



# Crafting Proximity Communications in Partnership

INFORM EU meeting, Evora

*16 November 2022*

# Scope

- What are the **pre-requisites, and the right conditions for successful communication synergies EU-Region?**

*Proven and tested, based on 4 years of experimentation and inspiring examples*

- What can we deploy together, and **what forms** these joint actions can take?

*A dialogue among practitioners*

# Who's in the room?

+/- 45 INFORM-EU interlocutors (mostly dealing with ERDF/JTF/RRF)

**16 Member States** BE,CY,CZ,DE,EL,ES,FR,HR,HU,IT LT,PL,PT,RO,SI,SK

Regional Partners

- with **ongoing** operations under Europe in my region
- with **recent** experience under Europe in my Region
- with **scheduled campaigns and former experience**
- with former **experience under previous round 2018-20**

New partners with **scheduled** campaigns

Potential **new** partners

**National** coordination/central government services

# Setting the scene

# The challenge

Communicating EU locally to broad non-specialist audiences:  
mission impossible?

## **Crafting**

(not rocket science,  
not standardised)

## **...Proximity**

(closeness,  
identification)

## **...Communication**

(a 2-way process, not  
transparency, not information,  
not regulatory provisions)

## **... In Partnership**

(we are in this together)

# The findings

→ Proximity communications generating **EMOTIONS**



Not

... a cognitive process (facts and figures)

... institutional

... political

8 ... fund-specific



# The findings

→ Featuring things, local communities can **SEE TOUCH FEEL**

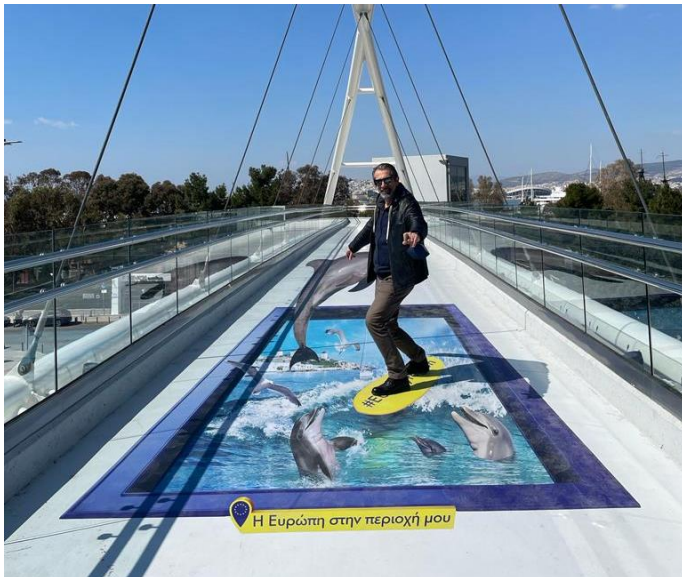
- Real human **STORIES**
- Meaningful **SUBJECTS**
- Familiar **PLACES**

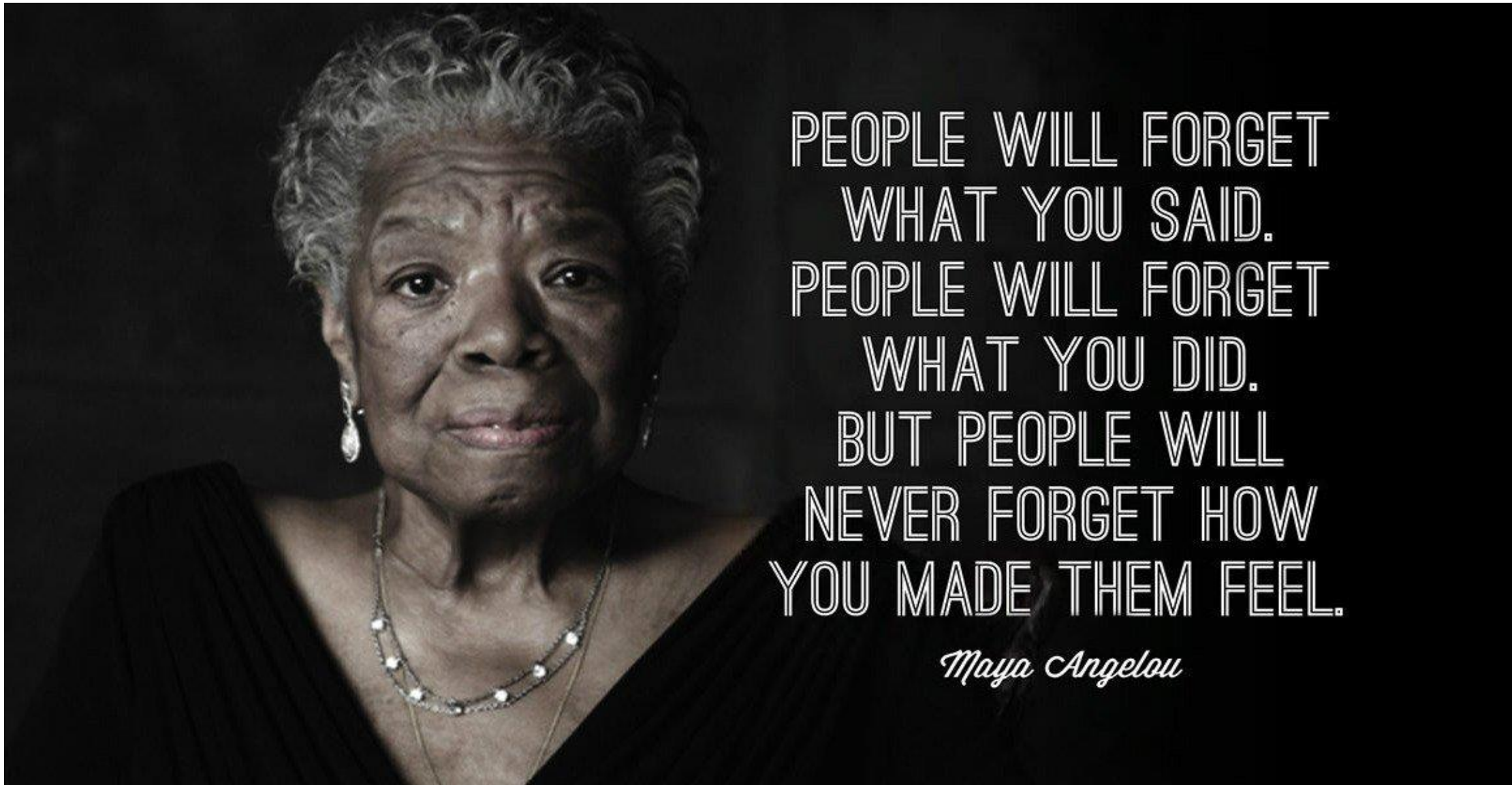


# The findings

→ Crafting memorable, engaging **EXPERIENCES**

The experiential element is a powerful vehicle  
Complement to compelling storytelling





PEOPLE WILL FORGET  
WHAT YOU SAID.  
PEOPLE WILL FORGET  
WHAT YOU DID.  
BUT PEOPLE WILL  
NEVER FORGET HOW  
YOU MADE THEM FEEL.

*Maya Angelou*



# Pre-requisites for impactful proximity communications

- ✓ Joint eagerness: time and active involvement (voluntary process)
- ✓ Co-ownership (locally rooted, credibility, legitimacy)
- ✓ Ultra-local scale (not top-down)
- ✓ End-user perspective
- ✓ Joint know-how and expertise, including tests
- ✓ Mix: Outdoor + third party endorsement + partnerships + paid + earned
- ✓ Flexibility (crafting, not applying a pre-defined formula, plan B)

# Co-ownership

# The best of both worlds – EU versus local

## **Direct cooperation EU-Region**

With project beneficiaries + Europe direct centres, NGOs, etc.

## **A human encounter**

Trust-based, long lasting

## **A joint adventure of co-creation**

Places, dates, narrative, mix, partnerships

## **Mutual presence on site**

Speaking with one voice, embodying continuity (shared management)

## **Co-branding = guarantee of credibility and acceptance**

Confirmed by surveys and focus groups

# Co-branding

Look again carefully at the image. In your opinion, who is behind this campaign? (%)



L'Europa nella mia regione

Qui si dà forma al futuro.



Ad Agerola, dal restauro della colonia Montana "Principe di Napoli", è nato un Campus che valorizza le eccellenze agroalimentari locali, la straordinaria produzione casearia e che forma gli chef di domani. La tradizione gastronomica, agricola e turistica del territorio dei Monti Lattari e dell'Alta Costiera Amalfitana ha così nuova energia. Una ripartenza, resa possibile anche grazie all'impegno dell'Europa e della Regione Campania.



The European Union with the support of local institutions

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# Places, People and Pride



# The human touch

Choosing subjects/topics, which are close to hearts and resonate to guts

Our focus: familiar, popular **PLACES**

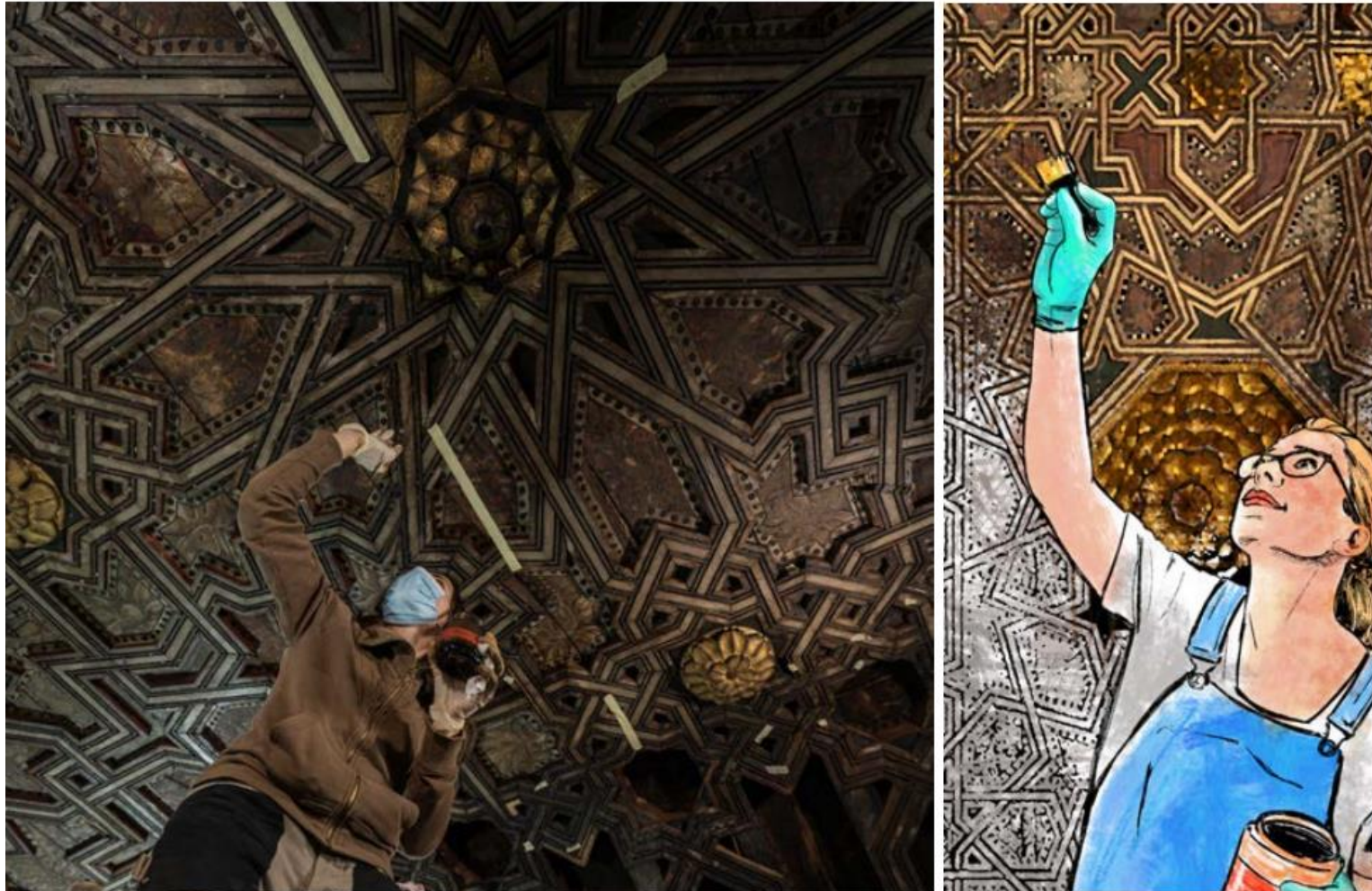
Natural bond, integral part of the feeling of belonging, associated with genuine pride

A powerful combination

On each territory a unique story:

## Embedding an EU dimension in the local pride

# Madeira – reflecting the island's facets





# Madeira – reflecting the island's facets

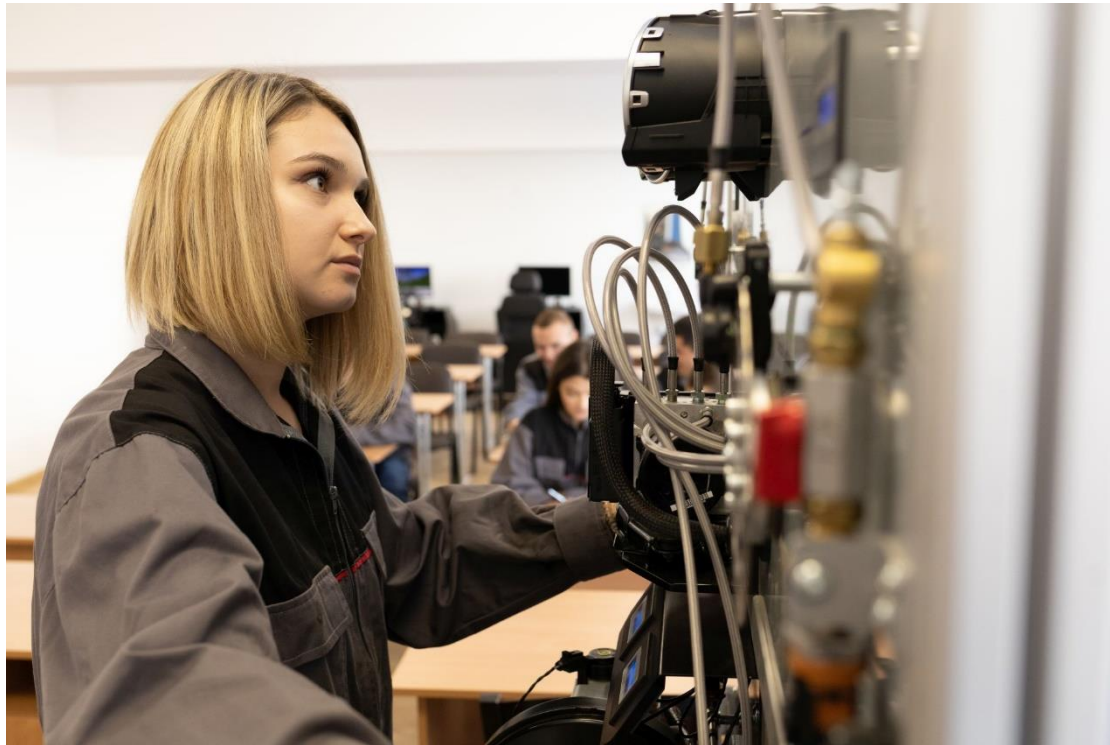




# Madeira – reflecting the island's facets



# North-East Romania: focus on the Siret community











# Authenticity



# Tonality

**Region-specific** messaging and activities “*only locals can understand*”

**Playing with local codes**, meanings, words, expressions so that “*it feels natural*”

Choosing the right **claim and visual** to boost the story  
*joint arbitration*

# The story of a meaningful claim

La noi acasă-i  
meserie!

→ It's awesome/craftsmanship  
here at home!

→ Meserie = craft/trade, awesome

# Final poster North-East Romania



## La noi acasă-i meserie!



Orașul Siret se reinventează creând condiții pentru o viață mai bună locuitorilor săi. Noile oportunități de formare profesională în meserii de viitor pentru tinerii din întreaga regiune, educația timpurie la standarde europene și extinderea zonei urbane cu noi spații verzi cu facilități de recreere contribuie la crearea unui viitor modern aici, acasă.

Regiunea Nord-Est a României intră într-o nouă etapă de dezvoltare, punând în prim-plan bunăstarea comunității, cu sprijinul Uniunii Europene.

Meaningful partnerships  
Memorable interactions

# “Crafting”... European emotions!

## **Going beyond conventional partnerships**

Personalities with a strong personal bond to the territory

Unconventional advocates and ambassadors

Role models for the regional youth

## **Interactive happenings** engaging the local community

→ Acting on perception

→ Generating a genuine, positive feeling in connection with something local AND European



# The story of an exclusive poster



## Madeira: O nosso jardim de histórias

Os feitos dos nossos antepassados, as estórias que eles nos contam e a herança que deixaram no património da nossa região formam o solo fértil que faz de nós madeirenses. O majestoso teto restaurado da nossa Catedral, a recuperação do Vicente's – um dos mais antigos ateliers de fotografia da Europa – e criação do Museu e a transformação do nosso Parque Temático em Santana, todos dizem muito sobre a história e cultura da nossa ilha, o saber-fazer dos nossos artesãos e o talento dos nossos artistas. Com o apoio da Madeira e da União Europeia, continuamos a cultivar este nosso jardim de histórias para as futuras gerações.

Ilustração por Roberto Macedo Alves, especialmente concebida para a iniciativa "Europa na minha região" na Madeira.



# The story of an exclusive poster



# Siret-born heroes





# Siret-born heroes





# Siret-born heroes



# The Experiential Element

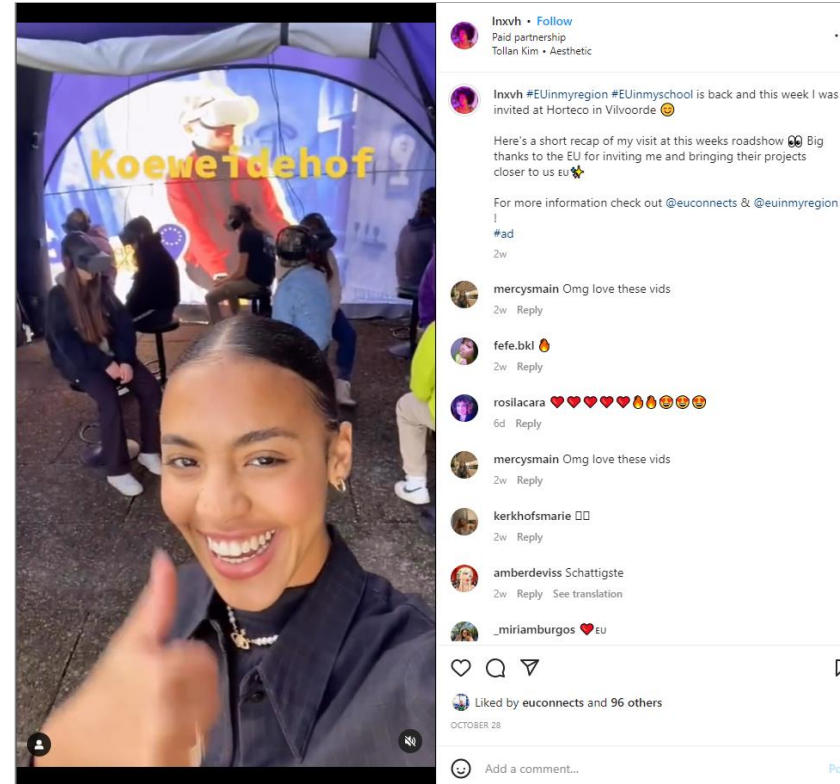
Particularly suited for activities targeting children/teens  
(formal and non-formal education)

In partnership with inspiring role models

Lived experience  
Creative consolidation  
Playful sharing

*#EUinmyschool*

# Role models for today's youth





# EU in my school



# EU in my school





# Magnitude and consistency

# More than outreach

- **Quantitative**

Offensive communication mix for maximum **REACH**

Outdoor, digital, print, paid media, earned media, partnerships, etc.

Pre-defined Key Performance Indicators

- **Qualitative**

Consistency for maximum **RECALL**

All elements converging, mutually reinforcing and echoing each other

- **Sustained**

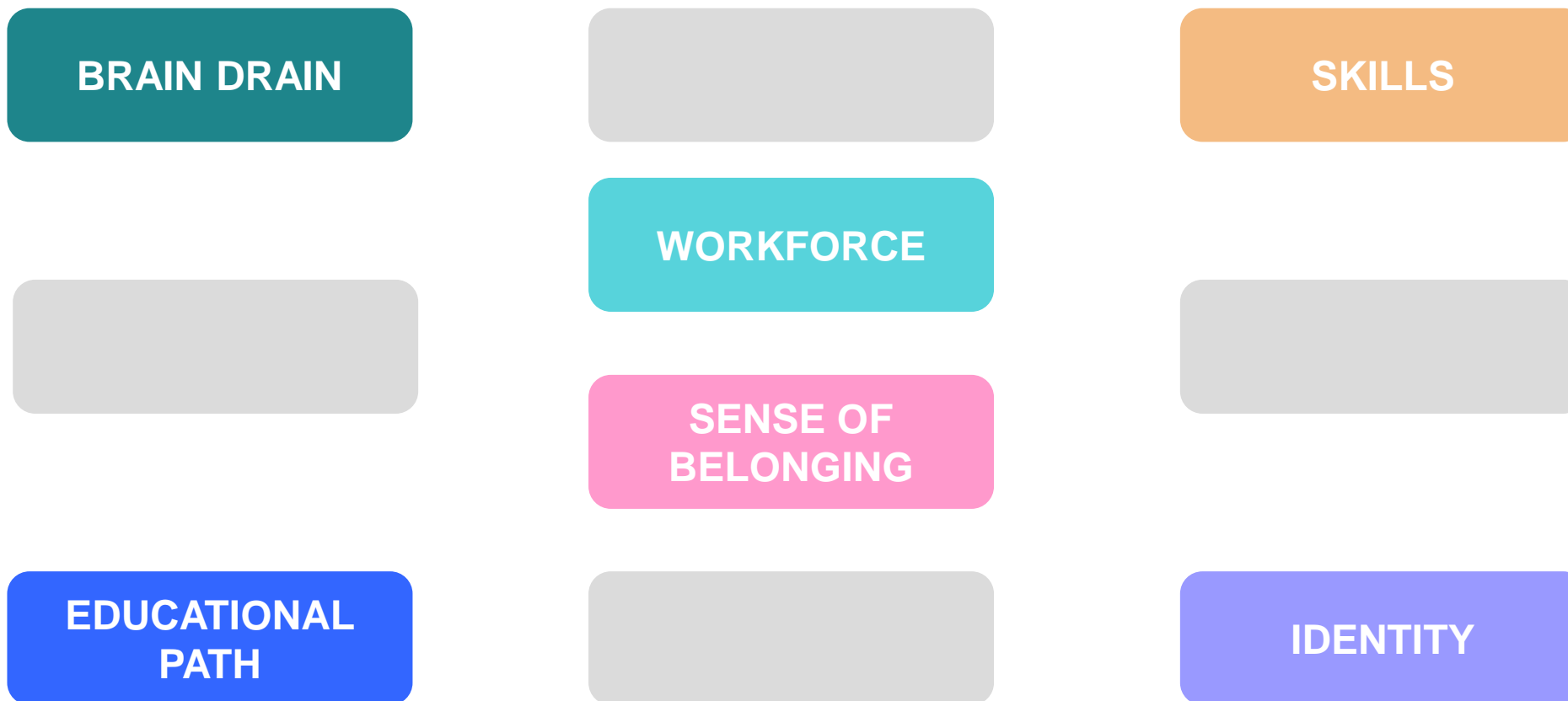
Fully fledged campaigns or ad hoc partnerships

→ Creating **A LASTING CONNECTION**



# More than promoting cohesion policy

# Addressing topics that truly matter



# Brain drain, lack of skilled workforce



## He preferred the vocational school in the small town Siret to the high school in Rădăuți City

He was born in Turrin, Italy, where his parents sought a better life, like many other families in the region of Moldova, 20 years ago. When they divorced, he stayed with his grandmother in Romania, in a village named Horodnic de Sus, near Rădăuți. He finished secondary school at „Bogdan Vodă” in Rădăuți, a famous school in Suceava County and he surprised everyone, colleagues, and teachers when, at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, he said that he wanted to attend a vocational school. Not a high school, because he wanted to learn a job and to go through all the stages of



# Educational path





# Identity, sense of belonging



# A challenge for communication agencies

# “Your mission”:

- ✓ Break the codes
- ✓ Unlearn corporate conventions
- ✓ Merge EU and ultra-local
- ✓ Orchestrate a compelling sequence



→ Opportunity to collect feedback to improve joint communications further



# (Other) Forms of joint proximity communications

# A wide range of possibilities

What is best suited for you/your territory?

Pitching ideas

Listening to suggestions

Replying to questions

# Takeaways

# Mission irresistible

*“Europe, its here after all”*

*“Europe is closer than I thought”*

*“I never went that far, that local I was deeply moved, I’d never thought it could happen in my job”*

*“Europe: so many people doing so many good things together, not Brussels, not politicians”*

*“I have discovered great initiatives nearby. Things here are changing for the better. And Europe is really everywhere.”*

*“You are Madeirans, Portuguese, and Europeans: you’re lucky.”*



# And more!

Online library:

<https://euinmyregion.eu/library/>

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Gabriela Bobeanu

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