

# Guide to Building Local Ecosystems

Method inspired by the Cité des Métiers - steps,  
partner's cases, lessons learned



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## Executive Summary

**Purpose.** This guide distils how STRONGER (KA220-YOU) partners worked to build local, multi-stakeholder ecosystems for youth career support—what they tried, what worked (or didn't), and what to do next. It is inspired by the **Cité des Métiers de Paris** approach and is meant for municipalities, youth organisations, training providers, NGOs, and employers who want practical coordination without heavy structures.

### What's inside:

- A **step-by-step pathway** from needs analysis to stakeholder mapping, engagement, light governance, small pilots, monitoring, and sustainability.
- **Country notes** (France, Spain, Italy, Ireland) showing how each partner applied the steps in their own context.
- A **lessons learned** section capturing enablers and obstacles you can anticipate.

**How the approach works:** Start small and co-design simple, visible actions within existing community touchpoints; use shared, lightweight routines (intake/triage, warm handovers, short calendars); collect just enough data (attendance, bookings, follow-through) to learn; and only formalise governance after early wins.

### Highlights by context.

- **France (ANI International):** Stakeholders converged on the value of a central, neutral hub (Cité des Métiers) for Val-de-Reuil; governance did not progress due to

missing operational backing, so pilots were scoped for a future cycle. Lesson: demonstrate value via micro-actions before formalising.

- **Spain (FEMXA):** Existing public systems already coordinate youth/migration services; effort focused on reinforcing networks and mentoring-based training rather than duplicating governance. Lesson: adapt to what exists; don't rebuild.
- **Italy (Città della Scienza):** Built a cooperative network concept and explored a hub in Naples; funding/premises constraints limited formalisation and pilots, but practical training/networking themes proved most engaging. Lesson: keep offers practical and plan for resource realities.
- **Ireland (Redial Partnership):** Planned a youth skills workshop embedded in Aremoja/Diversity Sligo/Forum routines; scheduled post-project. Lesson: embed in trusted routines to reduce stigma and raise follow-through.

**Core lessons:** Clarity of purpose, small doable activities, and regular contact move coalitions faster than design documents; neutral front doors reduce fragmentation; and light, honest monitoring beats complex KPIs when capacity is tight. Sustainability comes from anchoring activities in existing structures, seeking joint funding only after proof of value, and keeping a light coordination rhythm so momentum survives staff/funding changes.

**Using this guide:** Treat it as a practical checklist: pick one step to start (often Step 5 pilots or Step 3 engagement), run something small, capture three signals (attendance, bookings, follow-through), and share a one-page “you said, we did.” Repeat and scale only when partners—and young people—see the value.

## Introduction

This guide was developed within the STRONGER project (KA220-YOU), co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, to help municipalities, youth organisations, training centres, NGOs and employers organise what they already have into something that works as **one pathway** for young people. Rather than proposing a new institution, it shows how a small set of shared routines can align existing services so a young person moves from a first question to a clear next step and real follow-through. The approach is grounded in the **Cité des Métiers** method—neutral access, co-presence of services, guidance before placement, and visibility—and adapts those principles to territories where space, staffing and data constraints are real.

By “ecosystem,” we mean a local network of public, private and third-sector actors that coordinate lightly around a **neutral front door**, a **shared, minimal intake and triage**, **warm handovers** to a named contact, and a **rolling calendar** of opportunities across partners. The goal is not to create parallel structures, but to make existing ones easier to navigate and more effective together—especially for young people facing layered barriers (language, transport, timing, family economics, confidence).

The guide is practical. Section 1 explains the ecosystem approach and how the Cité des Métiers principles translate into daily operations: who convenes, how intake and referrals work, what cadence keeps the system alive, and how to handle consent and privacy with restraint. Section 2 sets out the step-by-step path—from local needs analysis and stakeholder mapping to engagement, light governance, co-created pilots, monitoring and sustainability—so teams can start small and learn fast. Section 3 presents **lessons learned** from partners in different contexts; these short notes record what was attempted, what

actually happened, and what made a difference on the ground. The document is intentionally concise and avoids internal project templates; where tools are mentioned (e.g., a one-page intake or a simple referral log), they are described so readers can reproduce them in a form that fits their context.

This is a **how-to**, not a theory paper. It assumes that many services already exist but are fragmented, and that partners want results without heavy administration. You will find clear design choices (neutral entry point; book the next step in the room; name a real person for each handover), a rhythm that is feasible to maintain (weekly calendar updates; brief monthly reviews), and a small set of indicators that matter (attendance, bookings to a next step, and follow-through). Where a full hub is neither possible nor needed, the same routines can be embedded in trusted venues—community cafés, clinics, school events—until value is visible and partners are ready to formalise more.

Use the guide in sequence if you are starting from scratch, or dip into the step that matches your current bottleneck—engagement, coordination, pilots or monitoring. Treat the country notes as reference points, not templates: each territory adapted to its constraints and opportunities, and the honest reporting of limits (what could and could not be done within the project period) is part of what makes the approach credible.

STRONGER is one contribution among others to improving youth pathways. If this guide helps you align actors, reduce drop-off between services and make next steps clearer for young people, it has served its purpose. For acknowledgements and the EU co-funding notice, see the credits at the end of the document

## Section 1: Understanding the Ecosystem Approach

### Purpose and scope

The ecosystem approach is a practical way to make existing local services function as one pathway for young people. Rather than creating a new bureaucracy, it aligns public, private, and third-sector actors around a neutral “front door” and a small number of disciplined routines. The aim is simple: a young person moves from a first question to a clear next step and follow-through without having to repeat their story at every desk. This guide applies those principles to territorial realities where space, staffing, and administrative constraints are real.

### Core principles drawn from the Cité des Métiers

At the heart of the Cité des Métiers (CdM) method are neutrality, co-presence, guidance before placement, and visibility. Access is open and non-selective; institutions are present together around the young person rather than sending them from counter to counter; short guidance moments and tasters precede long commitments; and the offer is made visible through a recognisable entry point and clear service menu. In our adaptation, partners remain autonomous but agree to coordinate lightly so that guidance, training, volunteering, and employability supports present as a single, intelligible pathway.

### How the ecosystem operates in practice

A neutral entry point welcomes young people in a small physical space or within trusted community venues. Intake is kept to the minimum necessary to help; triage is light and

aims for one concrete next step; and handovers are “warm,” naming a person and a time window so responsibility and follow-up are clear. Opportunities are made visible through a rolling calendar maintained across partners, and learning is organised through short review cycles that adjust practice month by month. Roles are explicit and human-scaled: one actor convenes the network and maintains the calendar and referral log; front-door hosts welcome and initiate handovers; receiving partners contact the young person within the agreed window and report status; an employer-facing function converts interest into talks, tasters, visits or interviews; and a data point person safeguards consent language, access controls, and a light set of indicators. Cadence matters as much as design: each week the calendar is updated and stale items are removed; after every session next steps are booked on the spot and recorded the same day; once a month the network reviews a one-page snapshot and agrees one improvement to test before the next meeting; each quarter partners look at patterns to decide what to scale, pause, or drop.

## Inclusion, data, and indicators of success

Inclusion is designed-in from the start. Communication uses plain language and mediation where needed; timing respects transport and family patterns; venues are step-free with clear signage; and digital alternatives exist for those who cannot travel. Participation is free, and where possible information about transport or childcare support is provided. Data and privacy are handled with restraint: the intake captures only contact details, consent to share between named partners for guidance purposes, the young person’s interest, and the proposed next step; referrals are stored in a restricted space and bulk personal data is not circulated by email; when consent is not available, follow-up occurs via the front-door host using anonymous identifiers. Progress becomes visible when access

broadens to priority groups, when a clear majority of participants leave activities with a booked next step and a named contact, when starts in learning, language, volunteering, tasters or interviews increase, and when the operating rhythm holds—referrals acknowledged on time, and the shared calendar and tracker kept current. None of this requires a large building or a new logo; it requires a small number of clear agreements kept consistently.

## Section 2: Step-by-Step Ecosystem Building Process

This step-by-step pathway is adapted from the **Cité des Métiers de Paris** methodology that inspired our approach. It translates their practical principles into our context, guiding partners through each stage—from initial mapping and mobilisation to co-creation, piloting, and consolidation—so every actor knows what to do, when, and with whom.

### Step 1: Local Needs Analysis

The purpose of local needs analysis is to understand the main challenges youth face locally and where services don't match needs.

#### How to proceed

- **Surveys with youth:** capture motivation, mobility/transport limits, family economic pressure, language needs, and volunteering/gender dynamics.
- **Interviews with professionals:** explore school dropout, mismatch between labor supply and demand, and barriers seen in daily practice.
- **Desk research & public data:** review local youth demographics, education and employment indicators to frame the scale and urgency.

#### Main findings from our local analysis:

## Case of France – ANI International

The local needs analysis in Val-De-Reuil in France revealed several key challenges faced by young people. These include limited motivation to change their situation, difficulties in matching labor supply and demand, high school dropout rates, low mobility due to inadequate transport, and economic hardship within families. Stakeholders also noted language barriers when mediators communicate with families, as well as gender disparities in volunteering, though the introduction of the “citizen’s permit” has encouraged broader youth participation.

To identify these issues, ANI International conducted a focus group in Montreuil and carried out interviews with stakeholders in Val de Reuil and some desk reseaches. With around 40% of Val de Reuil’s population aged 14-25, the findings underlined the urgency of coordinated action.

A major insight was that local actors are willing to collaborate, with many agreeing that a centralized physical hub – a “Cité de Métiers” – would be the most effective way to address these challenges.

## Case of Spain – FEMXA

Promoting employability among vulnerable groups in Spain faces significant structural and organisational challenges. Spain’s decentralized system delegates responsibilities for employment, education, and social inclusion to the Autonomous Communities, resulting in a fragmented landscape where services often operate independently. Young people

face difficulties accessing the labour market and gaining initial professional experience, while professionals in career transitions also require updated skills and guidance. Soft skills such as decision-making, adaptability, and communication are often lacking, and limited motivation and perspective on future job opportunities further complicate employability. Although networks of stakeholders exist, access to coherent, coordinated support is inconsistent.

To identify the issues, the following methods were used:

- Focus groups with youth and stakeholders
- Interviews with professionals and institutional actors
- Desk research and literature review
- Analysis of public data

A notable insight was the fact that stakeholder networks already exist in urban areas such as Madrid, involving universities, NGOs, professional associations, employers, and public administrations. Stakeholders generally agree on strengthening existing collaborations rather than creating new ecosystems. Effective coordination among these actors is crucial for ensuring coherent and sustainable youth support.

### Case of Italy – Città della Scienza

The project focuses on the Campania Region, with particular attention to Naples. The project brought together key players in social policy, youth training, and career support, especially those working on the front lines in marginalized neighborhoods. The goal is to

foster inclusion and promote cultural and social development, ensuring that no one is left behind and helping young people envision a better future.

An in-depth mapping of public bodies, institutions, and associations operating in youth employment, education, and training (targeting ages 16 to 35) led to the identification of key stakeholders. Initial outreach was conducted through phone calls and in-person meetings to present the project's objectives and invite participation. Each organization was asked to appoint a contact person to collaborate on co-designing a methodology for a one-stop shop: a multi-partner, integrated ecosystem supporting youth employment, education, and inclusion in Campania. This approach draws inspiration from the Cité des Métiers model.

To bridge the gap between labor supply and demand, the project aims to develop innovative tools for career guidance and personal development. Achieving this requires listening to the needs of institutions and policymakers, who must move beyond outdated frameworks and implement forward-thinking models that truly support younger generations. Current opportunities often fall short, as they are shaped by past experiences and fail to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving information society.

### Case of Ireland – Redial Partnership

In Sligo, three interlinked challenges emerged. First, language barriers, documentation complexities, and transport or childcare constraints reduce attendance and follow-through among young migrants, refugees, and those in or exiting Direct Provision. Second, information overload and fragmented signposting make it difficult for Ukrainian youth and families to navigate education, training, and employability supports without a coordinated local hub. Third, trust and stigma concerns mean standalone employment programmes

attract lower engagement than supports embedded in familiar, culturally safe community settings such as Aremoja gatherings and Diversity Sligo clinics.

To respond, outreach was embedded at existing touchpoints—issuing invitations and running short sessions during Aremoja coffee mornings and Diversity Sligo clinic times—to meet youth where they already seek support. Multi-agency information was coordinated through the Sligo Ukrainian Community Response Forum, aligning signposting to ETB guidance, DSP/Intreo supports, health services, volunteering, and education pathways. Light feedback loops (exit polls, follow-up SMS, youth roundtables) were used after each interaction to adjust timings, language mediation, and venue logistics based on what participants reported.

A key insight is that short, practical employability activities integrated into trusted community routines—paired with warm handovers and named contacts—significantly reduce drop-off after first contact compared with standalone programmes announced separately.

## Step 2: Stakeholder Mapping

Identify who's active in youth development locally:

- Make a list by sector (education, employment, social work)
- Use a mapping grid: High Influence / High Interest

**Key stakeholders identified:**

## Case of France – ANI International

The stakeholder mapping exercise highlighted a diverse ecosystem of organizations active in youth development. These include the Municipality of Val de Reuil, Hub Emploi, SOS Intérim, Point Jeunesse Val de Reuil, CFA (apprenticeship training center), Académie de Normandie, and Adequation Développement. Each brings unique expertise, from political leadership to vocational training, employment mediation, and youth guidance. The mapping revealed that while the territory benefits from many active players, services remain fragmented due to the absence of a centralized hub for young people. Stakeholders strongly agreed on the need for a single, visible structure to coordinate services, with the “Cité de Métiers” emerging as the most promising solution. Despite the challenges, the willingness to collaborate was evident across all sectors.

## Case of Spain – FEMXA

The stakeholder mapping exercise in Spain highlighted a broad ecosystem across education (universities, vocational training centres), employment (private job placement agencies, employer federations, chambers of commerce), social inclusion (NGOs and foundations), and professional associations (psychologists, economists, sociologists), alongside public representative bodies (youth councils, school councils, economic and social councils, public observatories). Key actors include Fundación ONCE, Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Acción contra el Hambre, Cruz Roja, Cáritas, the Official Colleges of Psychologists, Economists and Sociologists, universities and VET centres, private job placement agencies,

chambers of commerce and employer federations, as well as public entities with youth representation such as the Consejo General de la Juventud de Cantabria. While cooperation is present, it remains fragmented; stakeholders see a clear opportunity to strengthen networks through flexible, hybrid engagement formats.

**Key observation:** While stakeholder cooperation exists, it is fragmented. There is a clear opportunity to strengthen networks through flexible, hybrid engagement formats.

**Barriers to mapping:** Fragmentation of services across regions; diversity of actors and approaches.

**Lessons learned about engaging stakeholders:** Strengthening existing networks is more effective than creating parallel structures. Multi-channel communication (online and in-person) improves stakeholder engagement.

## Case of Italy – Città della Scienza

The stakeholder mapping in Campania (Naples) revealed a rich ecosystem spanning public institutions and community actors: the University of Naples Federico II (Dept. of Sociology for orientation), the Campania Region and Municipality of Naples (Youth Policies, Training, Employment), the Regional School Office, and associations focused on urban regeneration and work inclusion such as La Paranza, Audiovisual Napoli Hub, Apogeo ETS, and l'Altra Napoli. Their combined insights highlighted two dominant youth profiles—those fully disoriented about their future and those with clear aims but lacking tools—alongside guidance approaches that young people often don't identify with. While many initiatives

exist, services remain fragmented; stakeholders converged on the need for a single, coordinated multi-partner one-stop hub to align offers, strengthen listening and trust, and develop transversal skills. Despite systemic complexity, commitment to continue the action-research and co-create the hub was strong across sectors.

### Case of Ireland – Redial Partnership

The stakeholder mapping exercise in Sligo highlighted a complementary ecosystem: Redial Partnership (coordination, training design, employer-engagement brokerage, and light monitoring/learning), Aremoja Women’s Group (community-based, culturally sensitive engagement for migrant and refugee young women through safe social spaces and confidence-building), Diversity Sligo (advice, advocacy, and weekly clinics that act as trusted entry points for documentation, housing transitions, education/health access, and readiness for training or work), and the Sligo Ukrainian Community Response Forum (county-level information and signposting across education, training, social and health supports, volunteering, and local opportunities). Each brings distinct value: Redial convenes and aligns session calendars, shared intake/triage, referral follow-up, and employer-facing activities; Aremoja serves as a trusted gateway that weaves short, practical employability content into familiar gatherings; Diversity Sligo provides the primary access channel for international protection applicants via clinic-based supports that remove immediate barriers; and the Forum ensures consistent, visible information and rapid signposting for Ukrainian communities. The mapping also showed that embedding brief, practical employability activities into these existing, trusted

touchpoints—paired with named contacts and warm handovers—significantly increases attendance and follow-through compared with standalone offers.

**Lessons learned about engaging stakeholders:** Start from existing trust networks and familiar routines, co-design simple shared tools (intake, triage, warm handover) that each organisation can use without extra bureaucracy, and maintain short, regular coordination with visible “you said, we did” feedback so partners and young people see quick improvements, sustaining motivation and collaborative momentum over time.

## Step 3: Engagement & Partnership Building

This step aims at bringing stakeholders together, align on shared goals and values, and secure concrete commitments for coordinated action.

### Steps

- **Reach out to stakeholders** (email or phone) and share a brief stating the purpose, expected time, and desired outcomes.
- **Hold an information session or roundtable** to present context, listen to needs, and surface collaboration opportunities.
- **Present shared goals and values** and check alignment.
- **Capture commitments and next steps** (who does what, by when) and agree on the follow-up channel (mailing list or messaging group).

## Activities carried out by partners and outcomes

### Case of France – ANI International

ANI International organized multiple exchanges with associations and institutions in Val de Reuil, complemented by a focus group, to strengthen dialogue among stakeholders. These engagements provided a comprehensive overview of youth challenges and existing initiatives. One of the main outcomes was a shared recognition of the necessity to implement the Cité de Métiers methodology as a unifying framework. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of structuring cooperation around actors such as Hub Emploi, which could serve as a pivotal connector within the ecosystem. The process confirmed that stakeholders are motivated to collaborate, provided that roles are clarified and each organization's identity is respected.

### Case of Spain – FEMXA

We delivered online and onsite seminars to present the STRONGER methodology and, through several workshops, promoted and disseminated the methodology and the results achieved during the project (for example, the Gamecomp workshop held on 27 May 2025 in Vigo, and three sessions in December 2023 and January 2024 at Greenhive attended by nine VET school teachers and one educational counselor). We conducted in-person visits to professional associations and university career services in Madrid. We also held online meetings with youth representative associations (Consejo General Cantabria) and other

youth stakeholders (NGOs such as Emaús Foundation and YMCA) at local and national levels. In addition, Femxa contacted and met with international associations in the field of migrants and inclusion (Charter of Diversity Greece-KEAN), national associations in the field of disabilities (AEDIS - Asociación Nacional para la Discapacidad), and a regional association (AMICA - Asociación para la discapacidad de la región de Cantabria). Finally, we disseminated the project through a promotional video and presentations at international forums.

These activities enabled dynamic interaction with stakeholders and the collection of qualitative feedback, supported the consolidation of collaborations without creating parallel ecosystems, and informed ongoing adjustments to engagement strategies based on continuous feedback.

Stakeholders valued the methodology and showed willingness to cooperate within existing networks.

## Case of Italy – Città della Scienza

From the activities carried out, such as analyzing young people's needs, choosing local partners, meeting with stakeholders, and running focus groups and interviews, we have created not just one space, but a multi-partner ecosystem. This network brings together local organizations working in the same area, all connected to a central hub (the Desk at Città della Scienza). Here, we design projects and offer employment and training services, with clear rules, modern tools, and facilities across the region to support and share new initiatives as they emerge. For the involvement and collaboration with local

stakeholders, the most appropriate strategy for our territory of reference is the network, cooperation, to systematize a series of sharing and collaboration activities to develop innovative initiatives that meet the needs of young people.

A valuable lesson we learned during this step was the fact that it is necessary to find other funds and imagine recognizing economic tokens for the stakeholders to be involved in the future

### Case of Ireland – Redial Partnership

Initial outreach was conducted by Redial Partnership via email and phone to confirm points of contact and propose a short, joint information session with Aremoja Women’s Group, Diversity Sligo, and the Sligo Ukrainian Community Response Forum, building on their established communication channels and trusted community routines in Sligo . An online meeting was then held to align on a simple shared intake/triage form, warm-handover practice with a named contact, and a short, youth-friendly session calendar embedded into Aremoja gatherings and Diversity Sligo clinic times, with Forum signposting used to keep information coherent for Ukrainian families and youth . Shared goals and values were presented around neutrality, cultural sensitivity, meeting young people where they already are, and prioritising small, practical steps that move youth from first contact to language classes, training tasters, volunteering, or employer talks within existing community touchpoints

Partners agreed to a coordination rhythm and a shared online folder for the current intake/triage templates, a referral tracker, and a rolling decision/action log to keep work lightweight and transparent across organisations with limited capacity

The most effective lever was embedding employability content into existing, trusted community routines—Aremoja coffee mornings, Diversity Sligo clinic slots, and the Forum’s coordinated updates—because this overcame hesitancy and logistical friction that typically limit attendance at standalone programmes

From our experience, we saw that an alternative strategy that could also work is, when capacity or timing issues arise, short “pop-up” information corners at clinics or community events, five-minute micro-briefings at the start/end of gatherings, and rotating WhatsApp voice notes in multiple languages can maintain engagement without requiring separate sessions

## Step 4: Governance and Coordination Models

The purpose here is to keep collaboration light, clear, and workable. Adopt a simple, workable arrangement that keeps collaboration light and clear. An **informal working group** can coordinate activities without heavy structures, while **regular coordination meetings** (e.g., monthly) maintain a steady rhythm to review actions, share updates, and agree next steps. Whichever format you choose, ensure there is a brief action log (who does what, by when) and a single contact point for follow-up so decisions translate into concrete tasks and partners remain aligned.

**Models chosen by partners and how it worked:**

## Case of France – ANI International

Despite early interest from some partners, ANI did not move to a structured governance phase in Val de Reuil. The main barrier was the absence of financial and long-term institutional commitments: stakeholders were open to collaboration but not ready to assume the funding or administrative responsibilities a formal ecosystem requires. Locally, many youth services already operate independently with limited coordination, and actors preferred to preserve their autonomy rather than invest in a shared structure; economic difficulties and funding uncertainty further reduced appetite for risk.

The key lesson was not to attempt governance too early: stakeholders first need low-risk, practical collaborations (e.g., joint workshops or pilot events) that demonstrate clear added value. Our recommendation is therefore to start with small, concrete joint activities, collect clear evidence of youth impact to motivate decision-makers, and only propose formal governance once stakeholders have seen tangible benefits.

## Case of Spain – FEMXA

The methodology was not fully implemented because Spain already has centralized public structures (local/regional departments) coordinating migration, youth, and socio-labour integration. Creating a parallel governance framework was unnecessary, though public actors showed interest in adopting parts of the approach.

**Barrier.** A key obstacle was the requirement for data anonymization: Spanish public administration needs identifiable activity records for reporting and accountability, making

anonymization impractical. Limited financial resources also constrained the creation of new structures.

**Model chosen. Participatory, informal coordination** via hybrid working groups and ad-hoc meetings. Stakeholders share information and plan activities flexibly without a formal governance body.

### Advantages & challenges.

- **Advantages:** adaptable, quick to adjust, low administrative burden.
- **Challenges:** no formal structure; reliance on voluntary commitment.

**Recommendation.** Prior to adopting new governance, assess whether existing public systems already meet the objectives and **adapt rather than duplicate**. Ensure data practices align with national standards; where anonymization conflicts with requirements, explore alternative protection measures. Secure dedicated resources in advance. Note: **collaborative, mentoring-based training** was widely valued and strengthened peer learning and networks.

### Case of Italy – Città della Scienza

The chosen approach was a cooperative, multi-stakeholder network coordinated with local authorities, with a physical hub envisaged at Città della Scienza. Governance rested on participatory co-design, bringing employees, partners, citizens, and end-users into shared problem definition, solution development, and evaluation so that services reflected real youth needs and were jointly owned.

The governance focus was to align actors around the four agreed steps (understand the local context - develop a concept - co-create a shared project - implement the solution) while recognising the physical-digital continuum in young people’s lives and prioritising reliable information, critical thinking/media literacy, and digital education (including adult upskilling to better support adolescents online).

The main barriers to formalising governance were economic (insufficient funding) and operational (no suitable premises), which ultimately prevented establishing the hub even though stakeholders were oriented toward cooperation.

### Case of Ireland – Redial Partnership

An informal working group with regular coordination meetings and shared documents/action plans was chosen to keep governance light, flexible, and responsive for a four-organisation ecosystem made up of Redial Partnership, Aremoja Women’s Group, Diversity Sligo, and the Sligo Ukrainian Community Response Forum. This balances the need for structure (clear routines and shared tools) with the reality of limited capacity and the strengths of trusted, community-led touchpoints.

The four partners will hold a 45-minute operational check-in every 4 weeks to confirm upcoming sessions, outreach roles, and any handovers, followed by a short “micro-learning” slot to review what worked and what needs adjusting based on attendance and feedback. Each organisation leads engagement through its existing strengths (Aremoja gatherings, Diversity clinics, Forum information flows, Redial’s training/employer interface).

Advantages include speed (decisions made quickly in short meetings), low admin (no heavy charters or committees), and high trust (work happens in familiar community settings), which together raise attendance and follow-through. Challenges include reliance on each organisation's limited staff time, vulnerability to last-minute changes (e.g., accommodation moves, documentation appointments), and the need for frequent updates to keep information current across the four partners.

**Recommendation for others:** Start with the smallest viable structure: an informal working group, a fixed 45-minute coordination rhythm, and three shared artefacts (intake/triage form, referral tracker with named contacts, and a one-page dashboard).

## Step 5: Co-creation and Pilot Actions

This step turns collaboration into practice. The purpose is to **co-design and test 1-2 small, visible activities** with partners to validate your assumptions, standardise simple routines (shared intake, triage, warm handover), and **convert interest into concrete next steps** for young people (with a named contact). Keep pilots light and focused so you can learn quickly, adjust together, and show early results (attendance, bookings made, follow-through) that build trust and justify scaling.

You can organize activities such as :

- **Orientation day:** front-door overview of local services with live sign-ups for the next step.
- **Job fair or mentoring circle:** short employer/mentor interactions that end with booked tasters, interviews, or guidance slots.

- **Youth skills workshop:** a practical session (e.g., CV/portfolio, digital basics) that finishes with a scheduled follow-on activity.

## Pilots created by partners:

### Case of France – ANI International

During the project period, we focused on **governance-building and stakeholder meetings**, so we did not reach implementation of pilot activities. We **discussed and scoped** several small, low-risk actions with the Municipality of Val-de-Reuil, Hub Emploi, and SOS Intérim, but **no pilots were launched** due to the lack of a basic operational budget and the absence of a host structure. These actions remain our **ready-to-activate** options for a future cycle. Pilots co-created: none implemented during the project period.

Examples of actions discussed were:

- Ecosystem Open Day (2h, shared stand): meet-the-services for youth.
- Joint intake trial (2-3 weeks): one shared referral form + warm handovers.
- Employer meet-ups (60-90 min): speed talks with local firms; collect pledges.
- Youth feedback circle (45 min): test the process and capture improvements

## Case of Spain – FEMXA

No full-scale pilot was implemented; activities focused on co-creation and network consolidation. The focus was on strengthening networks and preparing the ground for future joint actions. Mentoring mentoring-based training has proven to be of great interest and value across all participating partners.

This resulted in a strengthened existing networks and preparation of hybrid collaboration formats.

## Case of Italy – Città della Scienza

No pilot activities were carried out during the project period. Work focused on reviewing existing municipal initiatives and meeting local stakeholders (e.g., Municipality of Naples: Department of Youth Policies) to understand current services and opportunities; this mapping informed potential future pilots but did not result in a co-created activity.

## Case of Ireland– Redial Partnership

Irish partners planned a youth skills workshop embedded in an existing community gathering, with short, practical segments on CV building, interview practice, and workplace culture delivered in a familiar setting to maximise attendance and reduce stigma for young migrants and refugees in Sligo. Redial Partnership would coordinate the

workshop design and employer-facing inputs; Aremoja Women's Group would host and mobilise participants through its coffee-morning network; Diversity Sligo would invite eligible youth during clinic hours and support documentation queries; and the Sligo Ukrainian Community Response Forum would share consistent information and signposting to ensure visibility for Ukrainian families and youth. The intended outcome was higher engagement and stronger follow-through.

If the pilot did not run within the reporting period, it was scheduled for October to align with partners' clinic and community calendars and to confirm translation availability, ensuring the workshop coincided with established routines and reached youth through trusted touchpoints for a stronger initial uptake. For future cycles, partners also discussed adding brief micro-introductions at the start of gatherings and circulating short WhatsApp voice notes in key languages to announce upcoming sessions.

## Step 6: Monitoring, Evaluation & Impact

This step shows whether collaboration is working and where to adjust next. Keep it light and regular: use a short, repeatable routine to capture what you did, what changed for young people, and how partners felt about the process. The aim is to learn quickly, evidence value, and feed improvements back into the next cycle.

- **Number of youth reached:** simple headcount of participants and first contacts per activity/period.

- **Stakeholder satisfaction:** a quick pulse (e.g., one-minute check at the end or a short follow-up) on clarity, usefulness, and coordination.
- **Outcomes for young people:** note concrete results such as **job offers** and **course enrolments** (and any other tangible progress agreed locally), with brief follow-up to confirm they happened.

Close each cycle with a one-page snapshot (“what we did, what changed, what we’ll improve next”) so learning is shared and actioned.

### How the partners evaluated their work:

#### Case of France – ANI International

Given that neither the pilot nor the formal governance bodies were launched, no outcome-level monitoring was possible during the project period. Our evaluation therefore focused on process evidence only (meeting notes, email exchanges and working drafts), which consistently showed stakeholder interest but insufficient conditions to proceed—primarily the absence of shared, recurring funding and a suitable host setup. We tracked process-level indicators such as the number of bilateral and group exchanges held, the proportion of stakeholders expressing conditional interest, and the barriers identified (funding, hosting, data-sharing).

The main lessons were twofold:

- First, readiness matters—goodwill without resources rarely converts into action;

- Second, a phased pathway is more realistic in this context, moving from micro-actions to a light MoU before establishing a formal body.

Looking ahead, our monitoring framework is defined and ready to deploy at pilot launch, focusing on youth reached, warm referrals made, time-to-first-contact, stakeholder participation rates and simple satisfaction scores from both youth and partners. If we were to sequence the work again, we would prioritise generating early operational evidence and only then formalise governance, so that decisions rest on concrete, local performance data.

## Case of Spain – FEMXA

Spain monitored progress through qualitative feedback from stakeholders and youth, relying on activity logs and event-based feedback rather than regular formal meetings or structured reports. This adaptive, ongoing approach allowed real-time adjustments during delivery. Stakeholders considered the STRONGER approach relevant and useful, and experience showed that flexible formats are essential to reach all actors and beneficiaries. Monitoring was feasible throughout, so no exceptions were needed.

Looking ahead, the team would prioritise measuring youth employability outcomes, improvements in soft skills, and the effectiveness of coordination among stakeholders.

## Case of Italy – Città della Scienza

Here we outlined a feedback-based monitoring approach focused on early issue detection, open communication with stakeholders and the local community, and basic risk management. The tools described were questionnaires/surveys, individual or group interviews, and direct observation, followed by a summary report assessing whether activities created job opportunities and contributed to local socio-economic development.

## Case of Ireland – Redial Partnership

We propose a simple monitoring plan for the post-project pilot: record the number of youth reached per activity and cumulatively at the point of contact, using sign-ins or quick headcounts for open drop-ins. As the pilot is scheduled after the project period, there are no in-project monitoring results to report.

## Step 7: Ensuring Sustainability

This step turns project momentum into routine practice. The aim is to anchor what worked inside local structures, secure resources to continue, and keep partners talking so collaboration doesn't fade once the project ends.

- **Integrate activities into local strategy:** align pilots and routines with municipal/youth plans so they become part of standard provision.

- **Apply for joint funding:** submit proposals together to sustain and scale the agreed activities.
- **Continue informal meetings after the project:** keep a light coordination rhythm to share updates, solve issues, and plan the next actions.

### Sustainability actions planned:

#### Case of France – ANI International

To maintain momentum without immediate co-funding, we will keep the stakeholder list current and send a brief quarterly update (email or 30-minute online check-in) to share news, small wins, and upcoming opportunities. This light rhythm preserves relationships and makes it easy for partners to re-engage when a concrete opportunity appears.

Rather than committing to full business planning now, we will draft a one-page **options note** for a Cité des Métiers-style hub in Val-de-Reuil that sketches a minimal “start-small” setup and indicative resource needs. In parallel, we will track a short list of realistic funding windows and have exploratory conversations with one or two potential hosts to gauge interest in providing a desk/room and coordination cover for an initial, low-cost phase. The resources required are modest and mostly in-kind (coordinating updates, preparing the options note, and basic outreach); if a small pot becomes available, we will use it for a single joint visibility action (e.g., an open day) to demonstrate value ahead of

larger bids. This keeps the coalition warm, gives decision-makers something concrete to react to, and positions the ecosystem for a credible relaunch when conditions align.

### Case of Spain – FEMXA

Spain did not implement a full governance structure, but will reinforce the methodology within the existing public framework by integrating collaborative mentoring-based training into ongoing professional development, coordinating with current local and regional services to avoid duplication, exploring data-management solutions that meet national administrative requirements while respecting privacy, and seeking funding to gradually adopt selected elements of the approach. These steps require coordination support plus technical and logistical assistance, and build on stakeholders' willingness to collaborate and keep communication open.

Sustainability is currently constrained by financial, organisational, and administrative barriers, including the fact that public structures already cover core areas of the methodology and that anonymisation requirements conflict with detailed reporting norms. For the future, dedicated funding, flexibility in data requirements, recognition/integration of existing structures (so new actions complement rather than duplicate), and firm political/institutional commitment would be needed.

## Case of Italy – Città della Scienza

We set out a strategic development plan and communicated its objectives to the territory, with a focus on NEETs aged 16-30. Building on our context analysis (youth labour market, trends, needs, and a SWOT of the ecosystem), we will sustain the work by continuing collaboration with similar local organisations and project stakeholders to expand our reach. Our communication emphasises support for job placement, skills development, and training opportunities. To guide continuity, we defined key performance indicators (e.g., number of service-counter users, participants in events) and will collect and analyse these data to assess progress and adjust activities accordingly.

## Case of Ireland – Redial Partnership

We will integrate short, practical youth-employability activities into existing partner routines—Aremoja coffee mornings, Diversity Sligo clinic slots, and Forum information updates—so they continue beyond the project without creating new standalone events. To do this, we need room access during those regular gatherings and clinics to avoid venue costs. Continuity rests on embedding activities in trusted touchpoints with a light, regular coordination rhythm and shared, simple tools (intake/triage, referral follow-up with named contacts, and a one-page dashboard), so momentum does not depend on new infrastructure or heavy administration.

At present, the main barrier is organisational capacity; looking ahead, a small recurring coordination micro-grant, continued access to shared community spaces during regular events, and a stable shared “what’s on” calendar would enable sustainability.

## Section 3: Lessons Learned from STRONGER Project

This section shares **real-world lessons** from each partner’s attempt to build (or prepare to build) a local ecosystem—what they faced, what they tried, what actually happened, and what they’d do differently. It’s meant to help you avoid common pitfalls and focus on what works: clear purpose, small doable actions, steady coordination, and realistic resourcing. Read these short notes as a **practical checklist** of enablers and obstacles you can keep in mind when setting up your own ecosystem.

### Case of France – ANI International

In Val-de-Reuil, we saw that cooperation is real but stalls without a neutral focal point and a light operational backbone. A visible “one-stop” hub gives partners and young people a clear front door; small, co-designed actions in trusted places build momentum; and formal structures only make sense once value is visible. Youth barriers (motivation, language, transport, family economics) must be planned for from the start, and aligning with local institutional rhythms is as important as the content of activities. Concretely, this means:

- **Anchor collaboration in a neutral hub:** use a Cité des Métiers-style front door to unify actors and simplify youth access.
- **Start with a minimum viable collaboration:** pilot shared intake/triage, warm handovers, and a simple joint calendar before governance.

- **Secure a light backbone early:** identify a host space and a convening role so partners can move from meetings to delivery.
- **Work through trusted touchpoints:** embed first actions where youth already go to reduce stigma and no-shows.
- **Design for layered barriers:** plan language support, timing/transport, and economic constraints from the outset.
- **Match institutional rhythms:** time actions with municipal cycles to unlock cooperation and visibility.
- **Measure just enough to learn:** track attendance, bookings to a next step, and follow-through, then share a one-page “you said, we did.”
- **Formalise after wins:** use early results to justify governance steps and resource asks—don’t lead with structure.

## Case of Spain – FEMXA

The STRONGER project in Spain demonstrated that reinforcing existing networks is more effective than creating new ones. Building on established collaborations helped avoid duplication and fostered synergies among diverse stakeholders.

The Cité des Métiers methodology proved to be highly adaptable, offering a valuable framework for local coordination. However, several challenges emerged: territorial fragmentation and the diversity of stakeholders complicated coordination efforts, and

reaching vulnerable youth remained a persistent difficulty. Additionally, many collaborations remained informal, which limited their long-term sustainability.

One of the most positively received elements was the collaborative co-mentoring-based training, which was highly valued by all partners. This approach fostered peer learning, strengthened professional relationships, and contributed to building trust among institutions.

Despite these strengths, the lack of dedicated funding was a major barrier to scaling and sustaining the initiative. Without financial support, it was not feasible to formalize structures or expand successful practices beyond pilot actions.

The main recommendation is to strengthen existing ecosystems through small pilot initiatives and adaptive coordination, prioritising learning and flexibility before moving towards formal governance structures. Ensuring financial viability and investing in collaborative training models will be key to long-term impact.

## Case of Italy – Città della Scienza

During the project, it was not always easy to put new practices in place. We learned that youth engagement improves when training stays practical and relevant (job orientation, job search, skills development, business creation) and when structured networking events create direct contact with companies for placement opportunities; however, sustaining employer involvement consistently was a challenge. Clear, youth-friendly communication that highlights concrete benefits worked better than generic messaging, yet tailoring messages across different groups and channels proved demanding. Monitoring the results

of different recruitment approaches helped us focus effort where it counts, but collecting feedback systematically and on time—through online surveys, paper questionnaires at events, and one-to-one interviews—was uneven at first and required clearer evaluation goals.

Overall, the lesson is to keep offers practical, make employer pathways visible, define feedback objectives early, and streamline simple tools so data collection becomes routine rather than an extra task.

## Case of Ireland – Redial Partnership

Our key lesson was the fact that, ecosystem building worked best when starting small with clear, shared purpose and embedding simple, practical activities into trusted routines (Aremoja gatherings, Diversity Sligo clinics, and Forum information flows), supported by a light coordination rhythm and visible “you said, we did” feedback that showed quick improvements without adding bureaucracy.

**Challenges faced:** Time limitation, budget constraints.

## References & sources

References include partner meeting notes, activity summaries, and stakeholder interviews conducted during STRONGER (2023-2025). Public statistics and contextual data were drawn from local authority publications and partner-provided materials. Detailed internal templates are excluded from this public guide to keep the focus on replicable practices rather than project administration.

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