



★ good
practices ★

WG ENTR & SMEs

Theme: *Building entrepreneurial ecosystems in cities*
Project title: *Creative Mikser - networking meetings for creative entrepreneurs*

City: Warsaw, Poland
Target groups: SMEs, startups, entrepreneurs
from creative industries

Creative Mikser

Context, issue(s) to tackle

Warsaw is the most prosperous and dynamically developing city in Central-Eastern Europe. It has the ambition to become attractive for all those who want to run a business, create a startup or organise an international event. According to the programme Innovative Warsaw 2020 - Working Together for the Development of an Innovative Economy, the city's main goal is to support the economic development in particular of the creative industries, which are considered to be priority economic branches. The city will provide support through networking projects, infrastructure or international collaboration.

Objectives

- Support creative entrepreneurs by sharing knowledge on how to run a business, find business partners or create new ideas in company development.
- Showcase the success of local entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Create a place to meet and share knowledge with representatives of local creative industries, academic experts, international entrepreneurs, local startup leaders or public administration officials.

Date of achievement - stages of design, development and implementation

Creative Mikser is a networking event for creative entrepreneurs. Since 2011, it has been organised by British Council Poland and the city of Warsaw. To date, it has had 11 editions.

Key steps and activities

The idea of organising a networking event for creative entrepreneurs dates back to 2011. At the time, the city of Warsaw was participating in the Creative Metropolises project, which was dedicated to supporting local creative industries. The events organised during the project inspired the city council and British Council Poland to create a new model of meetings to help creative entrepreneurs develop their businesses. From the outset, every edition of Creative Mikser has been organised as a cooperation based on barter exchange - not only with the media but also with the panellists, experts, owners of the event venues and catering suppliers. The main themes of the meetings were: E-Creatives; E-Business; Design Now!; Warsaw Creators and Food Design: Biting into the Topic.



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Creative Mikser is an open event with free entrance (prior registration by e-mail is required). Each event is divided into two parts. In the first part, we present one good practice from an English entrepreneur, followed by presentations of Polish initiatives, and in the end we hold an open discussion with the audience. The second part of the meeting is devoted to a networking session. This usually lasts about four hours (18:00-22:00).

The organisational tasks (renting a space, catering, media, invitations and lining up speakers) usually fall on the city of Warsaw and the British Council. Depending on the topic of the meeting, we engage partners (media, public institutions, NGOs, business environment institutions) on a barter basis, which helps us in booking speakers and inviting participants.

The Creative Mikser events are planned three months ahead of the actual date. Each year we organise two or three such events.

Budget and its origin

€2,000 per event (covered by the Warsaw City Council and British Council Poland budgets).

Results and impact

Creative Mikser is a series of networking meetings targeting Warsaw's creative community. It is co-organised by British Council Poland and the City of Warsaw. Each edition attracts about 100-150 participants, who represent small businesses, the academia, public institutions or the local startup community. It is a place where entrepreneurs have the opportunity to present themselves, discuss topical subjects and meet interesting business partners.

Creative Mikser offers a valuable networking opportunity, which leads to new business deals and collaboration projects between entrepreneurs and public administration.

One example: we organised a special contest for designers who produce creative gadgets for the city of Warsaw's participation in international trade shows. During last year's Creative Mikser event, entitled E-Creatives: Business in Internet,, we invited young entrepreneur Katarzyna Gerlach from Bluebirds & Co (<https://bluebirds.co>) to the panel. She suggested that many entrepreneurs from the creative industries can offer the city interesting promotional tools and nice gadgets. After our meeting, the city of Warsaw decided to organise a contest entitled Designed in Warsaw, with the entries to be presented and distributed at international festivals, shows and trade events. The first contest generated more than ten gadgets, which were distributed at the MIPIM, the international real estate show for professionals in Cannes, France. The entries also included clothes designed by Bluebirds & Co. We attach examples of entries we chose to promote. In November 2015, the city of Warsaw's delegation exhibited these gadgets at Munich's Expo Real 2015. Next year, Warsaw will organise a similar contest for young designers.

Transferability tips for cities willing to implement a similar scheme

- Do not be afraid of organising a new event in your city dedicated to small businesses (even if there are numerous similar initiatives). Creative Mikser has provided proof that this model of meeting is needed in a creative community.
- Try to engage various partners in creating a theme for the meeting. Their experience and contacts can make your event more interesting.
- Ask your target group who they want to hear from and share experience with, and what topic is the most interesting for them.
- Try to find a venue for the meeting which is connected with your target group. Creative Mikser is organised in cafes, maker spaces, co-working spaces or clubs.

Contact

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References, sources, bibliography

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cqTiqzpYXI>
creatives.waw.pl/en/articles/berlin-creative-mixer-report

Website, social media

www.britishcouncil.pl/en/search?search_api_views_fulltext=creative+mikser&=Search
firma.um.warszawa.pl/creative-mikser

Pictures



Picture 1: The 10th edition of Creative Mikser: E-Creatives. E-Business (by BLAGERS.co)



Picture 2: The 11th edition of Creative Mikser: Success in Fashion. How to Design (by BLAGERS.co)