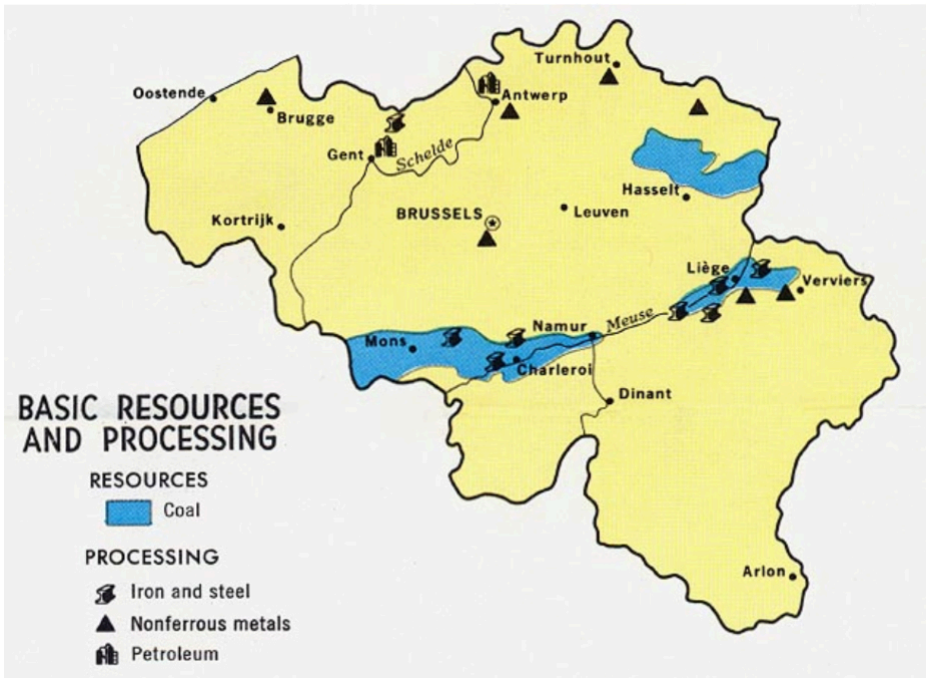


Figure3. Belgium basic resources and processing map.  
Source: Gifex.

**Socio-demographic characterisation**

Hainaut is one of the most densely populated provinces in Wallonia, Belgium, with a population density of around 355 inhabitants per km², contrasting sharply with the more rural and less populated regions of the country. However, like many post-industrial regions, Hainaut has faced a significant socio-

demographic shift since the decline of coal mining and heavy industry, leading to population stagnation and even losses in some areas. The Mons-Borinage region, where Grand-Hornu is located, experienced a similar pattern of depopulation as younger generations migrated to larger cities in search of better employment opportunities. Despite these challenges, recent efforts focused on cultural regeneration and economic diversification have contributed to stabilising the population in some parts of the province. Nevertheless, the growth of the ageing population remains a critical issue. Hainaut has one of the highest ageing indices in Wallonia, a trend exacerbated by a low fertility rate and the ongoing difficulty in attracting younger residents and skilled workers. This is partially due to the region's negative natural growth and limited opportunities in the past, though recent initiatives, such as creative industries and heritage tourism, have sought to reverse this trend by improving the region's socio-economic attractiveness and fostering local engagement through projects like Storytooling.

**Employment**

The employment situation in Hainaut, where Grand-Hornu is located, reflects the region's transition from a heavily industrial past to a more diversified economy. In the mid-20th century, the primary sector, driven by coal mining and heavy industry, was the region's largest employer. However, by 2021, the tertiary sector had become the dominant source of employment, employing over 70% of the workforce. This sector includes services related to commerce, education, health, and increasingly, culture and tourism, particularly thr-



ough initiatives like Grand-Hornu's Centre for Innovation and Design. The region's shift from industrial to service-based employment has been accompanied by ongoing challenges. Hainaut remains one of the provinces with the highest unemployment rates in Belgium, particularly among younger populations. The total unemployment rate in 2020 was 10.6%, significantly higher than the national average, with youth unemployment being particularly concerning. Many young people in Hainaut, especially those without higher education struggle to find stable employment due to the shift in demand towards more skilled jobs in the tertiary sector.

**Grand-Hornu UNESCO Heritage site Gamification**

The Grand-Hornu site welcomes around 35,000 visitors every year. In 2023, 3,793 of them were aged under 18, including individual visitors and school groups. This represents 10.75% of our annual visitor numbers. To encourage them to come and learn more about our local heritage, we have introduced many initiatives tailored to this young audience.

These include offering free admission to schools in the vicinity of the site and, for three months each year, offering a programme of educational activities for all schools from nursery to secondary level. The aim is to help young people to better understand their environment and discover the historical, industrial, social and economic dimensions of the region. At the same time, we are raising their awareness of disciplines such as contemporary art, design, architecture and innovation, through the museums on the site: the CID (Centre d'Innovation

et de Design) and the MACS (Musée des Arts Contemporains).

These themes, sometimes complex to approach, required innovative pedagogical approaches. To make the site more attractive and accessible not only to schools, but also to families with children and teenagers, we planned to ‘gamify’ the Grand-Hornu. The idea was to transform this UNESCO World Heritage Site into an interactive play area by creating a play structure inspired by the site's history and architectural features. This approach would have enabled children, parents and teachers to enjoy the Grand-Hornu in a stimulating and friendly setting, reinforcing its educational role while enhancing its unique heritage character.



Figure 4. Aerial photo of Grand-Hornu. Photo: CID au Grand-Hornu, Globalview.

## 2.2. France: The Imaginary of the Souvenir

The Autour du Louvre-Lens destination is part of the transformation of an industrial area that stretches across the Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield. Built on two international landmarks, the Louvre-Lens and UNESCO, it is an international short-stay cultural and events destination. It embodies a new generation of unique European destinations based on culture, people and creativity. We worked with a group of young people from the local mission of Lens-Liévin on the theme of ‘the imagination of memory’.

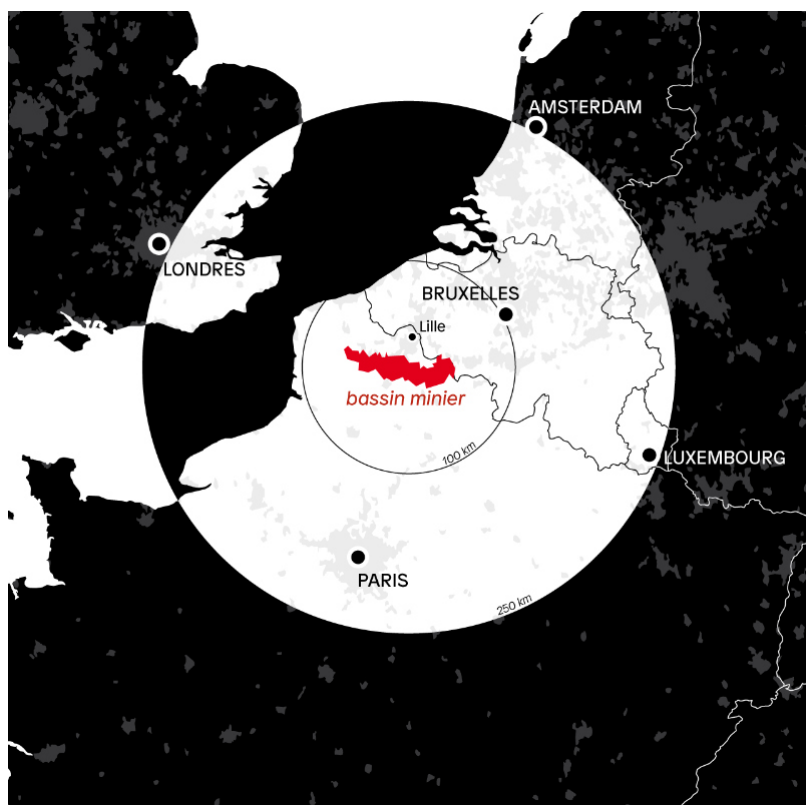


Figure 5. The Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield (Destination Around Louvre-Lens) in North Europe. Source: Mission Bassin minier.

### Geographical characterisation

The ‘Autour du Louvre-Lens’ destination is a gateway to Northern France, with links to Paris, Brussels and London in under 2 hours. Stretching 120 km from Bruay-la-Buissière to Valenciennes, it covers the post-industrial region of Northern France, historically known for its coal mines. The coalfield covers 1,200 km<sup>2</sup> in the departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais, or 9.5% of the surface area of Nord-Pas-de-Calais. It is

the western part of a coal deposit that extends across the Franco-Belgian border and outcrops in the Borinage region. This is a flat and urban region. During three centuries, from the 17th to the 20th century, coal mining shaped the landscape. It has had an impact on the topography through the extraction of coal and soil: mine subsidence or the appearance of slag heaps built by the accumulation of mine tailings.

The region is sparsely wooded, with most of the vegetation consisting of deciduous forest. The hydrography has been heavily impacted by mining, which has introduced a new landscape feature: subsidence ponds (caused either by mining subsidence in marshy areas or by the sinking of a slag heap and the rising of the phreatic table). These ponds are now used for leisure activities.

Local actors continue reconversion policies: landscaping redevelopment, requalification of industrial wastelands, preservation of identity markers inherited from the mine, and investment in major cultural and sports facilities, among others. Since 2012, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield has been on the World Heritage List.

The site's 120,000 hectares are made up of 109 individual properties, including pits, headframes, slag heaps, coal transport infrastructure, railway stations, mining districts and miners' villages with schools, religious buildings, community and health facilities, mining company offices, etc.

### ***Socio-demographic characterisation***

Today, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield, on which is located the tourism destination Around Louvre-Lens, is a densely populated area. The population density was 540 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> in 2020. In 2021, the departments of Pas-de-Calais and Nord have a combined population of over 4 million. 1 in 4 inhabitants live in the coalfield (1,065,828). Young people aged between 12 and 25 represented 17.6% of the population of the coalfield in 2020. Although the area is densely populated, the population continues to decline. If demographic trends continue, the proportion of young people in the coalfield will fall by 2.4% in 2070.

### ***Employment***

From the sixties, the decline of coal mining, caused by inadequate cost prices, has had devastating consequences for this mono-industrial territory: mass unemployment, and social, educational, demographic and sanitary difficulties. Economic conditions were no longer being met, the extraction stopped during the nineties. A vast conversion plan for miners still working was put in place. But the plan came up against the difficulties of re-employing miners, who were poorly trained and worn out by hard work. These employment difficulties are still felt today in the population.

Young people in the coalfield suffer from a combination of vulnerabilities: a depressed employment market, widespread failure at school and poverty among young households. In 2015, young people who had dropped out of school and had no qualifications (aged 16-24) in the coalfield (France) accounted for 24% of young people who had dropped

out of school in the Hauts-de-France region (INSEE), and 37.7% of the region's over-15s had no qualifications (2014).

Employers are looking for more highly qualified profiles. Almost half of the 15-24 age group in the coalfield is unemployed (42.9% in 2014). Urban poverty in this area is strongly influenced by this short educational pathway, which leads to insecure, menial jobs. Moreover, since the pandemic, recruitment difficulties in the tourism sector (hotels, restaurants, etc.) have intensified.

### ***The imaginary of memory and souvenirs: shaping tourists' imagination***

According to a survey carried out by the destination in 2022, the majority of visitors are visitors of all ages from the region (71.7% of French visitors are from the Hauts-de-France region, compared with 59% in 2015). However, taking regional, national and international tourists together, only 13% of visitors are under 30 (5.5% of visitors were under 25 in 2015), and 8 out of 10 young people are first-time visitors (in 2015). While 50% of young people rely on word-of-mouth to prepare for their stay in the destination, young people in the region have a relative understanding of their heritage, which is perceived as an everyday object. It is therefore essential for this destination to amplify young people's voices in shaping the tourist imagination of the region's heritage and to enable them to reclaim it. That's why we worked on the theme of 'the imaginary of memory' in France, to help youth build their own imaginary and perception of post-industrial heritage.



## 2.3. Portugal: Conservation awareness and the “beauty of destruction”

In Portugal, we worked with young people from the district of Évora, mostly living in the city of Évora, the capital of the district. The historical centre of Évora is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is often referred to as a “city museum”. Inspired by the natural, economic and cultural landscapes that surround the city, we started with the theme “the beauty of destruction” to work on the heritage and landscape of the marble mines in Alentejo and create narratives to raise awareness for environmental conservation and sustainable tourism.

### ***Geographical characterisation***

Évora is one of the districts of Continental Portugal and is situated in the central part of the country, approximately 132km from the capital, Lisbon, in the Alentejo region. The district of Évora is predominantly flat, with vast plain areas that characterise the Alentejo landscape. We can also find some moderate elevations, such as Serra de São Mamede (1025m), and scattered small hills.

The hydrography of the Évora district is marked by the presence of seasonal rivers and streams that cross the region. The climate is Mediterranean, characterised by hot and dry summers and mild and rainy winters. Temperatures in summer can reach high levels, but are generally moderate in the winter. The precipitation is more abundant in the winter months and scarcer during the summer. In this region, the natural vegetation is predominantly composed of heathers, holm oaks, cork oaks, and olive trees, characteristic of the

Mediterranean biome. Additionally, there are extensive agricultural areas dedicated to the cultivation of cereals, vineyards, and olive groves.



Figure 6. Évora district in the context of national territory. Source: Wikipedia, byTUBS.

### ***Socio-demographic characterisation***

Alentejo is the largest region in Portugal in terms of territory (31.551 km<sup>2</sup>). Simultaneously, it is the region with the lowest population density: only 24.2 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (in contrast to 113.6 on the mainland), mostly residing in places with up to 5,000 inhabitants. The region experienced a desertification phenomenon since the 1970s, which has been countered by actions aimed at socioeconomic development. Thus, although the population of Alentejo is typically characterised by successive population losses, in recent deca-



des, there has been a deceleration of population loss. The district of Évora is characterised by a relatively positive trend in terms of population, managing over time to create levels of employability and quality of life that have led to its affirmation in the regional context as the sub-region with the most positive population dynamics. An ageing population is a reality in Portugal and, to a greater extent, throughout the Alentejo region. Évora district presents an ageing index even above the regional average, which is undoubtedly a negative factor for its development. This unfavourable trend initially stemmed from migratory phenomena but is now the result of endogenous factors such as negative natural growth and the inability to attract population, a trend that is, however, undergoing a reversal as mentioned earlier, with the deceleration of population decline.

**Employment**

The employment situation in Évora was classified into 6 different groups: Self-employed as an employer, Self-employed as an individual, Unpaid family worker, Salaried employee, Active member of a cooperative, and Other. The largest workforce in the years 1960 and 2021 is salaried employees, while the smallest number in 2021 is “Other”. The tertiary sector, which deals with formal or informal services oriented towards commercial activities, is the one that employs the most people in Évora today (77.0%). In 1960, the sector that employed the most people was the primary sector, related to livestock and agricultural activities. The total unemployment rate in Évora in 2021 was 6.3%. This rate is slightly higher among men.

**Marble quarries: industry and heritage**

The stone industry is present in eight of the fourteen municipalities of the Évora district. They include the exploration of limestones, granites, schists and marbles. Of these, marble quarrying is the most important.



Figure 7. Map of Évora district. Source: <https://portugal-verdegaio.blogs.sapo.pt/4865.html>

The marble of Alentejo presents a historical exploitation that dates back to the Roman period, in the first century. The activity gained a new breath at the beginning of the last century, with the arrival of industrialisation. In the last two decades, problems of commercial management, deregulation of the territory and poor transformation have led to a crisis in the marble sector, even though this ornamental stone, for its quantity and quality, presents an enormous economic potential to be explored. In recent years, however, the cultural dimension of the stone industry has emerged as a result of sensitivity to ecological issues and the study, preservation, and dissemination of testimonies, remains and memories of this industry.

Alentejo's marble industrial heritage has been dynamised in two ways: through scientific research and the Marble Route, an industrial tourism offer whose central elem-

ent is the marble in its various dimensions. Both the research program and the tourism offer have been able to promote the marble territory, affirm its potential and advertise an active sector.

Together with these practices, projects such as Storytooling reinforce the study and promotion of the Alentejo’s marble area to the national and international public, but especially to young people, stimulating their knowledge of the history, the resources of the territory and the memory of places as an important element of cultural identity.

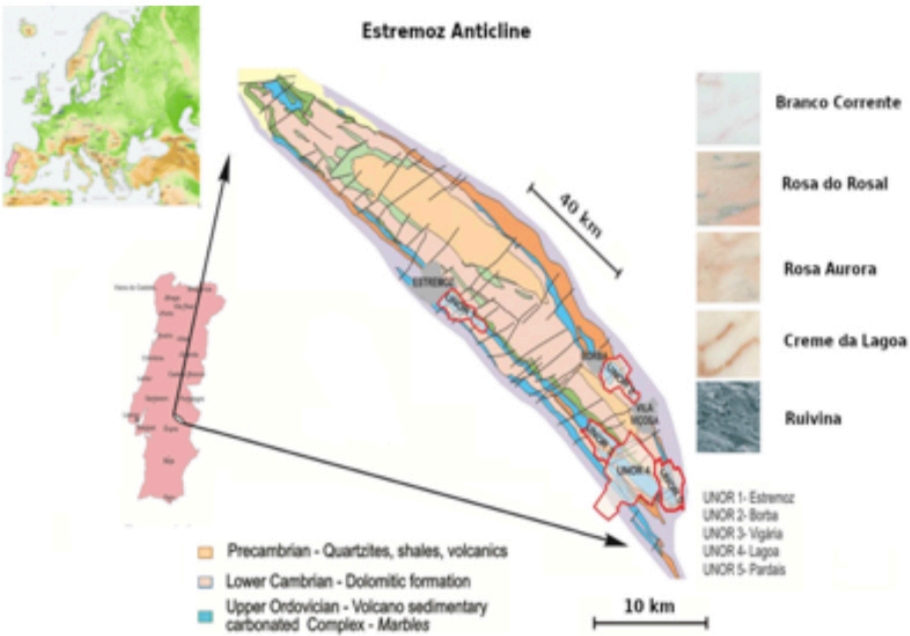


Figure 8. Marble territory. Source: Armando Quintas, 2021.

## 2.4. Spain: Relationship between rural, peripheral and urban areas

Puerto de Sagunto is an urban area belonging to the municipality of Sagunto (Valencia) that has an important industrial heritage. It is also a unique example of a twentieth-century factory town, especially known for the manufacture of iron and steel since its foundation.

The history of Puerto de Sagunto began in 1900, when the Basque businessmen Ramón de la Sota and Eduardo Aznar decided to expand their shipping business on the beaches of Sagunto. The company “Compañía Minera Sierra Menera” was specially dedicated to iron mining in the mines of Ojos Negros (Teruel). The aim was to export this material by rail from the mines to Puerto, where a new industrial plant was to be built: the “Compañía Siderúrgica del Mediterráneo”.

The company was founded in 1917 and experienced great moments of prosperity. However, in 1936, with the Spanish Civil War, the company was plunged into a deep crisis. In 1940, the Basque company Altos Hornos de Vizcaya took over the company and its manufacturing facilities for its own benefit. But in 1984, with the Industrial Reconversion Law, the factory was definitely closed until today. And its remains are part of the heritage of this city. We can mainly find industrial remains that were preserved after the dismantling of the steelworks. The current heritage site is made up of real estate, factory architecture, engineering elements, service buildings, and the houses of engineers, workers and other employees.

The railway tracks that used to run the trains that reached the

port were left unused after the closure of the company. The path is, today, conditioned for hiking and cycling, running from the rural area of Teruel to the city of Puerto de Sagunto. It is the longest greenway in Spain.

### *Geographical characterisation*



Figure 9. Ojos Negros Greenway itinerary. Source: <https://rutas.viasverdes.com/es/m/via-verde-de-ojos-negros-teruel#1750334701619>

The Ojos Negros Greenway passes through three Spanish provinces: Teruel, Castellón and Valencia. This project has worked with young people from Puerto de Sagunto (Valencia) and travelled part of the greenway through the area of the Alto Palancia region (Castellón). Therefore, it is relevant to contextualise both places: Puerto de Sagunto and Alto Palancia region.

Puerto de Sagunto is a population centre within the municipality of Sagunto, located south of Almenara and Canet de Berenguer, east of the population centre of Sagunto-Ciudad, west of the Mediterranean Sea, and north of Puzol. It

is located about 25 km north of Valencia. According to the 2019 census, it has 44,428 inhabitants. It is the largest population centre in the Camp de Morvedre region.

Camp de Morvedre is a region of great physical diversity, a diversity that includes the mountains that serve as a natural border with the regions of Plana Baja to the north, Alto Palancia and Campo de Turia to the interior and the Huerta Norte to the south. Between these orographic limits extends a valley, through which runs the Palancia River, at the mouth of which is located Puerto de Sagunto.

The Alto Palancia region is located between two mountain ranges declared Natural Parks, the Sierra Calderona and the Sierra de Espadán, together with its bordering section with Teruel and their respective natural spaces, the Sierra de Javalambre, which explains the high natural richness and diversity of the territory.

### ***Socio-demographic characterisation***

On one hand, Puerto de Sagunto is a population centre within the municipality of Sagunto, located about 25 km north of Valencia city. The city is divided into two urban centers: Sagunto city and Puerto de Sagunto, being in Puerto de Sagunto where we can find all the industrial remains and history. It is important to clarify this fact as the following information is related to the whole city, the two urban centres.

According to data published by the National Institute of Statistics on January 1, 2021, the number of inhabitants in Sagunto is 67,043, 130 inhabitants less than in 2020, and 71.80% of the population of the region. Currently, the popula-

tion density is 506,52 inhabitants per square kilometre.

The average age of the population, according to the National Institute of Statistics data, is 45,43 years. Likewise, the largest population sector is the 15-64 year old, but we must take into account how the population over 65 years old is increasing and the population of 0-14 years old is decreasing.

Sagunto presents a regressive pyramid typical of developed societies, with a narrowing of the base as a result of the declining birth rate, a wide peak due to ageing and a widened centre reflecting immigration. In general terms, the weight of the population groups over 40 years of age can be seen, a symptom of ageing, although the groups over 50 years of age are also noteworthy. The effect of the two main demographic phenomena observed in Sagunto, ageing and the growth in the volume of the immigrant population of foreign origin, can be perceived.

On the other hand, located in the southwest of the province of Castellón, the Alto Palancia region is the fourth most populated region behind Plana Alta, Plana Baixa and Baix Maestrat. It is made up of 27 municipalities, spread over an area of 965.17 km<sup>2</sup>. Based on the 2019 census, the population number is 23,753 inhabitants, and the population density of the area is 24.61 (Inhab./Km<sup>2</sup>). The Alto Palancia region is one of the districts with the highest life expectancy in the Valencian Community. As is happening in Sagunto, the increase in life expectancy, together with the decrease in the birth rate, is leading to a progressive and serious ageing of the population in the area. It should be noted that in the case of



the Alto Palancia region, the above reasons, combined with the high rates of emigration to large cities, have resulted in more than half of the municipalities in the region suffering from very worrying situations of severe demographic decline.

**Employment**

To understand the demographic problems of rural areas such as the Alto Palancia region, we must consider the area’s economic situation and the high unemployment rates. The lack of job opportunities ends up forcing the youngest, of working age, to establish their residence near where the work is, that is, around the population centres with the largest number of inhabitants.

Despite the migration from rural areas to urban cities, we cannot ignore the fact that Spain closed 2023 with a youth unemployment rate of 28.36%, according to the National Institute of Statistics. This means that some 481.500 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 can work, so they are part of the active population, but are unable to find a job. Transferred to the European Union, our country led in unemployment in January 2024, ahead of Sweden, Portugal, Greece and Italy.

**Urban-rural relationships around Puerto Sagunto**

The Ojos Negros Greenway runs nowadays through a truly diverse territory. The beginning of the route is located in a territory affected by depopulation, and it ends in an industrialised city where the arrival of workers is growing exponentially. The increase of new population arriving from other territories and the vast material heritage in disuse is cur-

rently assuming that history is falling into oblivion.

Taking this reality into account, the Storytooling project has sought to engage the participating youth in a dynamic process of rediscovering and reconnecting with the history of their territory through creative methodologies and innovative approaches. As the industry always seems to be linked to the masculine, this initiative has encouraged the youth to delve into the rich cultural and historical narratives of the area they call home through the work of women artists.

By fostering this renewed sense of connection, the project highlights the importance of preserving local heritage and enhances the tourist appeal of their community and its surrounding regions. This endeavour aims to celebrate the unique stories and traditions of the area, transforming them into powerful tools for cultural promotion and sustainable development.



Figure 10. Bicycle route with the participants. Photo: Mario Zamora.

## 2.5.Tunisia: Digital andTerritorial Attractiveness

Tourism presents significant potential for the region of Ghar El Melh. Its rich history, cultural heritage, and natural beauty make it an attractive destination for eco-tourism and cultural tourism. The region's traditional architecture, including the Ottoman forts and the Dar el Bhar (the house of the sea), is of particular interest to visitors. However, the town faces challenges in terms of infrastructure development and promoting sustainable tourism.

### *Geographical characterisation*

The Ghar El Melh/Sidi Ali El Mekki site, located in the southeast of the Bizerte governorate in northern Tunisia, has been a RAMSAR-listed wetland since 2007. The town of Ghar El Melh also received the “RAMSAR Wetland City” label during the 13th session of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands, held in Dubai in October 2018. The site is characterized by physiographic constraints and a scarcity of arable land and fresh water, which is unusual for northern Tunisia. However, these challenges were overcome as early as the 17th century by the Andalusian diaspora, who introduced ingenious and unique agricultural practices, such as the Ramli cultivation.

The Sidi Ali El Mekki lagoon is situated between the Ghar El Melh lagoon and the sea, bordered to the south by the Eddmina-Ennadhour mountain range. It covers an area of approximately 220 hectares, including a 180-hectare water body and about 40 hectares of orchards along its banks. The lagoon is separated from the sea by a 2.5 km long strip and

from the Ghar El Melh lagoon by the new road to the Ghar El Melh port.

The Sidi Ali Mekki and Ghar El Melh area boasts exceptional ecological, landscape, historical, and cultural heritage. Its proximity to the capital, its scenic values, and the quality of its beaches attract significant visitors, leading to traffic and pollution issues without major economic benefits.

Unique in Tunisia and throughout the world, ‘Ramli Culture’ agricultural developments are the exception in the region. The Gattayas are islets in the Sidi Ali El Mekki lagoon, and the Mlellahs are small plots on the marshes bordering the Ghar El Melh lagoon. These highly unusual gardens, were created in the 17th century by the Andalusian diaspora who were forced to settle in an area lacking in agricultural land. They are naturally irrigated by rainwater that is stored and floats on the surface of the sea through the movements of the tides. Nevertheless, these crops are grown under unfavourable agro-environmental conditions: scarcity of arable land and water resources.



Figure 11. Ghar el Meleh, 1:10. Source: Google Maps 2025.



***Socio-demographic characterisation***

Ghar El Melh is a small coastal town in north-east Tunisia with a rich maritime history, shaped by its role as a fortified port under Phoenician, Roman and Ottoman control. With a population of around 10,000, the town is predominantly rural and family-oriented, with an average age of 30. The local economy is centred on fishing, agriculture and seasonal tourism. Fishing, particularly in the lagoon, remains vital but is threatened by environmental problems such as pollution and over-fishing. Agriculture is also important, with favourable conditions for growing vegetables and olives, although water scarcity is a problem. Although tourism remains underdeveloped, Ghar El Melh has potential as a destination for ecological and cultural tourism due to its natural beauty and historic sites, such as the Ottoman forts.

The town is slowly urbanising, but the migration of younger generations to the cities has led to an ageing population in some areas. Balancing modern needs with the preservation of cultural heritage will be key to the city’s future growth.

***Employment***

The unemployment rate in Ghar El Melh, like in other rural areas of Tunisia, is higher than in the larger cities. The local economy relies heavily on fishing, agriculture, and seasonal tourism. Many young people, especially those with higher education, leave the region searching for more stable and lucrative job opportunities.

Despite its historical importance, Ghar El Melh faces socio-economic challenges, including higher unemployment rates

and more limited access to education than urban areas. Many young people migrate to cities such as Tunis for better opportunities.

***Gattayas: the Ramli cultivation***

Ramli cultivation, commonly known as “gattayas”, is a farming system where cultivable land is laid out as a fine management of the variation in sea level, overhung by a thin sheet of fresh water. The beating caused by this tide is used to irrigate crops. This type of farming, which involves creating arable land on the sebkha, is unique in the world. It dates back to the Andalusian occupation in the 16th and 17th centuries. It's a farming method based on a natural irrigation system. This method allows for cultivation without irrigation by using a thin layer of freshwater that floats above the saltwater, thus ensuring two crop cycles per year. The crops are protected from drying winds and sea spray by reed screens, creating a microclimate favourable to plant development.

Passed down from generation to generation, today this cultivation method is now under threat (including by the effects of climate change) and only a handful of farmers continue to practice this traditional agriculture. Even though it is subsistence-based and allows for the sale of the bulk of the production, due to the small size of the farms, it does not seem as profitable as so-called “classic” farming systems. These plots can be considered as private family gardens or vegetable patches that meet family needs, with the surplus being sold. Located on the coastal strips, they support arboriculture, particularly vineyards, as well as vegetable crops. The plots on the islets are dedicated to vegetable cultivation.

### 3.The Storytooling methodology

Based on the needs of each territory, as well as the identified themes for intervention, we implemented a common methodology for involving the local youth and creative experts in co-design processes based on the local industrial heritage, rural needs and sustainable tourism goals. The main objectives of the Storytooling Laboratory were to involve young people in the co-creation of new narratives for post-industrial and rural heritage.

Together with a creative expert, each group aimed to develop a tourist offer related to their territory and local theme. The methodology had two main phases: the building of the working groups in each territory and the development of the local workshops. The choice of the creative experts, combined with the different needs and themes in each territory, led to distinct local approaches in the design of the workshops.

#### 3.1. Building the Groups

##### *Creative experts*

A common open call was launched to find five experienced creatives passionate about cultural heritage and interested in working with young people within participatory processes. In each territory, the selected creative was responsible for presenting a plan on how to engage the group of participants in the co-creation and prototyping workshops, describing the methodologies they would use in each phase of the process. The local themes, aligned with the expertise of the creatives, moulded the workshops to the local realities.

Given the particular needs and the different themes in each territory, the call included specific profile criteria per country:

**Belgium:** a designer specialised in outdoor equipment and public outdoor furniture.

**France:** a professional photographer or tour operator specialised in photo tours.

**Portugal:** a designer or sculptor with experience with marble or marble waste.

**Spain:** a creative with experience in creative or artistic projects with a territorial focus.

**Tunisia:** a creative with a strong understanding of digital mediation and practical experience in development.





Lucile Soufflet | Belgium



Photo: Lucile Soufflet. Source: Waw Magazine. © GIG.

Lucile has a degree in industrial design from La Cambre, one of Belgium's leading art and design schools. At the start of her career, she worked in ceramics, notably reinterpreting certain pieces in the Musée Royal de Mariemont collection and producing a series for the Royal Boch earthenware factory.

However, it was in urban furniture design that Lucile Soufflet specialised, having acquired a taste for this discipline during an Erasmus exchange in London. This was the starting point for her thinking on the city and public spaces, where design is still relatively absent. Her research focuses on individuality, relationships and the playful side of things. From careful observation of social behaviour to the materials of the everyday environment, she takes a very personal approach to her work, creating disconcerting objects.

Working in wood, concrete, and stainless steel, Lucile Soufflet created circular benches that adorn many squares in Wallonia, Brussels and France, inviting people to come together. Favouring an artisanal approach, she creates one-off

commissions for local authorities keen to embellish public spaces by offering functional furniture in shapes that meet basic needs.

Originally from Charleroi, a region associated with Belgium's industrial and mining history, Lucile wanted to work with the CID at Grand-Hornu, which is located in a former coal mine, because of her family history. Lucile Soufflet also works as a consultant for architects' offices, and her work has been exhibited at numerous events. She has received multiple awards, including the 'Young Artists' prize in 2000, the innovation prize at the Equip'Hotel trade fair in Paris and the special jury prize at the lanchelevici international competition in 2010. For this promising career and her contribution to the beautification of public spaces in Wallonia, Lucile Soufflet was made a Knight of the Walloon Merit on 15 September 2016.

Jean-Michel André | France



Photo: Jean-Michel André.

Jean-Michel André is an Art photographer who has been exploring the French region of Pas de Calais for 10 years.

His photography is at the crossroads of visual and documentary interpretations.

His approach is based on a political and poetic vision of the territory. He questions its limits, its memory and its evolution. The notion of territory and questions relating to landscape are part of his research and creative work. He also explores the idea of circulation, particularly economic, financial and migratory flows. This is one of the common threads running through all his series. Having spent much of his life outside France, he can also claim that his travels nourish his work. He prefers to take the side roads, revealing the shadows and inviting us to explore an intimate geography.

Jean-Michel has taken part in several projects where he has been able to interact with local young people on heritage issues. For him, artistic and cultural transmission is a way of making photography accessible to a wide audience. It's also an opportunity to exchange ideas, share, and open doors to reflection and creation.

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**Rui Horta Pereira | Portugal**



Photo: Rui Horta Pereira.

Rui has a degree in Sculpture from the Fine Arts Faculty at the University of Lisbon. Since 2000, his work has focused mainly on sculpture and drawing, on how the construction of the creative process is not dissociated from the creator's action, in all its aspects – whether ethical, social, environmental – and how this relationship can be achieved effectively. He has been exhibiting regularly since 2010 and is represented by Galeria das Salgadeiras. He has also been working in the field of animated cinema since 1999 as an animator and screenwriter on Isabel Aboim's films 'De cabeça perdida', 'Taxi', 'Selo ou não Sê-lo', 'Vacas', 'Céu e a terra', 'Idade Óssea'.

Mediation is one of the activities with a special focus and presence in Rui's work, alongside his work as an artist, having collaborated with various institutions since 1998. One aspect to which Rui Horta Pereira has devoted his attention and research to developing and creating materials that allow autonomous workshops to be developed. Materials that can



suggest creative dynamics that can be interpreted and used widely. An example of this is the ‘Bag of stones’ project, a set of 15 bags each containing 15 small sculptures, all different from each other, and a leaflet with 30 suggestions/poems to interpret and develop actions, which can be graphic, performative, sound or contemplative.

**Irmina Insaurrealde Andrés | Spain**



Photo: Europimpulse Network.

From a very young age, Irmina was greatly interested in different artistic disciplines, especially in plastic and visual arts. She studied Fashion Design at the School of Design in Valencia (Spain) and later decided to move to Budapest, where, in addition to continuing her textile studies, she worked in different areas related to Design and Marketing for five years.

On her return to Spain, she became interested in education. So, she specialised in Art Education intending to transmit the same passion that she feels for the arts to future generations. Currently, as a teacher and educator, Irmina uses working methodologies from a social and practical perspective, help-

ing students reflect on their environment and apply this knowledge to self-expression.

**Ines Cheniour | Tunisia**



Photo: Ines Cheniour.

Ines is the CEO of COMMITT Agency, a consultant in strategy, communication, entrepreneurship and a trainer in communication, project management and Design Thinking. A graphic designer by training and thought, Ines Cheniour is a social entrepreneur who offers her strategic advice as a consultant in communication, entrepreneurship and as a trainer in Design Thinking. Experienced in providing training and guidance in the field of social innovation, she has a notable track record. She conducted training and mentoring programmes for employees worldwide, focusing on enhancing their social innovation skills.



*Involving young people*

Storytooling aimed to create an opportunity for local youth aged between 18 and 25 to come together, share ideas, and create meaningful projects that positively impact their communities. During the program, participants received hands-on training from experienced creative experts in various methodologies, based on design thinking and participatory processes. They contributed with their ideas, expertise and time to make the workshops spaces of participation and co-creation.

At its planning phase, Storytooling's proposed methodology was based on the observation that the project partners are all located in territories that share socioeconomic challenges such as an ageing population, high youth unemployment rate and/or a lack of job opportunities, especially in rural areas. These challenges often lead to the migration of younger generations to bigger cities, and create a need for projects that foster the social integration of young people who are unemployed and/or out of formal educational paths. In this context, the Storytooling Laboratory aimed to conduct actions in favour of the involvement of young people in territorial projects.

Despite having a common baseline for the selection of volunteers, each partner adapted the search to local realities and challenges and created different strategies to reach the target group. The local strategies included open calls, contact with local agencies responsible for unemployed integration in the job market, and contact with local universities and professional-based schools. It resulted in a total number of XX young people who participated in Storytooling workshops.



Figure 12. Belgium: Teo, Léna, Ousmane, Clément, Salvatore, Leandro, Giuseppe, Mathis, Ludwick, Jorel, Allan, Matt, Alia, Bilel, Kilian, Gianni. Photo: CID au Grand-Hornu.



Figure 13. France: Maxime Brunet, Chérine Djarer, Fanny Belanger-Deschacht, Matthieu Dhollande, Léa Mackowiak.

**Volunteers Roles**

In each territory, Storytooling partners have sought young volunteers interested in the project themes and open to contributing their expertise, ideas and time to co-create local prototypes within the Storytooling Laboratory. Volunteer roles included:

- Participating in brainstorming sessions and ideation exercises.
- Helping in developing project proposals and action plans.
- Providing feedback during the project implementation phase.



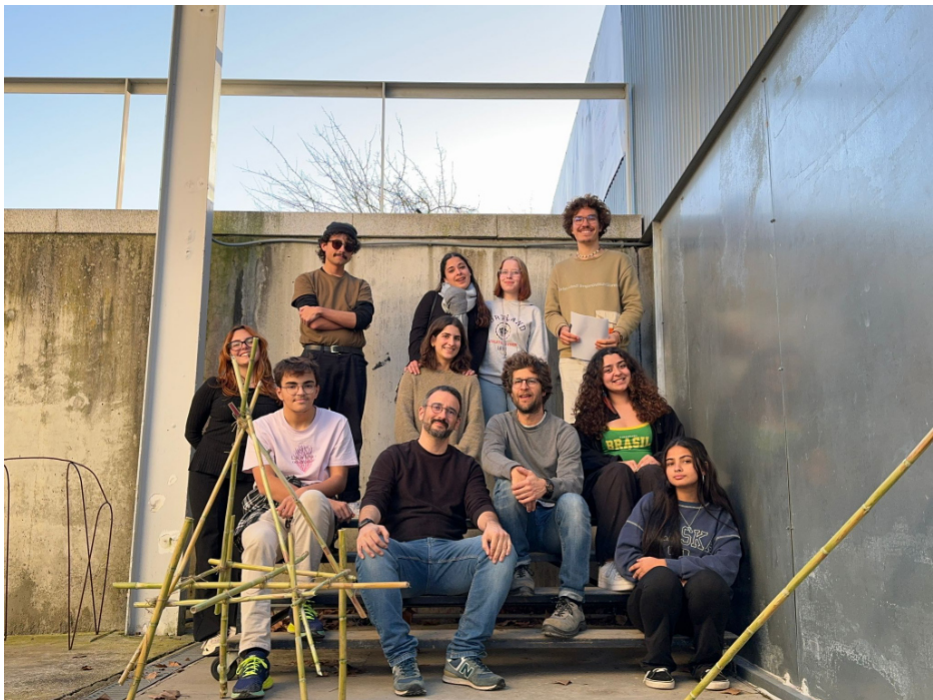


Figure 14. Portugal: Ana Lourinho, Bruna Oliveira , Carolina Fortio, Catarina Drumond , Cláudia Santinho, Débora Medrado, João Maria Canha, Pedro Retzke, Pedro Seiça, Rosa Aboim.. Photo: \_ARTERIA\_LAB.



Figure 16. Spain: Adriana Mora Sanchís, María Ruiperez Sánchez, Eva Enguádanos Palancia, Úrsula Bordanova, María Gómez Martínez, Mariam Spataro Canet, Sara Tejedor Gil, Toni Fons Fernández, Ioan Alexandru Raducanu. Photo: Mario Zamora.



Figure 15. Tunisia: Safa Borgi, Hela Khelifi, Rahma Ben Ghanem, Sarra Ben Ammar, Myriam Dhaoui, Yasmina Anane, Nour El Houda Kacem, Arbi Limam, Haythem Jenouiz, Ahlem Zghidi. Photo: TICDCE.

### 3.2. Storytooling Laboratory Roadmap

The Storytooling Laboratory path was designed to involve the participants in the creation process, making them more than learners, but active actors in the co-creation of the laboratory and its results. Although having a common structure, the Storytooling Laboratory was designed to adapt easily to different contexts. Different tools and methodologies were applied in each territory to achieve the goal of co-creating new narratives for local industrial and rural heritage.

By involving the participants in a co-design methods, we hoped also to foster critical thinking, leadership and inter-peer communication.

The Storytooling Laboratory used a structured methodology divided into four distinct but interconnected phases: co-creation, prototyping, testing, and communicating. Each phase builds on the previous one to foster collaboration, creativity, and actionable results. This approach engaged participants in hands-on, reflective, and iterative activities.

Below is a general description of each phase, and examples from the local Storytooling workshops.

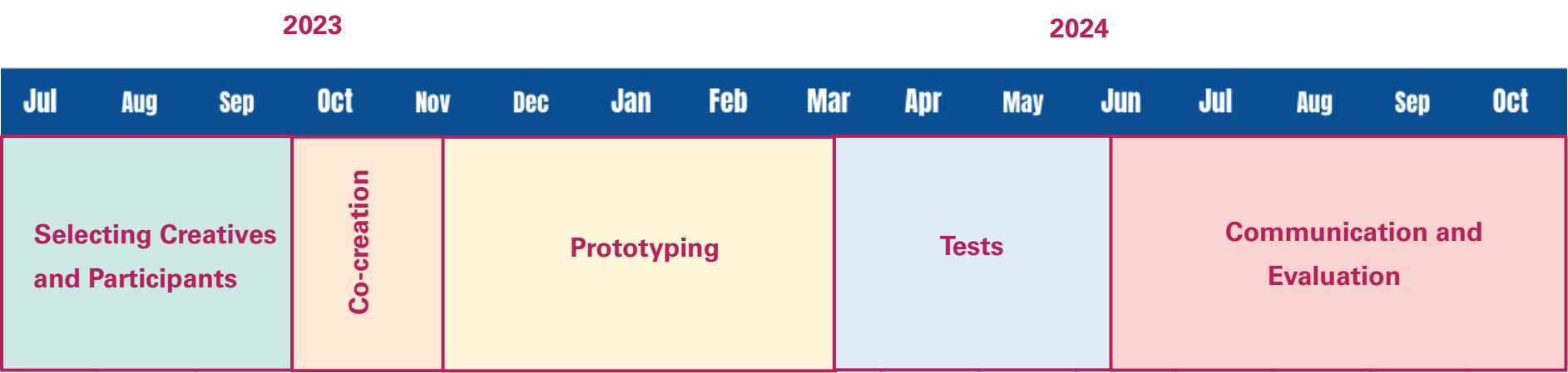


Figure 17. Storytooling Laboratory path, showing the four phases (co-creation, prototyping, testing, communicating).



Co-creation

The co-creation workshop was an immersive and exploratory process designed to engage participants with the territories, local themes and conceptualisation of ideas. Although the programs differed in each territory, this workshop can be divided into three main phases: immersion in the territory, experimentation with techniques, and conceptualisation and ideation.

Immersion in the territory

In each location, participants were guided through an immersion in the territory, focusing on the local industrial and/or rural heritage that the group would adress to co-create new narratives and touristic outcomes. Activities such as guided tours, interviews and free walks helped the groups build an in-depth understanding of each place’s historical, socioeconomic, cultural and touristic contexts. In this phase, participants observed, reflected and documented the experience, capturing their insights through notes, sketches, photos and conversations. The immersion in the territory ensured a shared foundational knowledge about the local themes and helped to create a repository of inspirations for the next phases.





Experimentation with techniques

Based on the expertise of the creatives mediating the workshop, and considering the local materials, heritage and narratives, participants explored different techniques of art, design and experimental research. This workshop phase aimed to foster the analysis and interaction with the local themes, as well as the dialogue between participants. The activities ranged from sketching and research to individual reflection and creative experimentation. Hands-on activities like mapping, material exploration and creative exercises helped build a joint knowledge and confidence among participants, essential for the conceptualisation and ideation phase.





Conceptualisation and ideation

The final phase of the co-creation workshop involved the co-creation of ideas that could provide new narratives and new touristic offers based on local industrial and/or rural heritage. Through brainstorming and experimentation sessions, participants collaboratively generate and refine ideas. This phase included group discussions, mapping and classification of ideas, and developing concepts and themes. With the mediation of the creatives, participants have summarised their observations and experiences into ideas that could be the base for a prototype. The results of the local co-creation workshops can be found in the Storytooling Ideas Book.



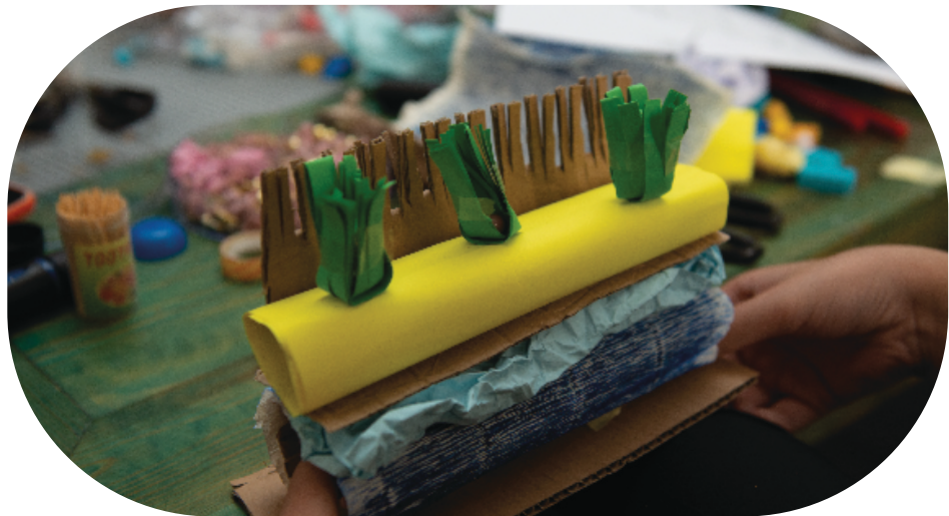
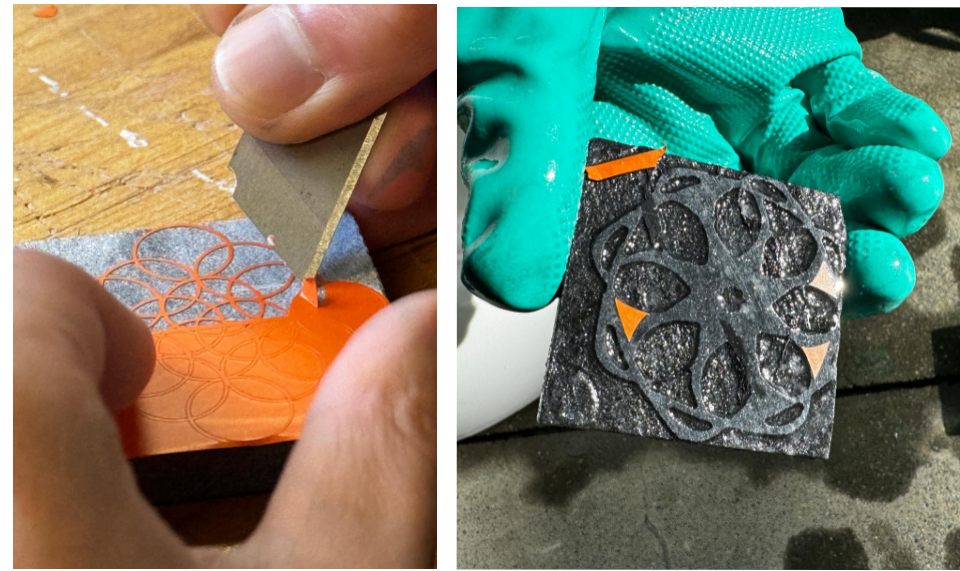


Prototyping

The prototyping workshop aimed to transform conceptual ideas into tangible forms by equipping participants with technical skills for prototyping. This workshop involved creating physical or digital prototypes, such as models, activities or detailed sketches, to visualise the proposed solutions in each territory. This phase emphasised collaboration and interactivity, encouraging participants to share skills and perspectives to refine their ideas and produce outputs.



The local ideas book served as a conversation starter, inviting critique, suggestions and discussions within the groups to decide which idea to prototype or to create a new final idea based on the previous ones. This iterative approach aimed to foster innovation and ensure that ideas were grounded in relevance, practicality and feasibility. The final prototypes developed within the local prototyping workshops can be found in Storytooling Prototypes Proof of Concept.





Testing

Storytooling Laboratory testing phase was centred on evaluating the prototypes in real-world or controlled environments, gathering feedback to assess the ideas’ feasibility, functionality and attractiveness. Each territory had a different methodology for testing its prototype, based on the nature of the object or activity developed, and on local dynamics and partnerships. The testing methodologies included small-scale implementations, internal tests, public presentations and exhibitions.

Testing is not just about identifying flaws but also discovering opportunities. This phase is crucial for understanding how the designs interact with users, stakeholders, and the territory. By taking part in the test of prototypes, participants can gain awareness of success and/or necessary redesign, and insights

that might lead to changes in their ideas. This guided process emphasises the importance of adaptability and resilience in the creative process.





Communicating

Testing the prototypes was also connected with the necessity of communicating both the processes of Storytooling Laboratory and its results. The communication phase focused on presenting the outcomes of the workshops and ensuring the dissemination of the prototypes, narratives, and tests. This phase involved the creation of diverse dissemination materials and moments, such as public presentations, brochures or exhibitions, that documented the project's journey and results, sharing them with stakeholders and communities. Communicating with different audiences outside the group of participants can foster the understanding of the connections between creating and implementing a project. Together with the test of prototypes, communicating is an opportunity to celebrate achievements, reflect on lessons learned and inspire further work.





## 4. Interviewing the Process

The design and implementation of the Storytooling Laboratory was challenging in several ways, and the biggest challenges were related to running a common process in five different territories, each with its specificities in geography, communities, culture, heritage and issues to be addressed. The local workshops served as prototypes of the idealised programme, and transforming this process into a common framework required not only observing the organisational ch-

### 4.1. Partners' Challenges

*Zoé Luc, CID at Grand-Hornu (Belgium)*

**How easy was it to find a group of participants? What challenges did you face? Did you have to change the initial group's profile?**

It was really difficult to find a group that met the criteria set by the project. In Belgium there is a programme for young people who don't have a job, but working with them can be complicated, sometimes they are not committed to the process. They come for a day, two days, and then they leave the workshop or the training they are in. We understood from the beginning that this would not be possible. Our last option was to contact a technical college. In Belgium there is a bad image of these fields, so we wanted to show that this kind of option is as good as the general school in Belgium.

**What do you think was the best part of the methodology and the biggest challenge in the implementation of the workshops?**

The best part was the visit to the site, the discovery of the site. It was a big part of the process because some of the

allenges involved in the implementation of the workshops, but more importantly listening to the experiences and visions of the different actors in the process. To grasp more information about the challenges and impacts of Storytooling workshops and help the design of the Storytooling Laboratory methodology, we have conducted interviews with consortium partners, creatives, participants, and other local stakeholders.

participants live near the site and never came. It was something that was really interesting for them, and they were impressed. It was also interesting to see how they worked through the creative process and the team spirit that was developed. But one of the bad aspects of the workshop was that the participants were very competitive. We divided them into four groups, and they were really invested in the mission, but they were also super competitive.

**In general, how do you evaluate this experience with the Storytooling methodology? And how do you think it can be improved in the future if you want to repeat the workshops?**

It was too long. The fact that all the parts were separated by several months made the process too long. The participants were no longer invested in the project when we met them later. I think that was the biggest problem with the project. Maybe it would be better to have all the workshops within three months.



### ***Solène Servin, ALL (France)***

**Was it easy for you to find the participants? What challenges did you face? Did you have to adapt the initial profile we had in mind?**

In France, we started with a group of six young people. Then, in the prototype phase, we only had five, and in the implementation phase, we had three. It wasn't easy. We worked with an organisation for the professional integration of young people between the ages of 15 and 30. They have a pool of young people who need help with their professional integration. We selected people who were involved in the CEJ (Contrat d'Engagement Jeune), a kind of contract with the organisation for professional integration, which includes participation in projects proposed by the local mission. In return, participants receive a small salary. CEJ participants are obliged to take part in projects, but they can choose which projects they want to take part in. Within CEJ, the participants are between 18 and 25 years old, so this was the target of Storytooling from the beginning.

Initially, 20 people expressed interest in the Storytooling workshops, and 11 confirmed they would attend. However, only six people turned up on the first day. So it wasn't difficult to find the target group, but it was difficult to get them on board. A lot of them didn't come and didn't explain why they didn't come.

We had the same problem at the prototype phase. We asked the local mission to help us find new people. It was the same: some didn't come, and one of the original participants left. He didn't want to continue participating in the project, so we only had five people for the prototyping phase.

**Did he tell you why he didn't want to continue?**

He wasn't really interested. He wasn't committed to it, and didn't find it interesting to continue working on the project.

There was another participant who came during the prototype phase, but he only stayed for one day. And that was because he didn't want to stay in the professional integration programme.

**What about the implementation phase?**

We only had 3 people for the implementation. One of the participants found a job during the project, so he had to leave. And the other one who left was this girl, we don't really know why she left. The official reason she gave us was that she was sick and wasn't well enough to continue. But the second possibility is that we think that the one who left was her boyfriend, and she came to the project because she was with her boyfriend. And after he left, it wasn't really interesting for her.

On the other hand, what is interesting is that in the last group of three, another participant also found a job, but she wanted to continue working on the project. So she came on her day off to continue working on it.

**How did you implement the Storytooling methodology? What do you think were the best parts and the biggest challenges in implementing the workshops?**

Before starting the project with the group of young people, we had a meeting with the designer of our team and Jean-Michel to explain the design methodology and help him

prepare the workshops. Then the workshops started with the immersion day. It was a moment for the young people and the creative to meet and learn how to work together on the project and the local theme.

From the start, Jean-Michel suggested to the participants to take photos along the way. After the six days of the workshop, he worked with the group to define what would be the main concept of our project on photography, heritage and travel. The different steps included ideation, brainstorming and, at the end of the co-creation workshops, conceptualisation of the three main ideas proposed.

What went really well was the relationship between Jean-Michel and the young people. He was really involved in the group, and I think he went beyond what was asked of him in working with the young people.

The biggest challenge was getting the young people involved. But the duration of the project was also a challenge. It was too long, and this is one of the reasons why it was difficult to keep the group. It was a nine-month project, and

***Zoé Luc, CID at Grand-Hornu (Belgium)***

**Was it easy to find a group of participants, or did you have to adapt the initial profile? What challenges did you face?**

It was really difficult to find the group of participants with the initial characteristics described in the application. Storytooling was initially meant to be a project for the inclusion of young people who were neither working nor in formal education, and it was quite difficult for us. We tried. First, with an open call, we had no inscriptions. Then, we contacted the regional office of the IEFP (Instituto de Emprego

normally, this kind of activity in France is more like one or two months.

**I think this is part of the answer to the last question: how do you think the method can be improved in the future?**

Yes, a faster product.

We also changed our prototype, and I think it's important to accept that we need some time to embrace change. What we decided to create, our first idea for the prototype, was a travel iron photography process. But it would be too hard to implement within the nine months of the project, and to create it with the young people was a bit too much of a challenge.

So, how can we improve it? Maybe with smaller and less ambitious goals and a shorter duration of the project. But in terms of methodology, I don't think there are any major difficulties or things to change. Maybe having more creative processes or activities. I would like to have more creative workshops than design workshops. So yes, we could repeat the design workshops and add more creative fun practices.

e Formação Profissional), the national institute that manages the reintegration of the unemployed. They arranged a meeting with potential participants in the project, and we had that meeting with two former design students. They were looking for work, and the feedback we got was that they felt it was unfair for them to have a design degree, to have the skills to contribute to a design project, to contribute their expertise and



their ideas and not be paid for it. They seem to be interested in the project and the process, but in the end, they didn't sign up to participate.

So we had to change the profile of the group. We contacted a professional school here in Évora that has a high school course in tourism and animation, and our group of participants was formed by students from that school, as well as design and visual arts students from the School of the Arts at the University of Évora, and another visual arts student from Lisbon. We ended up with a group of students, not the initial profile.

### **How do you evaluate the implementation of Storytooling methodology in Portugal?**

The implementation of the methodology here was quite simple and smooth. The co-creation and the prototyping phases were quite clear. We were also able to find partners to test the prototype. It was really good to work with an expert, the creative and sculptor Rui Horta Pereira. He has a lot of experience in working with young people and facilitating participatory processes. He made it easier for the project team to implement the Storytooling Laboratory.

The communication training was a challenge for us. It wasn't clear from the start what this phase would look like. But at the same time, we realised that the participants could use communication tools and skills during the workshops. Also, in the process of developing ideas, brainstorming, discussing the development of these ideas and prototypes, we can see it as a phase of developing critical thinking, negotiation and communication skills.

### **What was the best part of the Laboratory, and what were the biggest challenges in implementing it?**

Even though we didn't manage to have a group within the initial profile planned for Storytooling, the methodology helped to involve this group of participants in the co-creation process, in the territory and the needs of the territory. So the biggest achievement was probably to have this group of students working together and thinking together about how to respond to regional challenges related to sustainability, tourism and industrial heritage.

The biggest challenge was finding a group of participants. But even though it was quite easy to find partners to test the prototypes, we didn't have any of the participants in the testing phase because they are students, and they have their own schedules. Our prototypes are two different objects. We made a small showcase of the prototypes, with some information about the project, which was displayed at the Frei Manuel do Cenáculo National Museum in Évora, at an art festival, and we also presented it at the European Research Night. In all these situations, it was not possible to have the participants with us for the presentation of the prototype. It was a challenge because it's more difficult to understand the impact of the prototypes on tourists or even on the local population if we don't have a group following the exhibition of the prototypes.

### **How do you think the Storytooling methodology can be improved in the future?**

There are two main things that could be improved, and I am concerned about. The first is that the project does not have a phase to test the impact of the prototypes as tourist

products. The testing phase of the prototypes was more about the design, how people reacted to the idea, which was good. I mean, it is a prototype, and that kind of feedback is important. But the project wanted to respond to local issues. In the case of the Alentejo, it was the beauty of destruction and sustainability and sustainable tourism, and we are ending the project with no idea what the impact of these prototypes could be in the region, in the marble industry, for tourism... we don't know. This is something that could be improved in the future. Not only to focus on the methodology, in the sense of the workshops and the production of prototypes, but also to have a later phase to develop more the ideas and to test their impact in the territory.

The second thing is about collaboration. We are five partners, and each partner has been working on their own territory. There was no time to share and to have joint workshops, for

***Mireia Alemany, Europimpulse Network (Spain)***

**How easy was it to find the participants? What challenges did you face? Did you have to adapt the profile set at the beginning of the project? If so, how did you do this?**

We had to adapt it because it was aimed at the unemployed. In the end we managed to have a few unemployed people, but most of the group were people in the last stage of high school. We also had people who were unemployed, but during the process they found a job, so they stopped their involvement in the project. So it was quite difficult to have the group.

**You talked about high school students. Did you contact a school directly, or was it an open call?**

It was an open call.

example, to have discussions between the creatives, between the groups of participants, to share the ideas while developing them and the prototypes. This is something that can definitely be improved in the future, but also the cooperation between the partners. In the same way that the workshops were completely independent in each territory, the consortium, the partners, did not have many or any moments to discuss the methodology and the implementation of the methodology and how to address common challenges together.

I think it could be really good for future projects of this kind to have these moments of sharing, to have these moments of looking together at challenges that are not necessarily from our territory. Someone from outside may have different thoughts, different ideas to solve problems that people who are immersed in the territory and the challenge of the territory may not see.

**How do you evaluate the implementation of the methodology? What were the better parts and the biggest challenge in implementing the process, the workshops?**

Apart from the participants, the creative we worked with, she is a teacher and she found a job far away. So we had to make some changes to the dates of the workshops and other logistics. It was complicated, but we managed it.

Testing the prototype was certainly a positive experience. It was a great success, as the group was all involved. It went really well. And we had a big impact in the villages because people were really involved in the activities that the young people organised. At the beginning it was quite



complicated for the creative part, but in the end I think we managed it. It had a big impact, I think.

**How do you think the methodology can be improved in the future, not only in relation to the workshops you have conducted in Spain, but as a whole?**

I know we are talking about methodology, but I think the project needed more collaboration between the partners.

Sometimes when you are focused on what you are doing and

### ***Nouha Ben Lahbib, TICDCE (Tunisia)***

**Was it easy for you to find the participants? What challenges did you face? Did you have to adapt the initial profile we had in mind?**

I want to talk about it. It wasn't easy. We don't know what happened. We didn't have enough people, local people from the village. Even though I was working with the local partner there. I think they have some problems, even with the local partner, and we didn't know about it. Because we tried, with the representative of our ministry in this city, the big city. And also with the local partner in this village. Normally, young people are in different clubs, but in the village they have big problems. People are leaving the village, there are no young people there. So we only had two boys from the village and one girl from the city. The big city. And the others were from other places in Tunis. We didn't get 15 people. We accepted and had confirmation from 12 people, and then we had only 10 participants. That was it.

**And the profiles of the participants, were they unemployed or a mix of unemployed and students?**

It was a mix. We had some students, people who already had a degree and went back to study in another field because they wanted a new career and more opportunities. So

you are doing it well, you can forget what the other people are doing. Probably if we had more exchanges about how each of us was doing it - I mean like talking, not just looking at the documents for what people are doing - maybe it would have been richer. It was a replicated methodology but not really a shared methodology.

they joined us because they work in the creative industry. For them, this opportunity was a good internship. They are enrolled in a master's course about marketing and territorial attractiveness. The Storytooling programme was just a good match for them.

There were the guys, for example, who were professionals. They have a background as designers and product designers, but they work on other things. One of them has a restaurant, but it is only open in the summer. For him, it was like: I want to talk about our heritage, about this particular agriculture technique, because it is important to me, as the owner of this restaurant, that these particular vegetables come from this particular farming technique. People want to come to my restaurant, and I can offer that. And he wants to talk about it and raise awareness about all the issues and the preservation of these techniques.

There were also people from other fields, but they are passionate about heritage and technology. They joined us and most of them were girls. We had a lot of girls.

### **How do you evaluate the implementation of the methodology and the workshops? What were the main challenges you faced? And what were the best things about implementing the methodology?**

Initially, the co-creation workshop programme was planned for 4 days, with people going home and coming back to the site each day. But our creative suggested doing it in a bootcamp format, with the group together day and night. It was an approach of being immersed in the site together, working with collaborative design, concentrating on analysing all the documentation and data collected from the first day of immersion.

It was great, a great environment. Maybe because the choice of the creative expert to run this format of the bootcamp helped a lot to get people more focused. Because we had people from different backgrounds, she wanted to align everyone on the approach and what we expected from them, that we needed ideas, and in particular to know about this agricultural technique: what is the issue, what can we do about it, talk about it, and how can we make more people aware of this heritage. At the same time, how can they use this opportunity, these tools and this training as an opportunity for themselves? Why not start a project like that?

The format helped us a lot because we had all the participants focused on working together, brainstorming together, and organising all the data collected after the immersive day we had with the local people. Because we had this immersive day with the local people. We did a visit, we went to a farm, and an agricultural expert talked about it. So they had a lot of data, and when we came back, they were working together.

The creative minimised the risk of people not coming back to work on this data. She said, *let's do it in a faraway place where people can't come home and be more focused on collecting data, brainstorming and learning about human-centred design, how we can talk about or raise awareness of these techniques and how we can have an impact and offer an impactful solution or idea.* She gave them a time challenge. They worked on their ideas until midnight, using paper and digital tools. They came up with three ideas, which they then explained to us.. And they even explained the agricultural process, how the water comes and the waves come, how the rain water comes to the plant... It was amazing that they explained it to us using paper prototypes. They also developed a prototype using digital tools like Figma. And we had like a finished application. We loved it. What they did in such a short time, at a high speed and with a lot of information coming to them.

It was a great choice by the expert. She has experience in that. Having four days where they would come in the morning, go back home in the evening and then come back again the next day, she was like No, we will lose them. So it was a good idea of hers.

Perhaps one of the challenges was collecting and interpreting the data. It wasn't so easy for us because we don't belong in the place. We had the opportunity to have an agricultural expert, and the local partner also gave us a contact for a farmer, but it wasn't as easy as we expected. The three people we spoke to didn't give us the same information. Each of them has a point of view with a different background. It was



not so easy for the participants to understand the issue and what all the people were saying. They all have the same problem, but with different points of view. So it was a challenge. It took time for the participants to understand, because we had local participants and people from another place. There was a lot of discussion about it. This was a little bit of a challenge.

We also had some issues with participants, teams that were not so collaborative. But the creative who worked with us is an expert, and she tried to make it work. In the end, they were so proud of their idea, and they presented it together. That happened because it was a very short time. People, when we work on something, especially when creating together, there will be different points of view. So we need more time to build a team. This is important, this connection between the team members. This is important.

We also had a session with participants and stakeholders, where the creative expert presented her methodology and the bootcamp program, and the participants presented their ideas. We had the opportunity to share this innovative outcome with all partners, the local partner, the expert from agriculture, from the Ministry of Environment and also from the Ministry of Culture. The main objective was to present this methodology to all the directors of local cultural institutions, and to talk about the importance of collaborative design for the attractiveness of your territory, or perhaps for the enhancement of one of our heritage monuments or assets. We explained how other stakeholders could do this and that the project would result in a methodolo-

gy that they could replicate in their institutions, with our support.

**Have you organised any communication training?**

In the prototype development phase and before the closing event, we had a small meeting with 10 to 12 people - local partners, village residents and participants. We also invited future local partners from cultural institutions that work with our targets. We presented the methodology, the three ideas developed by the group and how they were combined into one common idea. We also presented the first version of the prototype, which was later improved based on this first test. It was a communication training because the group of young participants needed to know how it works and what it takes to communicate with stakeholders.

**Looking at the whole idea of the Storytooling methodology, what do you think could be improved in the future? If we or another institution wanted to implement this methodology, what do you think could be improved?**

I had this conversation with my team and my supervisor. It is important that we are partners. But we haven't had a lot of time as partners to connect as partners. I don't have a lot of information about each other's actions and activities. It wasn't that we didn't want to know, but we haven't had enough time to get to know each other. It is important that we connect the different local themes and why we choose them. For example, agriculture and the other post-industrial sites, make a connection between them. It is important to make a connection because it is a Creative Europe project. We should be inspired by each other or have a common activity, like two or three partners working together to work on the sa-



me heritage, but with different results.

Because our participants came from different backgrounds, we had three different ideas for the same issues. This is a testament to our methodology. Working in collaborative design and having this human-centred design approach can give us a lot of ideas. By connecting with different partners and people from different places, you have the chance to get a different perspective on your problems. And maybe you will have a more innovative solution, because sometimes, when we are immersed in our daily routines, we don't see that solution or those opportunities. Other people with different backgrounds can offer a different point of view.

That is something we can improve in this program.

Another thing to consider is communication within the consortium. After two years in this program, we didn't have much communication. As partners, we didn't have much time together. Or maybe we need more access, to be in touch, to talk, to exchange about the activities. It is like being part of a Creative Europe programme, but we weren't. Each of us had an expert from our country. We didn't have the opportunity to accept another expertise, another point of view. If there had been an exchange between two partners, for example, we might have had a different output.





## 4.2. Creatives' Views

### *Jean-Michel André (France)*

**What is your background? Why were you interested in this project?**

There are three main aspects to my work as a photographic artist. The first is my creative work, for which I produce series that are then exhibited and published. The second involves photographic commissions for public and private institutions. Finally, the third part of my work involves artist residencies and workshops in France and abroad.

The theme chosen for this project, ‘The Imagination of Memory’, and the area in which the creative narrative developed, resonate with my artistic approach and my local initiatives in the field of photography.

I was particularly interested in this project because of my attachment to the Bassin Minier, the Pas-de-Calais département and its inhabitants, and also because of my experience of this area, which I have been exploring and photographing for ten years now as part of various projects, both personal and institutional, working with numerous partners (ALL, Mission Bassin Minier, Euralens, Pas-de-Calais Tourisme, Louvre-Lens, DREAL, Ministry of Culture, etc.).

These collaborations have enabled me to gauge the extent of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Nord and Pas-de-Calais coalfield, as well as its revival and the tremendous momentum of cultural and tourist activities in the region, particularly in the Lens-Liévin conurbation.

The links I’ve forged and the experience I’ve gained from

working on a number of projects have enabled me to grasp the dynamic of transformation and innovation running through this area, as well as the many issues linked to its intangible cultural heritage.

The mediation activities I’d like to see as part of the Storytooling project are also part of my work, and that’s why I was so enthusiastic about applying. For a number of years now, I’ve been running artistic and cultural workshops to make photography accessible to the widest possible audience. This educational aspect of my activities is at the heart of my work as a photographer, and it’s very important to me. It allows me to promote my practice through exchange and sharing, by opening doors to reflection and creation.

**What results do you expect to get from the project?**

The results will be manifold. There is, of course, the human aspect at the heart of this project, but there is also the creative dimension, which is part of a project thought out and designed with and for the young participants.

I hope that this project will open up new perspectives for the young participants as well as for our partners. I’m convinced of the importance of this kind of project, and I’m sure that we’ll achieve concrete and interesting results based on hands-on experience, a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach, a strong sense of solidarity, and the promotion of post-industrial heritage.

**What has the group’s experience been like in France?**

The group’s experience has been very positive. Right from the start of the project, I felt a real commitment and active participation on the part of the young people from the local mission in Lens-Liévin who signed up for the European Storytooling project.

The group got a bit smaller as the sessions went on. This was mainly due to the participants’ job search, which kept them away from the project. That said, I was lucky enough to have a group of 6 young people who were assiduous from the beginning to the end of the project. The discussions were rich and friendly. Everyone took part with a clear interest and a real commitment to seeing our project through.

**And what did you like most about the project?**

What I liked most was the collective and experimental dimension of the project, the fact that we were working together with several objectives and a precise framework, while being free to design the project. The values of sharing and cohesion were at the heart of the creation and our proposals.

**What do you think the project and the activities you carried out brought to the area?**

The activities I carried out essentially affected the young participants by enabling them to design and carry out a project, while tackling the notion of post-industrial heritage and acquiring expertise in photographic creation and project management. Our contribution to the region was the organisation of the first photography marathon in Lens. It took us several months to prepare, and the result was very positive.

The participants enjoyed photographing the town of Lens and were able to discover some of its heritage.

**What do you think of the methodology proposed by the Storytooling project to help young people take ownership of their heritage?**

I wouldn’t change much. There’s always an element of experimentation in this type of project, so you can never be sure of the end result. The most important thing is the motivation of the group and the co-creation of the project. The project has to be as precise as possible, while remaining open to change. If I had to change anything, it would perhaps be to have more workshop sessions, even though these were at the heart of our project. The fun aspect is also important. I think we’re on the right track!

**Is this something you’d like to do again?**

Yes, of course, I’d love to do it again!

**From your point of view as a creative professional, what improvements would you recommend?**

My suggestions would be more of a logistical nature upstream of the project, in terms of choosing the right participants, the length of the project and the spacing between sessions. For me, this is the most important point if the project is to make sense and meet the expectations of the participants and all the employees. Motivation and commitment are essential!

For my part, I was lucky. I can only salute my group’s commitment, creativity and sense of sharing. I’d also like to highlight the involvement and support of the partners.

It is, of course, important to ensure that the artists selected are



experienced, committed and available to supervise this type of project.

I would also recommend making sure that the projects are not too ambitious and can be completed on time. It's not a question of scaling down ambitions, but rather of measuring all the contingencies in order to highlight the expected objectives.

**Rui Horta Pereira (Portugal)**

**Tell us about your background and what inspires your work.**

I'm a sculptor with a passion for matter, for the way we mould and adapt it. I'm even more fascinated by the ability of human beings (but not only human beings) to do this, how they do it and why they do it. Human matter is still very intriguing, and I'm captivated by its constant adaptability.

**How did you get started in the Storytooling project, and why were you interested in the project?**

I was interested in two aspects right from the start: the possibility of sharing due to the format, and the reflection on the territory in its various approaches. My connection began precisely there, in this scenario in which matter has a unique existence. I found in Storytooling one of the possibilities for reflecting, thinking and proposing.

**What has the experience with the group been like in Évora (Portugal)?**

The experience was as intense as it was peaceful. There was a lot of fluidity in the actions and receptiveness to the proposals.



**What did you like most about the project and your experience with the group?**

I would emphasise the dynamics and interactions that are developed. The informal context has collaborated and contributed to the group gaining confidence. In addition to the issues that brought us together, it opened the way for others.

**What do you think the project and the activities you have carried out have brought or can bring to the territory?**

The subject of this particular territory is complex and involves many players. They have very different interests, ranging from economic, cultural and social. Promoting dialogue, stimulating it, making it clear that without this relationship, everything will remain fragmented and separate. I think mediating is the most important task. Creating forms of

connection, which takes time and resilience. These are processes that need to be continued, otherwise, it's just a note on which I have some doubts about the impact.



***Irmina Insaurrealde Andrés (Spain)***

**How did you get started in the Storytooling project and why?**

I heard about it when the partner Euroimpulse was carrying out the selection process for teachers who could propose a project to be developed precisely in the area between Alto Palancia and Puerto de Sagunto. The objective was to revitalise the area and, above all, to work on the post-industrial heritage that exists in these territories and to tell new stories through artistic workshops.

**What is your background, and why were you interested in the project?**

I am a plastic arts teacher. I used to be a graphic designer, the only thing is that later I realised that I wanted to dedicate myself to teaching, and today I am a secondary school teacher.

I think it's very important for young people to understand the arts today and to create new narratives based on artistic processes, where we can clearly see the involvement of previous artistic styles that today perhaps we don't give so much importance to or we only see it in school books or as just another subject. In other words, applying it to real life and to the present moment.

**And what has the experience with the group been like in Spain?**

The overall experience has been very positive.

It's true that it was difficult at the beginning, getting the young people to participate, but once they signed up for the workshop, it went really well.

I think we have done a lot of fun things, especially in the

workshops that started in November, a lot of time has passed, and these young people have come with the same enthusiasm, with the same desire and especially the final part, which was this bike route.

**Explain what this final part was.**

On the one hand, it was to hold workshops in a co-creative space where the young people could make art performances.

But at the same time, once these workshops were over, the idea was to get out of our comfort zone and go into our own territory.

That is to say, although the workshops took place in Puerto de Sagunto, what interested us was to move it to the Vía Verde in the interior of Castellón, because it was part of our project. The objective was to understand all the post-industrial heritage that existed along the train tracks from the mines in Ojos Negros to Puerto de Sagunto, to move the iron to the factory, which we had to understand and experience for ourselves.

So it was decided to make an alternative route and spend a weekend where we would cycle along the Via Verde to get to know the territory, but also to organise different artistic workshops.

**And what did you like most about the project or this weekend?**

What I liked most was, on the one hand, the positivity of all the people who have been participating in the activities.



I really liked the fact that we had fun, that we laughed, that we are making art, but that we are making art not as a discipline, as in class or in a book where there are guidelines, but it was all very spontaneous.

Sometimes we think that art is something very distant from us, but this is not true. And what I liked most about this weekend was that we could reconnect with our inner child and go back to those childhood stages where the important thing was to enjoy all together to create something common.

**What do you think the project and the activities you have carried out have brought to the territory?**

On the one hand, I think it has contributed to the fact that people from the territory itself realise that some things that have happened are not forgotten.

***Ines Cheniour (Tunisia)***

**Tell us about your background and Storytooling experience in Tunis.**

I am an expert in design thinking. This project builds on the participatory approach and co-creation. The most important thing was involving people from the region themselves who come and conduct the reflection with their experiences and their emotions with their way of thinking, and their culture.

Walking on the ground is important to listen to people, and they find and find and find and find and find and find. It was very important for us that the connection also be from the region. Mixed with the connections that do not concern them from the region, they must bring different perspectives which provide us with a new view on the presented issue and on the

For example, the last installation we are doing related to nature, to land art, is an installation in an area that burned down two years ago. So, a negative element, a catastrophe, a rural village is often left out of the margins of society, of what people expect from tourism.

So we want to encourage this type of workshop, at least along the bike route, to promote tourism, a cultural tourism that can revitalise a village. We are not making a festival, we are not making a big thing, but we are creating elements that change the vision of this territory a little bit.



solutions that can be proposed.

The entire workshop focused on a lot of work on emotions, how we can get out of these emotions and how we can handle these emotions. The tools that we can work with, how we can harness this energy, and how we can present and propose ideas and solutions that will hopefully materialise into feasible, realistic projects on the ground.



## 4.3. Youth Voices

### *Fanny Bélanger--Deschacht and Matthieu Dhollande (France)*

#### Could you introduce yourselves?

**Matthieu:** I got my electrical baccalaureate in 2021, and I looked for work afterwards. But as I didn't have any experience, I couldn't find one, and they asked me to go on a training course. My basic hobbies are sports and in the evenings I watch Japanese animation. I joined the CEJ to get help with my job search.

**Fanny:** I passed my general baccalaureate in 2022. For personal reasons, I didn't start studying at the end of secondary school. In January 2023, I joined the Mission Locale for the CEJ. They helped me to fine-tune my career plan, which involved going back to school. My main hobby is looking after my four cats. I love reading, especially manga.

#### What made you take part in the Storytooling project?

**M:** I asked my advisor to put me on the project. I'm not a history buff, but I'm interested in learning about the history we have and a bit about photography.

**F:** I've always been interested in history and heritage. My advisor advised me to come to the introductory meeting in September. I liked both of them, but I was more interested in Storytooling, so that's the only project I stuck with.

#### How did you find the project?

**F:** It was interesting from start to finish. There was a lot of participation in the sessions, and that was a plus compared with the other local mission projects, where I think you're more likely to listen than participate. The opportunity to visit

places was interesting, I felt like I was on a little field trip.

**M:** I agree with Fanny. Most of the places I visited were the first time I'd been there, because where I live, it's much harder for me to get there. Lewarde, 9-9bis was new to me.

**F and M:** The step-by-step methodology in design allowed us to anchor ourselves in the project. Moving forward a little at a time allows us to think things through, to take our own look at the project and ourselves.

#### How did you tackle the question of heritage during the project? What role did artistic practice play?

**F:** I discovered photography and its techniques through Jean-Michel ... I'm not much of a photographer ... Thanks to the techniques I've learnt, I take better photos now, I think. Photography gives you a new perspective on what's going on around you, because you pay more attention to your surroundings. It's a great way to discover our heritage.

**M:** You can see more details.

**F:** You discover more things. For example, during the Marathon, at the station opposite, with Chérine, we realised that there was a coat of arms on the house, even though we walk past it every day during our sessions.

#### And your relationship with heritage?

**F:** My relationship with heritage was very much based on my basic knowledge at school. I went to museums a bit, but more during the summer holidays with my parents. I was aware that heritage (heritages) was varied because of my SES



(Science Economique et Sociales) classes.

**M:** In almost a year, we discovered more about the heritage of Lens than we'd been able to learn at school. I was more interested in going on nature walks. I was aware of the variety of heritage because of my management courses.

**F:** We didn't learn so much about mining heritage at school. But our environment reminds us of it. I know that mining has a global impact, coal is still used in Germany, and the Nord Pas-de-Calais was one of France's major coal producers.

**M:** My parents lived in a mine house for over 20 years. My grandmother lives in a mine house, and my mother grew up there. I was aware of the world heritage, but not that there were so many mining sites grouped together.

**Do you think this project has helped you to develop personally and professionally? If so, how? How will you use your experience in your future career or studies?**

**F:** We're told that we're not the most enlightened generation, but that's not necessarily true. During the project, that wasn't the case. I value the project because it instilled in me working principles: organisation and teamwork. Getting on well together is crucial to bringing out the best in everyone. Personally, it gave me a taste for work and allowed me to escape from my daily routine. As part of my application to train as a librarian, towards the end of the interview, I thought of mentioning my involvement in Storytooling. I said that it helped me to organise myself better, to work as part of a team. It opened up my critical mind.<sup>1</sup>

**M:** I'm going to try and find a training course for electric-

ians. I'm going to present Storytooling clearly as a 9-month work experience. I worked on a really good project with people who ... even though we're young people who are a bit 'beta' ... you had the vision to teach us the principles of work. It enabled me to get away from my daily routine. Nowadays, we're better able to work.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Fanny has been accepted and will start training in September 2024.

<sup>2</sup>Matthieu started training at the beginning of August.

**What would you say to future young people to convince them to join in the adventure of the next marathon?**

**M:** Come and sign up! It's going to take you out of your everyday life. It's an incredible experience, which could give them a sharper critical sense. The people behind the project will take your comments to heart and turn them into something constructive. Which is much more rewarding. People end up taking an interest in the project even if they didn't at the start.

**F:** Go for it, test it, make up your own mind. It'll boost your self-esteem, because what you say has an impact and it leads to something concrete. They'll be able to make new friends, get contacts for later on, and discover the profession of photographer. They'll get something positive out of it if they're interested.

**What would you have liked to see or do more of? What improvements would you recommend?**

**M:** What would have been good is to meet other professions. For example, Jean-Michel did the participants' booklet. It would have been good to meet a graphic designer with whom we could have discussed his work and the booklet.

We could also have met some designers.

F: It could have given us ideas for the booklet and for the group, they could have discovered this profession. For photography, there was enough practice (half a day or a day of practice out of our 2 monthly days). As for the duration, sessions were held every fortnight maximum to allow time for other activities and reflection, without being overloaded.

**Haythem Jenouiz (Tunisia)**

**What encouraged you to participate in Storytooling workshops, and how was your experience?**

What encouraged me to participate in the workshop is the Ramli sandy culture that represents the identities of Ghar el Meleh. We have that identity, meaning, when you say Ghar el Meleh, you say Gatayaa. We're waiting to come up with something concrete, something that addresses the problems and allows us to preserve this heritage. It is something that is 500 years old, and we do not want to give it up today. We want to come up with solutions that allow us to always remember it



and not forget it.

What I imagined, I found a large part of it had problems. So there are steps to solving the problems. We need to follow them, so we can devise solutions and value the sandy culture.

The place is honestly wonderful, and even the programme is rich. I learned a lot from it. I can say that my satisfaction is four out of five, quite satisfied.





# 5. Storytooling Laboratory “Tourism, Culture and Design” Toolkit

Based on the experience developed in the five territories where the Storytooling Laboratory was tested, we selected a group of activities that can be replicated for any group or institution interested in applying Storytooling methodology. The activities are presented in four groups, corresponding to the Storytooling path: Immersion in the Territory, Co-Creation, Prototyping, and Testing and Communicating.

## Immersion in the Territory

### 1. The Walking Method (Spain)

**Context and objectives:** Learning about the industrial heritage of Puerto Sagunto and understanding the connection with the Ojos Negros Greenway.

- Target groups:** Participants; Guide; Project Team.
- Duration:** 1:30h
- Materials and Resources:** Mobile phones for taking pictures.
- Procedure:** The group enjoys a walk around the city with a specialist on its history. The industrial heritage route through Puerto de Sagunto showed the group the most representative buildings and places of the industrial heritage of the city. During the tour, participants had to take pictures of everything that caught their attention to be used later as sources of inspiration.

**Results:** Inspirational pictures of the territory and a better understanding of the history of their territory.



2. Visiting the Village and Immersion in Local Culture (Tunisia)

**Context and objectives:** After a presentation on Ramli culture by the President of the Ghar El Melh Local Union of Agriculture and Fisheries, participants were given a guided tour on a Gataaya, a plot of Ramli land, in the company of an experienced agri-fisherman. To enrich their understanding of the region, an exploration of its history was offered by the former secretary-general of the commune.

**Target groups:** Participants; Stakeholders; Project Team.

**Duration:** 0,5 days.

**Materials and Resources:** Materials for recording interviews and taking photos.

**Procedure:** This activity was a direct exchange with local people connected to the territory and the local theme. During the visits, participants observed, asked questions and collected data about the territory, agriculture techniques and challenges.

**Results:** Compilation of data and information about Ramli culture, from different experts and points of view, that were used for the next phases of the project.



3. Observing the intervention site (Belgium)

**Context and objectives:** An immersion into the site, aimed at raising young people's awareness of its history, what it is today, and its potential for future projects.

**Target groups:** Participants; Project team.

**Duration:** 0,5 days.

**Materials and Resources:** Photos illustrating the history of the site, guided tour, individual exploration, and notes.

**Procedure:** The activity started with the observation and familiarisation of the site, with the available resources:

- A guided tour of the site by the Museum team;
- Discovery of the post-industrial heritage and its conversion into a Museum;
- Analysis of the site's characteristics through observation, photos, and notes;
- Introduction to the theme (gamification of the site) with the local creative;
- Collective and individual immersion, followed by initial discussions.

**Results:** The result was simple yet effective in raising awareness among young people and helping them develop their ideas. Some who live very close by didn't know the history of the site, while others weren't even familiar with the place itself.



4. Bag of Stones (Portugal)

**Context and objectives:** Saco de Pedras (Bag of Stones) is a tool created by sculptor Rui Horta Pereira as a mediation tool. As the name suggests, it consists of a bag with stone pieces inside, with different shapes, colours, textures and weights. The objective of this activity was to create a moment for participants to know each other, while also promoting a first contact between participants and stones - the main material linked to Alentejo’s theme within Storytooling.

**Target groups:** Participants; Project team.

**Duration:** 40 minutes.

**Materials and Resources:** Saco de Pedras.

- Procedure:**
- Each participant takes a stone from the bag, placing it in front of them.
  - Based on a description of each stone, the group try to identify, by observation, which stone the description matches.
  - The person who has that stone says their name, age, and something else they would like to share about themselves.
  - The activity continues until all stones have been identified and all participants have presented themselves.

**Results:** The activity allowed participants to know each other and make contact with the main material they would work with in Storytooling workshops. It was also an opportunity for the group to start trying to debate and find answers together in an easy task, before jumping into richer and challenging debates in the co-creation phase.



Description of the Stones in the Bag:

- Polished grey stone, which could be a roof tile;
- White with a hint of grey, fits between the fingers;
- Someone who may be asleep or awake... dark grey;
- Perhaps a place to sit or just a small sculpture, White and pink;
- Apparently heavier than all the others;
- Long with a crack;
- Textured with a smooth face, with unnatural marks, green... light green;
- Part cube, part rough, part regular, broken in places;
- Almost a bone, almost bone;
- Two smooth faces, three textured, one grey, the others slightly whitish;
- Round, partly sloping;
- Regular with two sloping sides;
- Teeth in the stone on all sides;
- Long, white with faces apparently scraped with a knife;
- Round with apparent fossil.



#### 4. Postcards on Glass (Portugal)

**Context and objectives:** This activity was carried out after the group visited a marble quarry in the Alentejo region. During the visit, participants were encouraged to observe with attention, to look for details, to search for the unseen, the unexpected and also for common things. They could be inspired by a stone on top of another stone, or a stone that hid an image. The objective of the activity was to produce postcards that worked both as individual pieces and together, forming a collective one.

**Target groups:** Participants.

**Duration:** 1 day.

**Materials and Resources:** digital cameras, laser printer, software for vectorial drawing (we used Inkscape - it is open source!), 10x10cm pieces of plain glass.

**Procedure:**

- During the marble quarry visit, the group collected images (photos) of details, general shots, portraits, etc..
- Back to the maker space, participants selected the images they wanted to use for making the postcards, and learned how to transform the photos into vectorial drawings that can be used in digital fabrication machines, such as the laser printer. This phase of the process allowed participants to create freely, having the photos as inspirational references.
- Before printing the postcards, the group discussed how to create points of connection between the individual postcards to allow the creation of one or multiple collective pieces.
- The vectorial images were printed with a laser on glass. And the group discussed different ways of combining the postcards.

**Results:** The activity allowed participants to know each other and make contact with the main material they would work with in Storytooling workshops. It was also an opportunity for the group to start trying to debate and find answers together in an easy task, before jumping into richer and challenging debates in the co-creation phase.



#### Alternative Materials and Methods:

If a maker space with digital fabrication machines is not available, this activity can be made with other materials and methods, such as:

- Print the photos and use photo transfer gel to transfer the images to glass, polished stone or tiles (it will be necessary to allow 24h to let the transfer dry);
- Simplify the images in a cleaner drawing to create stickers on vinyl, and print stones using these stickers and muriatic acid (make sure to have in charge someone who already knows the technique. All participants shall wear gloves and masks, and the stones shall be well washed after printed).



# Co-Creation

## 6. Cube of the ideas (Spain)

**Context and objectives:** Knowing the aspirations and artistic interests of the participants.

**Target groups:** Participants; Project team.

**Duration:** 1h

**Materials and Resources:** Paper, stickers and a pen.

**Procedure:** We will create a paper cube with some questions to get to know the participants better. Taking turns, each young person will roll the dice and will have to answer the question written on the face of the dice that has appeared. Little by little the group will get to know each other personally as well as their artistic interests.

**Results:** Sharing the ideas, experiences and interests of the participants to get to know better the group and adapt the following steps of the project to their interests.



## 7. Concept in Common (France)

**Context and objectives:** We began the co-creation workshops by defining a common conceptual framework for understanding what the young people and the supervisors meant by ‘photographic journey’. This task, was designed to create a common basis for the group's work, exploring and defining concepts such as heritage, photography, the heritage/territory of the coalfield and tourist travel. By discussing and agreeing these terms, we wanted to ensure clarity and alignment within the group in the later phases of the project.

**Target groups:** Participants; Project team.

**Duration:** 0,5 days

**Materials and Resources:** Paper, stickers, pen, flipchart, colour pencil, notebook.

- Procedure:**
- The mentors asked the young people: ‘Based on the keywords of our project (travel, photo, heritage), can you list what they evoke for you?’
  - The young people listed on different post-it notes what the different words evoked in them
  - They pooled their thoughts
  - The mentors added to the list by encouraging them to think about other aspects and/or by adding words that had not been mentioned.
  - At the end, the participants agreed on a common definition of the various project concepts.

**Results:** This session resulted in the definition of the three main concepts of our project: post-industrial heritage, travel and photography. It was important as it served as a base for the following steps of the co-creation workshop.

8. Identifying key-words (Belgium)

**Context and objectives:** Work in small groups to identify a series of key words on the main themes: the history of the site; the shapes and materials associated with it, and their typology; the current and potential uses of the site, and its audience; the concept of play; image search on the different themes.

**Target groups:** Participants; Project team.

**Duration:** 0,5 days.

**Materials and Resources:** Papers, computers for research, printer (images), pencils.

**Procedure:** Each group worked independently before presenting the identified elements to the other groups. All the words and images were displayed and written on a large collective wall.

**Results:** Each group presented its findings, keywords, and images, which were then pooled together to serve as a foundation for the conceptualisation work, providing a shared resource for everyone to draw from. In addition to the initial groundwork laid, which was useful for their reflection, the

groups were already able to define interests, conceptualise through words, differentiate themselves, and also learn from and enrich each other.



9. The Human-Centred Design Method (Tunisia)

**Context and objectives:** This activity aims to highlight participants’ skills and expectations, by relating them to the context of the project, and foster collaboration in finding innovative and effective solutions.

**Target groups:** Participants.

**Duration:** 2 days.

**Materials and Resources:** Paper, stickers, pen, flipchart, colour pencil, notebook.

**Procedure:**

- Start it with an introductory exercise followed by a redefinition of objectives. The introductory exercise consists of inviting participants to write down their personal superpower and their specific needs on separate Post-it notes. All the post-it notes are then collected in a ballot box.
- Each participant then selects a Post-it at random and tries to guess who it belongs to.
- The ideation phase of this participatory workshop emphasised collective intelligence and collaboration to rapidly find innovative and effective solutions. Participants used specific methods and practices to generate a wide variety of relevant ideas. The approach began with a brainstorming session, gathering a variety of ideas. These ideas were then materialised on a visual medium to facilitate discussion.
- Finally, discussions around the shortlisted ideas led to the identification of the most promising solutions for tackling the issue in question.

**Results:** TThe activity resulted in three ideas books, which presented the potential solutions found by participants. These ideas were then discussed before going forward to the prototyping phase.



**10. Designing ideas (Belgium)**

**Context and objectives:** Context and objectives: This activity has two phases - drawing and modelling - with complementary objectives.

- *Drawing:* each group chose four words (from activity 7. *Identifying key-words*) to focus their reflections on and begin the first drawings. The drawings were then selected, and the concepts were worked on to evolve the project. The notions of materials, scale, and integration into the site plan were addressed to develop the drawing into a full project.
- *Model:* each group tried their hand at creating a three-dimensional model, which helped refine the sketch and engage with other spatial realisations.

**Target groups:** Participants; Project team.

**Duration:** 2 days.

**Materials and Resources:** Paper, cardboard, wire, drawing materials, photos.

**Procedure:**

- Instinctive drawings, discussions, and presentations of the first concepts.
- Adaptation of drawings, awareness of technique and reality.
- Transition to 3D, creation of models.

**Results:** TThe activity resulted in three ideas books, which presented the potential solutions found by participants. These ideas were then discussed before going forward to the prototyping phase.

**11. For a tactile and tangible interaction... probably without language (Portugal)**

**Context and objectives:** What if... the person in front of us does not speak our language? What game do we offer them? What interaction do we propose... and how? This activity challenges participants to explore tactile languages in a day of collecting textures. The objective is to develop a visual and material correction mechanism that can be based on an existing or invented visual reference, and which corresponds with a specific material.

**Target groups:** Participants.

**Duration:** 0,5 days.

**Materials and Resources:** clay, paper.

**Procedure:**

- In the first part of the activity, participants explored the surroundings, looking for different textures and patterns. They used a clay paste to record textures and compose new patterns.
- Using the moulded clay, participants created stamps having textures collected in their surroundings and emblematic places within the city as references.

**Results:** Participants worked on visual representations of places through the exploration of textures, creating different patterns and symbols related to their surroundings.



# Prototyping

## 12. Screening ideas (France)

**Context and objectives:** In the making of the concept in the prototype, young participants screen their ideas (in relation with theme choice, communication activity, itinerary of the event, rules...) on paper to share with other participants and evaluate their potentiality, feasibility and quality.

Target groups: Participants; Project team.

**Duration:** 2 days.

**Materials and Resources:** Paper, stickers, pen, flipchart, colour pencil, notebook, Google Maps.

**Procedure:** The mentors listed the ideas given by young participants:

1. For the themes:

- They were classified into 3 categories: technical, creative or other.
- They were evaluated according to their feasibility, potential and quality (if they were possible at any time: several photo possibilities, weather, events, no need for special photographic equipment, etc.) and their category (to have a fair distribution of categories).
- The young people then selected 6 themes.

2. For communication (event title, post, web page article, brochure, etc.):

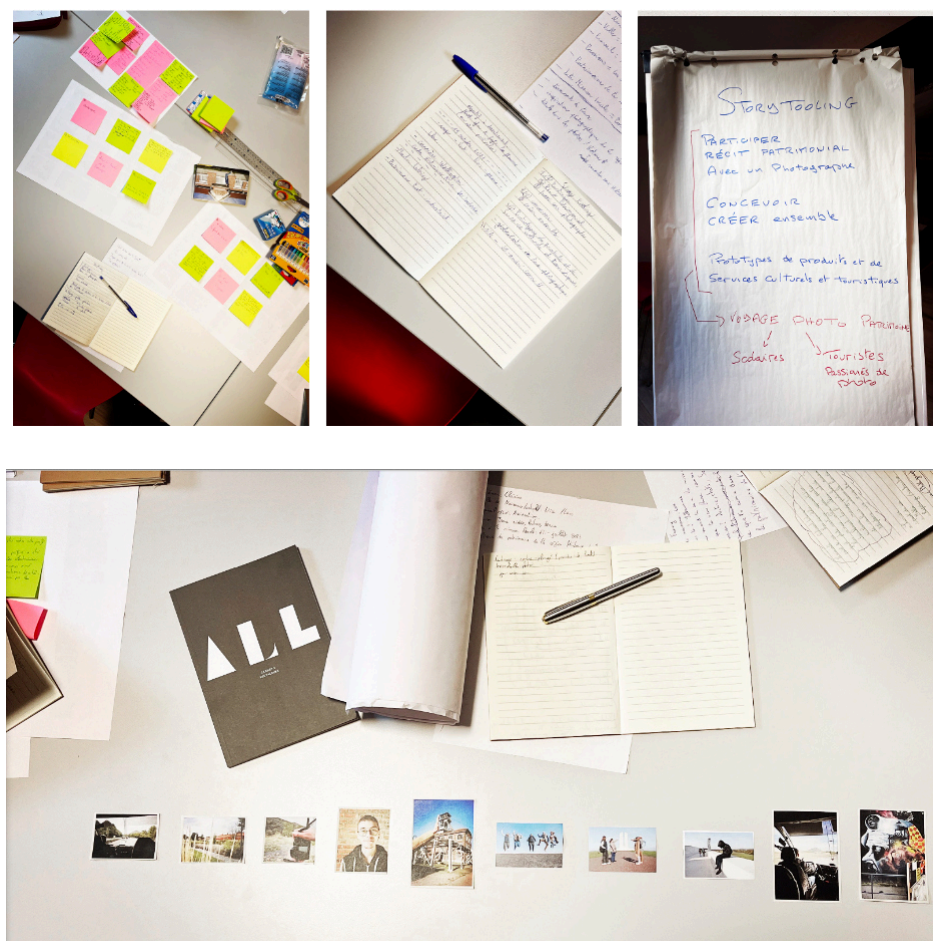
- The Pas-de-Calais Tourisme marketing team selected or validated the final communication elements.

3. For the itinerary:

- The participants took as their starting point the various walks they had made in the town during the workshops.
- They suggested a number of key places to include in the itinerary.

- These were assessed on the basis of their heritage interest, their relevance to the themes or their practicality for hosting a group.
- The final route was drawn up on Google Maps.

**Results:** Through this activity, the group developed their collaborative decision-making skills and critical thinking in evaluating their ideas. They selected ideas that had strong potential.





13. Moderated Usability Testing (Tunisia)

**Context and objectives:** A moderator from the startup team guided the participants through the test in person. The moderator and the creative answered any doubts participants had, asked follow-up questions, and recorded observations during the test.

**Target groups:** Participants; Project team.

**Duration:** 3 hours.

**Materials and Resources:** Prototype of the virtual game created by participants.

**Procedure:** Participants played the game app and gave their feedback.

**Results:** Collecting feedback from users allowed to update the version of the game app before testing it outside the group of participants. This was an important step of the prototyping process.



14. Stamping workshop (Spain)

**Context and objectives:** Reflect on the industrial heritage through the work of Spanish women artists, their procedures and styles.

**Target groups:** Participants; Project team.

**Duration:** 10:30h

**Materials and Resources:** Papers, pencils, paint, brushes, textiles, scissors and recycling materials.

**Procedure:** This workshop intended to make an analysis of the industrial heritage rescuing the cubist art from our reference woman artist: Maria Blanchard. The participants were able to see how the geometric shapes, colours and industrial symbolism of the time can be applied today through printing and the Collagraph technique. The students created works inspired by the industrial monuments of Puerto de Sagunto thanks to a collage they used as a plate and its subsequent printing on watercolour paper with tempera.

**Results:** Art pieces inspired by the territory.





# Testing and Communicating

## 15. Creative workshop - photography practices (France)

**Context and objectives:** During the co-creation and prototype phase, young participants could express themselves through photography. We wanted to let the general public have this opportunity too, so we organised an event where they could have a creative photography workshop. Through this tool of photography workshop, they explore the city in another way and discover the post-industrial heritage.

**Target groups:** Participants; Local Community; Tourists.

**Duration:** 1 day.

**Materials and Resources:** Mobile phone and camera, papers, pen.

- Procedure:**
- Choose a place where you can hold your creative workshop.
  - Prepare some themes to let the participants in the workshop to take photos about them.
  - Communicate the rules and guidelines of the photography workshop.
  - Let people express their creative vision of your place through photography.

**Results:** The results of this activity can be very diverse due to its creative approach: the photos taken by the participant on the same theme can be different, and it's interesting to see how people perceive a theme and exploit it in their environment. It allows people to immerse themselves in the place and discover it through a creative medium.

## 16. Presenting for Children (Belgium)

**Context and objectives:** Each group of participants created a summary of their idea in the form of a poster and a model for a final oral presentation. A group of children attended the presentation and were able to share their comments and questions.

**Target groups:** Participants; Project team; Local children.

**Duration:** 0,5 days.

**Materials and Resources:** Summary posters and models.

**Procedure:** The groups presented the projects to the children visiting the Museum. The children had the opportunity to comment on the ideas and ask questions.

**Results:** This activity was a good exercise in synthesis, communication, and listening to the reception of the project. The interaction with the children also permits gaining insights to improve the ideas.





# STORY TOOLING



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