



Building bridges, shaping tomorrow

# OECD Local Development Forum 2024

## HIGHLIGHTS

24 September | Malmö, Sweden

25 September | Copenhagen, Denmark



## About the OECD Local Development Forum

The OECD Local Development Forum is a community of thousands of individuals from around the world, united by their shared commitment to making their communities more resilient, inclusive and sustainable. It counts members from over 60 countries, representing city, regional and national governments, employment and training agencies, economic and community development agencies, chambers of commerce, social innovators, businesses and social economy organisations. Through its events and online resources, the Forum serves as a venue for peer learning, disseminating local innovations at the global level, and bringing the OECD's work beyond ministries to local communities. The Forum is part of the OECD's Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme, overseen by the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities.

The Forum's annual meeting is its flagship event. Through plenary sessions, workshops, site visits, as well as social and networking events, participants get a chance to discuss the "latest and greatest" in local development, sharing their own experiences and learning from the host community and global peers. Over the last 16 years, the annual meeting has been hosted in cities such as Berlin, Cork, Dublin, Manchester, Porto, Prague, Stockholm, Venice, and Vienna.

## About Greater Copenhagen

The Greater Copenhagen region stretches over the borders of Denmark and Sweden. With 4.5 million inhabitants and 17 universities, it's the largest metropolitan area in the Nordics and a global hub for growth, sustainable solutions and innovation. The region offers world-class research facilities and a creative business environment. Outstanding infrastructure makes Greater Copenhagen highly connected via rail, road, air and sea. The two main cities of the region, Sweden's Malmö and Denmark's Copenhagen are just a half hour train-ride apart. Its strategic location makes Greater Copenhagen the link between 25 million consumers in Scandinavia and 125 million in Northern Europe.

Greater Copenhagen is the name of the region as well as of the Danish-Swedish political co-operation between 85 municipalities and four regions on both sides of the border. Greater Copenhagen is building the world's most competitive metropolitan region by working on the focus areas of an integrated labor market, infrastructure and green growth. Greater Copenhagen organises the Greater Copenhagen Task Force, where both governments participate.

*The following are the summary of the Forum discussions and do not represent the official views of the OECD. This document, as well as any statistical data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.*



# THE 2024 AGENDA

## OECD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2024

Building bridges, shaping tomorrow

Access the full agenda at:  
[oe.cd/ldf2024](https://oe.cd/ldf2024)



### MONDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2024 – PRE-FORUM ACTIVITIES



#### LEED Directing Committee

85th meeting hosted by the Swedish Public Employment Service



#### Speaker reception

Copenhagen City Hall

### TUESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2024



#### Forum Day 1

Malmö Live



#### Conference dinner

Malmö City Hall

Study visits



#### Øresund Bridge



#### Minc

Startup House of Malmö



#### Yalla

Trappan

### WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2024



#### Forum Day 2

UN City, Copenhagen

Study visits



#### Havhøst

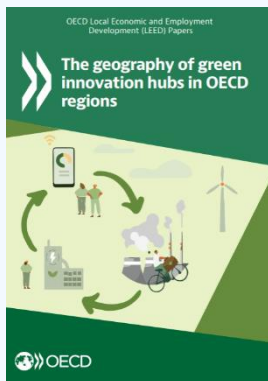
Ocean harvest



#### Railway District and Spor 10



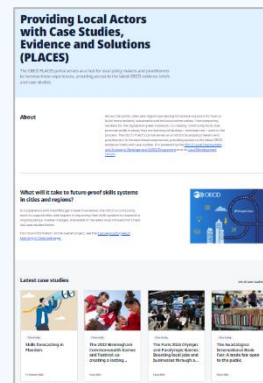
# Resources



[The geography of green innovation hubs in OECD regions](#)



[Twin Transition Tracker](#)



[Providing Local Actors with Case Studies, Evidence and Solutions \(PLACES\) portal](#)

# Speaker spotlight

## Videos



[Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh](#),  
Mayor, City of Malmö, Sweden



[Linus Eriksson](#),  
CEO, Øresund Bridge Consortium



[Andrew Wear](#),  
City Economist and Director of Economic Development and International, City of Melbourne, Australia



[Evelyne Ahipeaud](#),  
Head of Unit impact Investing Social and Solidarity Economy, French Treasury,  
Ministry of Economy and Finance, France

Watch more videos [here](#).

# Cogito

## Blog articles



### Labour markets without borders: Greater Copenhagen's Vision for the Future

*By Jan Handeliowitz,  
Board Member of Greater Copenhagen  
and Member of the Regional Council of  
Region Zealand, Denmark*



### Local climate actions meets economic development: Lessons from the Melbourne Climate Network

*By Andrew Wear,  
City Economist and Director, Economic  
Development and International, City of  
Melbourne, Australia*

# A better tomorrow

## Podcasts



### Breaking barriers to the labour market for women

*With Frida Grundahl from Yalla Trappan*



### Shaping tomorrow's cities with Urban Partners

*With Jesse Shapins from Urban Partners*

# PLENARY SESSION HIGHLIGHTS



# Opening plenary: Day 1 in Malmö

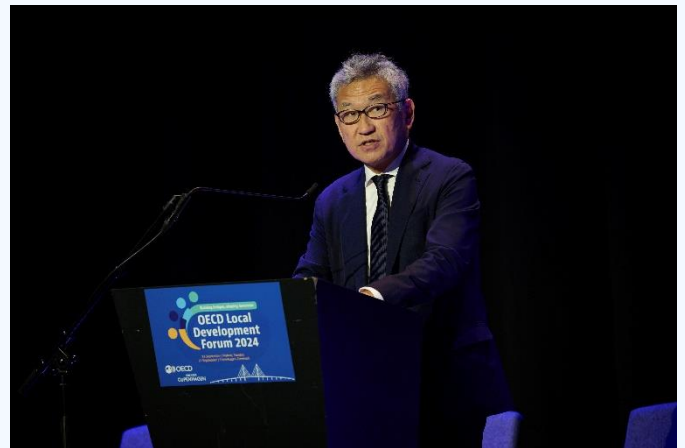
## Profound shifts are reshaping local labour markets and communities

The global economy – and labour markets – have weathered the storm of recent crises surprisingly well. Labour demand remains strong – in May 2024 there were 662 million people in employment across the OECD – 3.8% more than in December 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, beneath the surface, profound shifts are underway, reshaping the ways that we work, live and interact. Labour shortages that emerged post-COVID will become more acute as populations age and shrink. New technologies, including generative AI, are creating new jobs as they render others obsolete. As governments and firms respond to the climate emergency, ramping up green innovation and expanding local green talent pools will be essential. Amongst other topics, one of the themes of this year's Forum was how stronger cross-border collaboration can help places address these challenges and meet their collective ambitions.

## The Local Development Forum helps communities learn from each other's successes and brainstorm solutions to common challenges

The Local Development Forum is a unique international platform bringing together different types of stakeholders working on local development (e.g. local policymakers, but also chambers of commerce, public employment services, social economy organisations, training providers, and trade unions). In Greater Copenhagen, 400 participants from around the world joined in person for these exchanges. This year's Forum was particularly special for two reasons. First, it is the first time the Forum is being held in two countries, with participants getting the true cross-border experience as they moved

between Malmö and Copenhagen over the course of the event. Second, the Forum was held back-to-back with an official meeting of the OECD's Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Committee. The LEED Committee brings together senior government representatives from around the world to discuss how national policies can better support quality job creation in different types of local communities. Holding these events back-to-back helps deepen the type of national-local exchange that is at the core of LEED's work.



## Much can be learned from the experiences of Greater Copenhagen, the host of this year's Forum

The Nordic region has the ambition of being the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. Greater Copenhagen – the cross-border region spanning eastern Denmark and southern Sweden – is a prime example of these ambitions and is well known for combining sustainable living with a high-quality life. [New work by the OECD](#) shows it is indeed a leader in green innovation: compared to regions across the OECD, it has one of the highest shares of green patents per capita.

Collaboration in Greater Copenhagen builds on a long history of cooperation in the Nordic Region, with 2024 marking the 70th anniversary of the open Nordic labour market. With a population of 4.5 million people, Greater Copenhagen is the largest labour market in the Nordic region. Today, almost 20 000 people commute daily across the border. However,

while Greater Copenhagen is the biggest and most dynamic cross-border labour market in the Nordic region, it still lags behind other cross-border regions in Europe in terms of commuting. While advances such as the recent signing of a new tax agreement between Sweden and Denmark can be celebrated,

more can still be done in areas such as improving jobs and skills matching across borders, better coordinating digital services, and enhancing public transit to help take regional integration to the next level.

## Speakers

### Moderator:



**Jan Juul Christensen**

Managing Director,  
Greater Copenhagen

### Speakers:



**Yoshiki Takeuchi**

OECD Deputy Secretary-General



**Lars Gaardhøj**

Chairman,  
Greater Copenhagen



**Anders Ahnlid**

Director-General,  
Swedish National Board of Trade, Sweden,  
Chair of the Nordic Freedom of Movement  
Council, Nordic Council of Ministers



"We are committed to realizing the full potential of Greater Copenhagen—a region without cross-border barriers, whether linguistic, cultural, economic, administrative, or legal. Removing these barriers is crucial for labor market integration, innovation, efficient infrastructure, and the green transition. Our aim is to make Greater Copenhagen an attractive, connected, and green metropolitan region.

Our latest achievement has been bringing the Danish and Swedish government together to revise the special tax-agreement for Øresund commuters to make life as a cross border commuter and taxpayer easier."

**Lars Gaardhøj**

**Chair, Greater Copenhagen**

# Plenary: A form that functions: Working across borders

Within the European Union alone, approximately 150 million people live in cross-border regions. Accordingly, how to work more effectively across borders to deliver economic and social returns for residents on both sides is not a niche issue. This session took a deep dive into the unique story of Greater Copenhagen, before turning into other international examples of cross-border collaboration.

## Part I: The case of Greater Copenhagen

### Cross-border collaboration has helped drive economic transformation

Greater Copenhagen is a prime example of how cross-border collaboration can drive local development. For example, Malmö's transformation from an industrial hub into a modern, green economy is closely linked to its connection with Copenhagen. Being part of a 4.5 million-strong region gives Malmö access to a larger talent pool and business opportunities, which has helped attract global headquarters and foster rapid private-sector growth. Recent achievements on issues such as a revised tax agreement between Denmark and Sweden demonstrates the type of progress that can be achieved when local political leaders, the business community and citizens put their joint interests on the agenda. This type of determined, long-term cooperation can be a model for other places to learn from.

### The right infrastructure can be a game changer for labour mobility and economic growth

The region benefits from shared infrastructure, such as the Copenhagen Airport and the Øresund Bridge, which have both been instrumental in enhancing regional connectivity, trade, and labour market integration. The Øresund Bridge, celebrating its 25th anniversary next

year, has been a game-changer for cross-border commuting and economic integration. Before the bridge's construction, there were around 800 daily commuters, while today, almost 20 000 people commute between Sweden and Denmark each day. While the region experienced significant growth in commuting in the early days of the bridge, since 2010, growth has plateaued as result of challenges such as the global financial crisis and COVID-19.

In the face of labour shortages, labour mobility remains a crucial issue. Future plans, including a proposed metro line between Malmö and Copenhagen, could further integrate the labour markets and expand opportunities. As one example, with about 20 000 workers, Copenhagen Airport is the largest workplace in Denmark but is facing important shortages in both blue and white collar occupations. This makes the question of how to better tap into the Swedish labour pool particularly pressing.

The region is also looking to new infrastructure projects like the Fehmarnbelt tunnel, which will connect Denmark and Germany to further enhance trade and mobility. Although the tunnel is unlikely to significantly impact local commuting patterns, it is expected to boost imports and exports in the region.



### Deeper regional integration will require policy actions on several fronts


Several challenges, including taxation issues, regulatory barriers, and infrastructure bottlenecks, were identified as obstacles to more seamless

cross-border integration. Building a stronger evidence base – for example calculating the cost of inaction in terms of better regional integration and identifying practical solutions to issues such as cross-border taxation – can help to build the case

for further policy reforms. Additionally, continuing to build a positive narrative around cross-border living and working and sharing success stories can also help to build trust and to foster a sense of unity and shared purpose in the region.


## Speakers

**Moderator:**




**Karen Maguire**  
Head of Division, Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD


**Speakers:**




**Søren Clausen**  
Director, Public Affairs  
Copenhagen Airports,  
Denmark




**Linus Eriksson**  
CEO,  
Øresund Bridge



**Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh**  
Mayor, City of  
Malmö, Sweden



**Helene Andersson**  
1st Vice Chairman,  
Regional Board of  
Halland, Sweden



**Anders Ahnlid**  
Director-General, Swedish  
National Board of Trade, Sweden,  
Chair of the Nordic Freedom of  
Movement Council, Nordic  
Council of Ministers

“Our citizens have lots of job opportunities when they can choose from both sides, and our business sector can reach out to skilled people on both sides. Using the strength of the labour market region on both sides has really been an advantage in the development of Malmö.”

### **Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh**

**Mayor, Malmö, Sweden and Board Member of Greater Copenhagen**

# Plenary: A form that functions: Working across borders

## Part II: Learnings from other international experiences

### From North America to Europe, cross-border collaboration has helped to unlock innovation and competitiveness

The experience of places such as the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (encompassing the US states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington, and the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon and Northwest Territories) and Limburg (a border region in the Netherlands) demonstrates how cross-border collaboration can help position regions as hubs for innovation and economic growth. In the Cascadia region (Seattle and Vancouver), for example, strong cross-border ties has helped to leverage factors such as Canada's immigration policies, lower currency rates, and healthcare system to attract businesses like Microsoft and Amazon to establish satellite offices in Vancouver. Similarly, Limburg (the Netherlands) has become an innovation leader, including by leveraging the innovation infrastructure that spans across its borders. At the European level, the need to consider cross-border collaboration as a pillar of the EU competitiveness agenda was stressed.

### Local, national and supranational actions are needed to make the most of this potential

The role of governance and policy frameworks in enabling successful cross-border collaboration was emphasized by multiple panelists. In the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, 18 working groups engage government officials, business leaders, and communities in collaborative problem-solving on key

issues like housing, transportation, and economic development. The importance of engagement of national policymakers and ministries was also raised as essential, including developing enabling policy and legal frameworks at the national level. At the European level, programmes and projects such as Interreg, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), and Facilitating Close Border Solutions (FCBS) offer legal and financial tools to address cross-border challenges.



### Building trust and addressing local realities is essential for long-term cross-border successes

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the importance of trust and local engagement in cross-border regions. For example, in the Pacific Northwest, there is history of 25 years of trust built up through regular meetings, consistent leadership, and collaborative projects, ensuring that solutions are grounded in local realities. In Limburg, cross-border cooperation has been driven by a sense of connection to neighboring regions, despite political borders. Echoing the Greater Copenhagen panel, the importance of enhancing the availability of cross-border data to raise awareness of the costs of inaction was emphasized. The role of culture and people-to-people exchanges was also highlighted as a key factor in fostering trust and long-term collaboration, whether through shared cultural projects or acceptance of multilingualism and diversity. The importance of considering "push" and

“pull” factors for cross-border labour market mobility were also discussed, as well as the need to address

issues such as housing and transport to respond to local realities.

## Speakers

### Moderator:



### Karen Maguire

Head of Division, Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD

### Speakers:



### Elianne Demollin-Schneiders

Regional Minister, Province of Limburg, The Netherlands



### Ricardo Ferreira

Border Focal Point Coordinator, European Commission



### Rolf Elmér

Director, Nordregio



### Matt Morrison

Executive Director, Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, United States



# Opening Plenary: Day 2 in Copenhagen

## Solving global challenges through local action

Local solutions are key to tackling global challenges, meaning that communities and local governments must take charge of their future, supported by global expertise. Achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires new ways of working, including systems thinking and cross-sectoral collaboration. This approach highlights that local action is not just a method but a guiding principle for sustainable development.

Building resilient economies and communities relies heavily on private sector initiatives and collective efforts. The proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together," reinforces the importance of working together to address long-term challenges such as climate change and social inequality. Collaboration across sectors – governments, businesses, and civil society – is critical for creating sustainable, scalable solutions that contribute to global progress.



## Roundtable with young social entrepreneurs: Empowering Local Innovation

The roundtable with two young social entrepreneurs showed how "solving global challenges through local action" can pan out in practice. Siavosh Derakhti, founder of the non-profit organisation UMAF (Young People Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia), highlighted the importance of bridging divides within communities and supporting underrepresented groups like immigrant entrepreneurs. Siavosh grew up in Malmö, Sweden, and experienced first-hand the extent of discrimination of marginalised groups. He realised that a city that does not offer space for every member of society is not a city he would want to call home. The statistics support his observations, -- he noted that in Sweden relatively few entrepreneurs come from immigrant backgrounds. To foster inclusion and combat discrimination, Siavosh founded UMAF with the goal to build bridges between Jews and Muslims in Malmö. Today, the organisation provides workshops across Sweden to combat xenophobia. He also further seeks to provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to create a more equitable and inclusive economy.

Ahmed Hadi, co-founder of MIMIR, shows how a student initiative seeks to make the Nordics global leaders in research commercialisation, tackling global challenges like climate change. He emphasises that, although Europe leads in scientific outputs related to climate change research and innovation, the main challenge of bringing solutions to the market and



upscaling them is still largely unsolved. The Nordics are emerging as leaders in this context, with the potential to provide world-class infrastructure for cutting-edge research and entrepreneurial innovation. Encouraging youth to engage in climate change, attracting leading researchers and enabling entrepreneurs, as well as collaboration between entrepreneurs, researchers, and policymakers will be necessary for scaling climate solutions globally.

The conversation highlighted how a new generation of entrepreneurs are combining economic and social objectives. Policymakers can act as enablers for young social entrepreneurs providing them with opportunities to ultimately play an important role in tackling some of society's biggest challenges. Ahmed further stressed the urgency to combat climate change by radically reducing our carbon footprints and providing better opportunities to (quickly) scale new, innovative solutions for a global market.

## Speakers

**Welcome:**

**Henrik Fredborg Larsen**  
Director, Nordic Representation Office,  
United Nations Development Programme

**Moderator:**

**Evelyne Ahipeaud**  
Head of Unit impact Investing Social and  
Solidarity Economy, French Treasury,  
Ministry of Economy and Finance, France

**Speakers:**

**Ahmed Hadi**  
Co-founder,  
MIMIR, Finland

**Siavosh Derakthi**  
Founder,  
UMAF, Sweden

**“To combat climate change, our best bet is to continue our lives in a radically more sustainable way and scale innovative solutions for a global market.”**

### **Ahmed Hadi**

**Co-founder of MIMIR, Finland**

# Plenary: Green hubs: Connecting the dots between innovation and inclusion

Some cities and regions are acting as green innovation “hubs”. These communities can be spaces not just for advancing the green transition but also for developing inclusive approaches that mediate the risk that some residents get left behind. The discussion around green hubs highlighted the need for clear goals, collaborative efforts across sectors, and a focus on making the green transition a just transition.

## Clear goals and regulations can drive green innovation

Setting clear, ambitious targets is a catalyst for green innovation. In Helsinki (Finland), establishing binding targets and regulations, for example in the construction sector, has helped to drive innovation by compelling businesses to innovate, aligning economic growth with environmental sustainability. In Malmö, Sweden, setting common goals around green jobs and carbon neutrality has not only been a main success factor in its sustainable urban development starting in the 1990s but to this day encourages the private sector to create and invest in solutions that meet these demands. The role of local governments in leading this transition is crucial, as they set the framework within which businesses and other actors can develop green innovations.

## Collaboration and long-term partnerships build the foundation of success

Cross-sector collaboration is fundamental to driving systemic green transformation. Cities that align with local, regional, and national actors, alongside the private sector, can unlock greater potential for innovation. An example from Denmark further highlights that local initiatives can foster green

growth, especially when collaborating with the private sector, even in the absence of national strategies. By bringing together stakeholders from various sectors – such as government, business, and civil society – green hubs can transcend traditional boundaries, allowing for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to economic and environmental challenges. For example, the Melbourne Climate Network demonstrates how formal collaboration between different sectors and industries can enable cities to make significant strides in achieving climate targets.



Establishing strong, long-term partnerships is essential for ensuring the success of green hubs. The private sector plays a crucial role in these partnerships, as businesses recognise that their success is increasingly tied to broader societal and environmental goals. Through cross-sectoral climate partnerships in Denmark, cities and regions are able to pool resources and expertise to tackle ambitious green targets. Such collaborations showcase how local and regional efforts can not only meet but exceed national and global climate commitments. A shared long-term vision across sectors and strong commitment of business leaders can sustain green growth, even if political priorities (e.g. at the national level) shift. The importance of local leadership in these efforts cannot be overstated – those cities and regions that embrace this integrated approach will be the ones to thrive in the green economy of the future.

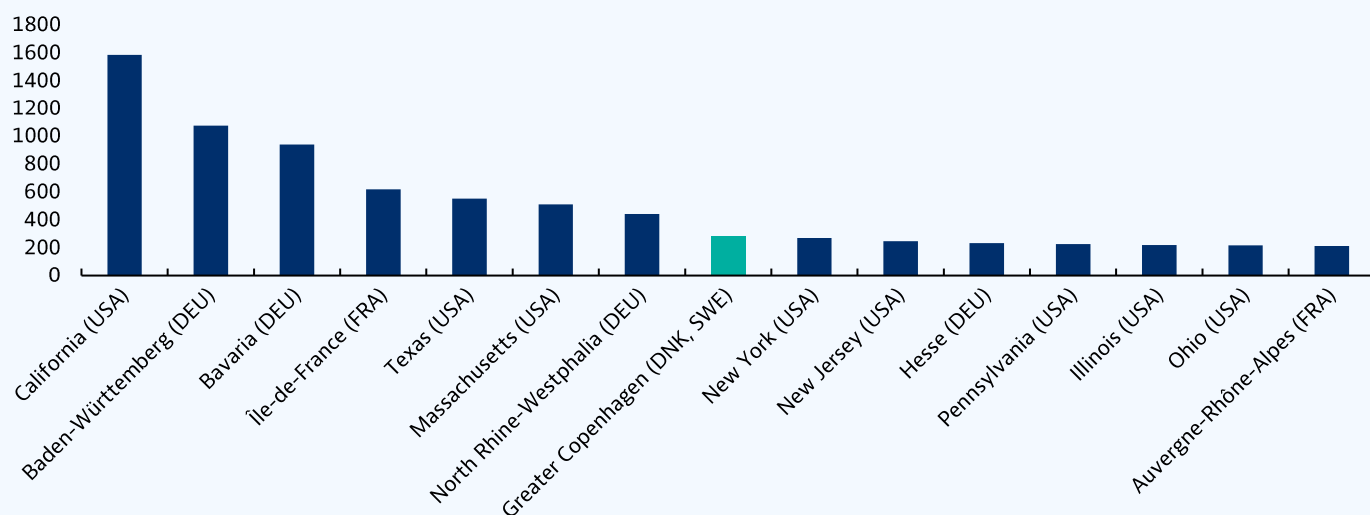
## Inclusion is at the heart of the green transition – balancing economic growth with social outcomes

For the green transition to be equitable, inclusion must be at its core. Ensuring that vulnerable communities, newcomers, and marginalised groups are actively involved in the green economy is essential for a just transition. Workforce development through

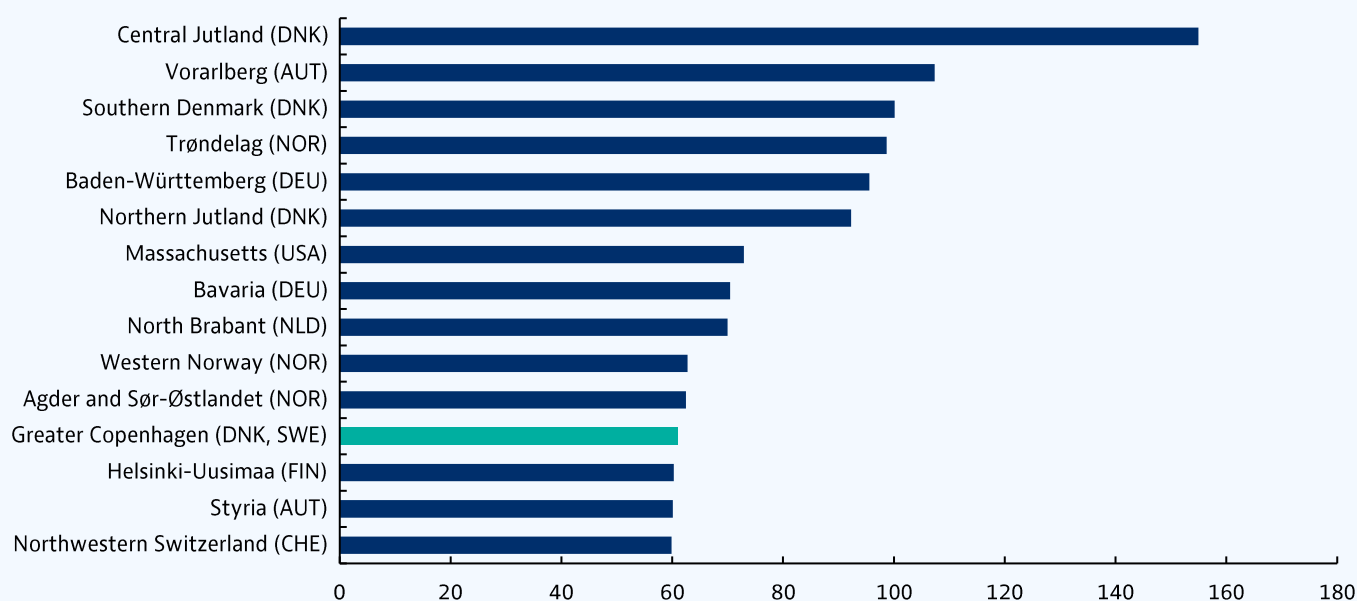
reskilling and upskilling initiatives can help cities meet the growing demand for green jobs while addressing unemployment. Addressing housing shortages, health disparities, and access to essential services in communities most affected by the transition is also needed. In many cases, the success of the green transition depends on how well cities manage these social aspects, ensuring that the local population benefits from economic and environmental progress.

### Greater Copenhagen ranks eighth in the total number of green patents and twelfth in the green patents per capita compared to other large OECD regions

Top 15 large OECD regions in the number of green patents, 2021



Top 15 large OECD regions in the number of green patents per million inhabitants, 2021



Source: Peñalosa, P. and L. Kleine-Rueschkamp (2024), *"The geography of green innovation hubs in OECD regions"*.

# Speakers

**Moderator:**



**Yasemin Arhan Modéer**

CEO, Altitude Meetings

**Speakers:**



**Sofia Hedén**

Deputy Mayor,  
City of Malmö,  
Sweden



**Andrew Wear**

City Economist and  
Director, Economic  
Development and  
International, City of  
Melbourne, Australia



**Jan Hendeliowitz**

Board Member,  
Greater Copenhagen and  
member of the Regional  
Council of Region Zealand,  
Denmark



**Anni  
Sinnemäki**

Deputy Mayor,  
City of Helsinki,  
Finland



**Thomas  
Bustrup**

Deputy Managing  
Director, Danish  
Industry, Denmark

**“Innovation is at the heart of the green transition, and cities are the drivers. Those that lead on climate action will also be the ones that are economically successful, showing that environmental and economic goals are inseparable.”**

## **Andrew Wear**

**City Economist and Director of Economic Development and International, City of Melbourne, Australia**

# Closing plenary: Embracing change: Communities, companies and careers in transition

As the pace of transitions accelerates and our communities are exposed to rapid shifts, both predictable and unpredictable, it is essential to prepare people, firms, and workers to respond and keep up. Past transitions offer hints about what works - and not; however, current and future challenges will test our creativity and collaboration skills to adapt and overcome.

## Managing change requires a long-term and collaborative approach

Transformations are often more palpable over the long term, making it important to allow time for thoughtful planning about the future and the transitions ahead. Clear legal frameworks, constructive dialogue with key stakeholders, including businesses, governments, and communities, are fundamental to ensuring that decisions made today remain relevant in the long term. Flexibility, adaptability, and public-private partnerships are also important in addressing evolving market demands and external shocks, such as the 2008 economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. In Denmark, for example, there is a long-standing tradition of collaboration between the state, unions, and employees, which made it easier to keep the country running during the pandemic.

For example, in relation to reskilling and lifelong learning, traditional education systems are often slow to keep up rapid changes in skills demand. Inspired by international experiences, public-private partnerships are working to close skills gaps, especially in areas like the digital economy, and enhance workforce readiness for future transitions. In Porto, for example, businesses associations are increasingly stepping in to provide

short, market-relevant courses to fill the gap that traditional education systems cannot address.

## The role of local leadership in transitions

Local leadership is critical in guiding communities through periods of change. Leaders need to be visible, optimistic, and inclusive, especially during transitions. Bringing communities together and fostering positive attitudes toward new technologies, such as AI, can help mitigate fears and showcase the potential benefits and opportunities that change brings. Additionally, local leaders play a key role in balancing day-to-day responsibilities with long-term visionary planning. They are also responsible for facilitating constructive dialogue among stakeholders, using data-driven decision-making to effectively address local challenges. In Køge during the 90s people faced uncertainty about the future, however, thanks to positive local leadership from the public sector, the city was able to undertake a transformation and redevelopment of the old harbour area, which sparked a new period of economic dynamism.



## Mitigating the uneven impacts of transitions

Transitions can have unequal impacts among people and places, particularly in regions dependent on traditional industries. Creating new job opportunities in these areas, especially through green jobs and digital sectors, can offer solutions. In the US, for example, reshoring incentives are bringing jobs to some areas, while many companies are allowing remote work. However, expanding broadband access is necessary to support this type of job creation in regions experiencing economic decline.

To build resilience and manage economic transitions effectively, it is essential to ensure equitable access to new opportunities for those with less education, particularly in green and digital sectors. Additionally, having an education system that can work together with people and train workers while they are still active in the labour market is of utmost importance.

Change cannot be fully embraced if workers fear that their companies are not adapting quickly enough.

This is especially a challenge in some rural areas. In a context of rapid changes, it is important to support new and established businesses to succeed, especially in rural areas where there has been a different economic tradition and now there is a need to evolve to respond to the demand of the digital and green transitions. Moreover, cultural factors affecting generational handover entails risks to businesses' ability to adapt.

## Speakers

**Moderator:**   
**John Buck**  
President and Chief Executive Officer, CEDEC, Canada

**Opening keynote:**   
**Morten Dahlin**  
Minister for Cities and Rural Districts, Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs and Minister for Nordic Cooperation, Denmark

**Closing:**   
**Karen Ellemann**  
Secretary General, Nordic Council of Ministers

**Speakers:**

  
**Marie Stærke**  
Mayor of Køge, Denmark

  
**Rui Monteiro**  
Director of the Department of Economics, Porto City Council, Portugal

  
**Mary Ellen Wiederwohl**  
President & CEO, Accelerator for America, United States

  
**Nanna Højlund**  
Vice Chair of Danish Trade Union Confederation (FH), Denmark

“Greater Copenhagen is one of the leaders in navigating these transitions, especially the green transition. Compared to regions across the OECD, Greater Copenhagen is amongst the best performers in terms green patents per capita.”

**Yoshiki Takuechi**

**Deputy Secretary-General, OECD**

# DEEP DIVE HIGHLIGHTS



# Deep dive 1: Coordinating employment and skills policies to enhance cross-border labour mobility

Labour and skills shortages remain a significant challenge in many cities and regions across the OECD. Multiple strategies may be used to reduce these shortages, including re- and upskilling programmes for those in and out of work and international talent attraction strategies. In cross-border regions, however, another option is to facilitate labour mobility across the border, thus increasing the pool of available labour for employers and the chances of finding work for the unemployed. Beyond the need to reduce barriers to cross-border mobility (e.g., taxation and social security rules), this also requires coordination of employment and skills services that can support matching workers and employers across borders.

## Public Employment Services can facilitate cross-border labour mobility

Public Employment Services are fundamental to preparing and guiding job seekers or people outside the labour market into work. They do so through various measures, including matching and job search support, training programmes, and targeted support for employers. Public Employment Services generally operate within national borders. Yet, in cross-border regions, they can potentially reduce unemployment and labour shortages by looking across the border and coordinating their policies with counterparts in bordering countries. This coordination may take various forms, including information and data sharing, joint training programmes, one-stop-shop approaches and measures for strategic policy coordination and capacity building.

## Learning from EU cross-border regions

Cross-border regions across Europe and beyond are taking various steps to coordinate employment and skills policies. In the Meuse-Rhine Region covering the border between Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, stakeholders have agreed on a 360-degree labour market approach, meaning that employment services should always look at job opportunities and vacancies in all parts of the cross-border territory. Their joint approach to create a borderless labour market includes a network of four Cross-border Information Points for citizens and employers and three joint cross-border job placement offices. The placement offices operate as one-stop shops where individuals and employers can receive services from counsellors from all three countries. The offices rely on solid cooperation with the European Employment Services (EURES), a European cooperation network between the European Commission and national public employment services in all the EU countries. Among other things, the network facilitates the presence of more than a thousand EURES advisers working in the member organisations.



In the Upper Rhine Region, which covers the tri-national economic area between France, Germany and Switzerland, the EURES-T (Transfrontailer) Upper Rhine network is the main body that facilitates coordinating employment and skills services for workers and employers. The network facilitates

cooperation at the operational level between counsellors from the three countries and at the strategic level through a steering group that takes long-term strategic decisions on cooperation. Like the Meuse-Rhine Region, the region has multiple cross-border information points and placement agencies building on the idea of a one-stop shop. In the agencies, counsellors support the unemployed, employed, and employees, e.g., those working, hiring, and doing traineeships across borders. The cross-border traineeship programme started in 2013 and allows students to do the theoretical part of their education in one country (France or Switzerland) and the practical part in the other. Another example from the region is the cross-border labour market observatory, which, among other things, has been used to develop a tool to identify occupations experiencing high labour or skills shortages across the region.

The Greater Region, composed of four countries (Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg), offers another example of coordinating employment and skills policies across borders. For example, seven cross-border placement services operate with advisors from both the German and French Public Employment Service on the border between France and the German region Saarland. In addition, the region organises cross-border job fairs for job seekers, cross-border workers and graduates to improve employability and reduce unemployment. In 2024, the job fairs also targeted youth looking for training opportunities (including cross-border traineeships), and the fairs took place online and in person. To support the sharing of labour market information across borders, the region also has an inter-regional Labour Market Observatory that provides cross-regional data e.g. on population, the labour market, the economy and salaries and prices.



# Speakers

## Moderator:



**Tilde Ussing**

Policy Analyst, Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD

## Speakers:



**Ramona Corsius-Corvers**

Programme Manager  
International Labour  
Market Approach,  
Municipality of Maastricht,  
The Netherlands



**Pim Mertens**

Scientific  
Coordinator,  
ITEM/Maastricht  
University, The  
Netherlands



**Martin Unfried**

Senior Researcher,  
Maastricht University  
– ITEM,  
The Netherlands



**Michelle Willuth**

Coordinator, EURES-T  
Rhin Supérieur,  
France / Germany /  
Switzerland



**Achim Dürschmid**

EURES Advisor and  
Team Leader,  
International Division,  
Federal Employment  
Service, Germany

“European integration does not always mean better integration in border regions. There is a need for coordination and capacity-building among public employment services in border regions to facilitate cross-border labour mobility and labour market integration.”

## Martin Unfried

Researcher, Institute for Transnational and Euregional Cross-border Cooperation and Mobility (ITEM), University of Maastricht

## Deep dive 2: Local leadership for place-based transformation

Catalysing economic and social transformation in struggling communities will require going beyond business as usual. While many places are still struggling to manage the legacy of past transitions, demographic change, shifting global value chains, technological progress, AI and automation, and climate change are bringing additional pressures as well as opportunities for local transformation. Effective place transformation focuses on both economic and social outcomes, aiming to enhance productivity, quality of life, and opportunities for all residents, leveraging a broad range of local asset. Local leadership and institutional collaboration play a key role in driving place transformation. While local governments might have the obvious mandate for such a leadership role, other stakeholders, such as universities, businesses, and civil society are crucial for breaking out of political cycles or overcoming resource limitations.

### Local leadership is a cornerstone of place transformation

Local leadership is one of the cornerstones of place transformation because it ensures that transformation efforts are rooted in the unique needs and aspirations of the community. Effective local leaders are deeply connected to their community, understanding its specific challenges, strengths, and priorities. By listening to residents and focusing on restoring pride and hope in the place they are from, they can help foster social cohesion and re-knit the social fabric. This grassroots empowerment can facilitate more responsive and sustainable development, driving a positive, community-driven vision of the future.

### Effective leadership requires cross-sector collaboration

Cross-sector collaboration is essential for fostering local leadership, especially when it comes to driving economic development. Universities can play a significant role in this process, as the evidence and knowledge developed within them can serve as powerful catalysts for economic growth. However, many universities are not sufficiently embedded within their local communities, which limits their potential impact. Transforming universities into local civic institutions is therefore key. This requires universities to not only focus on research but also actively engage with local businesses, government, and community organizations to create sustainable economic strategies.

Comprehensive, long-term strategies are crucial, and cross-sector collaboration forms the backbone of these efforts. The private sector, which tends to focus on short-term goals within individual companies, can contribute to broader, long-term visions when coordinated through entities like chambers of commerce. These umbrella organizations are uniquely positioned to transcend administrative boundaries and unite diverse stakeholders—businesses, universities, and local governments—around a collective vision for regional development. Furthermore, local governments must shift from being mere administrators to facilitators, enabling collaboration across sectors and ensuring that different entities work toward shared goals.



## **Listening and responding to the needs of the community is necessary for building trust and restoring local pride and hope**

Community engagement is a cornerstone of successful local development. However, engagement is only meaningful if there is a sense of belonging, pride, and empowerment within the community. The example of how Oslo involves vulnerable residents highlights the transformative potential of true community participation. It shows that local governments may need to relinquish some control to allow for authentic engagement, which can be difficult but ultimately rewarding. When local communities feel ownership over projects, they are

more likely to participate actively and contribute to sustainable solutions.

Moreover, engaging the community also means recognizing the importance of local assets. Areas that lack strong local assets need creative strategies to avoid being left behind compared to regions that do have them. Pilot programs, for example, provide an effective way to engage stakeholders on a small scale, test solutions, and build coalitions. These programs allow local governments and partners to address specific challenges incrementally, without being overwhelmed by the complexity of larger issues. Ultimately, meaningful community engagement fosters a sense of local pride, empowering residents to take part in shaping the future of their regions.



# Speakers

## Moderator:



**John Austin**

Senior Fellow,  
Brookings Institution,  
United States

## Speakers:



**Ellen Dahl**

Area Manager  
Policy, Chamber of  
Commerce and  
Industry of  
Southern Sweden



**Camille Viros**

Head of Unit, Inclusive  
Growth in Cities, Centre  
for Entrepreneurship,  
SMEs, Regions and  
Cities, OECD



**Des McNulty**

Honorary Fellow,  
University of  
Glasgow, Scotland,  
United Kingdom



**José Antonio Torre**

Director of the Center for  
the Future of Cities,  
Tecnológico de Monterrey,  
Mexico

“Purposefully paying attention to building “soft” community infrastructure: citizen engagement, community empowerment, leadership cultivation and support is important and an essential precondition and foundation stone to the delivery of the “hard” infrastructure of economic development: things like innovation, skill-building and physical infrastructure.”

## John Austin

Senior Fellow, Eisenhower Institute at Gettysburg College, United States

## Deep dive 3: Boosting local socio-economic impacts of game-changing infrastructure

Large-scale infrastructure projects can be important sparks for local development, as the experience of Greater Copenhagen exemplifies. Completed in 2000, the Øresund Bridge that links Denmark and Sweden has helped to integrate the local labour market and improve international connectivity. Today, almost 20 000 commuters use the bridge.

Following on from the success of the Øresund Bridge, Denmark has commenced work on the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link. Scheduled for completion in 2029, this ambitious infrastructure project will create an 18-kilometre combined road and rail tunnel beneath the Baltic Sea to link Scandinavia with mainland Europe. It will reduce travel time by up to two hours, facilitate the smoother movement of goods, and bring people closer together across the region.

While large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the Øresund Bridge and the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link, can have a transformative impact on regional and local development, bringing these projects to fruition is not easy.

### Political will is essential to pursue transformative projects

Aligning political interests is not easy – especially for large-scale cross-border projects. Often one side needs to take the initiative as interests are often not simultaneously aligned. Establishing a clear governance structure and developing a shared vision for a project and region is essential.

### Collaboration can help to ensure benefits are shared

Early engagement with local authorities, communities and businesses is essential to align interests of different groups impacted by infrastructure. Engagement can also help to foster local ownership and ensure benefits are widely shared. The Fehmarnbelt Business Council, for example, is an international business association that represents more than 400 000 companies through its members and advocates for those businesses interested in the project.



### Infrastructure is not enough on its own

Policymakers need to look beyond infrastructure to complimentary policies in order to ensure and enhance the socio-economic impact from infrastructure investments. Action is required to support workforce development, update local development plans and align regulatory systems (e.g., for taxation, labour and pensions). In Greater Copenhagen, a new Øresund Agreement was agreed in 2024 to simplify taxation arrangements for cross-border commuters and employers, which should greatly support the integration of the local labour market.

## Infrastructure projects can support local workforce development

Large-scale projects require a specialised workforce, which can lead to the upskilling of local labour and migration of temporary workers. Workers for the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link project have been sourced from various countries, including Italy, Denmark, Sweden and the UK. This provides opportunities for cross-border cooperation, knowledge transfer and provides an economic boost during construction. However, ensuring impact beyond construction requires careful planning around workforce development.

## Creating legacy from infrastructure

Large-scale projects, like the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link, can lead to a surge in economic activity in the local economy during construction. This can be followed by stagnation when construction is complete and temporary workers leave. Using large-scale infrastructure to leave a local legacy requires identifying opportunities to use investment as a catalyst for change. In Lolland Island, near the Fehmarnbelt fixed link, businesses are already exploring opportunities to establish logistics facilities in anticipation of the improved transport network, which is supported by a new international school established in the area.

## Speakers

### Moderator:



**Courtenay Wheeler**

Policy Analyst and Coordinator,  
Subnational Infrastructure Programme, Centre for  
Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD

### Speakers:



**Camilla Khokhar**

Senior Director,  
Dansk Industri,  
Denmark



**Thomas Schmidt**

Senior Banker,  
European  
Investment Bank



**Christian Orsing**

Mayor,  
Helsingborg,  
Sweden



**Mary Ellen Wiederwohl**

President & CEO,  
Accelerator for America,  
United States



**Thomas Becker**

Managing Director,  
String

## Deep dive 4: A place for the youth in the just transition

Through their professional and personal choices, youth are at the forefront of driving the just transition towards a more equitable and sustainable future. Yet, they are also the ones who are most directly facing the uncertainty that the future may bring, from the impacts of climate change to how AI will change the jobs of the future. This deep dive explored how young people can help drive forward the just transition, from unleashing their full potential in the green job market to supporting their inclusive participation in the socio-ecological transformation of the future.

### Rebuilding hope and fostering youth engagement

Many young people are disillusioned with the status quo. The rise of politicians with controversial platforms on social media contributes to this dissatisfaction. Local leaders need to work together to rebuild trust and make young people believe in society and the future. Media can play a key role by highlighting positive stories from around the world. Youth spirit can be a positive asset during a transition, but youth need real influence, not just a symbolic voice.

Young people face both significant risks and opportunities in the future. Policies must help them avoid risks while giving them the opportunities to drive change. Having the right safety net in place for young people can not only help to mediate failures, but to enable youth to “jump” if they have the capacity and motivation to take risks to make change.

### Empowering youth through education and participation

To maximise youth engagement, it is essential to dismantle barriers that hinder their action and

participation. Schools must address these challenges early on, emphasizing diverse skill sets alongside intellectual pursuits.

Youth are eager to engage and participate but need access to decision-making spaces, like boards in city councils. While an aging population means older politicians, this isn't an inherent challenge. A bottom-up approach can empower people at the grassroots level and encourage young people to enter the political system.

The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) can be an effective framework for sparking engagement of stakeholders with different interests, including young people, even in places where the green transition is a less prominent issue. For example, in Thailand, clear communication based on the SDGs has improved stakeholder engagement.



### Expanding access to green jobs

The current education system often perpetuates a prestige gap between academic and technical education. This poses a challenge for the green transition, as many green jobs require technical skills but lack appeal for young people. Thus, it is crucial to enhance the attractiveness of technical and vocational education.

Youth can also play a more direct role in green job creation. For example, running from 2023 to 2027, the Green Growth and Jobs Accelerator programme supports SMEs, including youth-led businesses, in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan. It fosters green

growth and creates jobs for youth, promoting local transitions to sustainable economies. The initiative, a collaboration between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, runs two five-month accelerators annually, where SMEs develop green business plans. Some examples of

SMEs include in Morocco, where companies are working to increase agricultural productivity using fewer resources and Tunisia, where a sustainable merchandise supplier helps businesses make eco-friendly choices, offers sustainability workshops and works with rural women to commercialize their products.

## Speakers

**Moderator:**

  
**Xavier Mestres**  
Technical Coordinator, The World Forum on Local Economic Development

**Speakers:**

  
**Alessandra Proto**  
Head of the Trento Centre for Local Development, OECD

  
**Hjalte Drejer Jørgensen**  
Chairperson, Capital Regions Youth Climate Council, Denmark

  
**Gunnar Anderzon**  
Senior Advisor, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions

  
**Valdemar Satoshi Rojle Christensen**  
Project Leader, Youth Innovation Summit and Facilitator, UNLEASH, UNDP

“We need to work together to build trust again and make the young believe in the society and in the future.”

## Gunnar Anderzon

Senior Advisor, SKR/SALAR, Sweden

## Deep dive 5: Navigating the talent tides – addressing labour and skills shortages

As unemployment rates in the OECD reach lows not seen in decades, employers are facing increasing challenges in recruitment. These challenges are especially acute in some sectors and places. At the same time, the accelerating green transition, and rapid technological innovation, such as generative AI, are creating new challenges and opportunities.

### Global labour shortages require localised solutions

Labour shortages, aggravated by the pandemic, have become a global issue impacting sectors such as technology, services, and manufacturing. These shortages affect foreign direct investment, recruitment, and local economic growth. To tackle these challenges, regions must implement place-specific policies. In some cities, for instance, rapid advancements in the tech industry have exposed skills gaps, particularly among foreign workers. One solution has been the introduction of training programmes like JobTracks in Malmö, which are developed in collaboration with private companies. These programmes ensure that participants are trained for specific roles, with many securing employment upon completion.

In Japan, rural areas face unique challenges driven by population decline and wage inflation. Local initiatives, such as the Hiroshima Quest, aim to reskill workers and attract foreign labour. These programs focus on integrating digital skills and supporting foreign workers with language training and long-term career development. Despite these efforts, the region continues to struggle with an aging population and difficulties retaining skilled workers.



### Upskilling, reskilling, and workforce flexibility are essential

To address labour shortages, many regions are prioritising upskilling and reskilling initiatives. The pandemic highlighted the need for workforce adaptability, with some regions creating new support systems to engage not only workers but also their families, making relocation more attractive. In southern Sweden, a pilot project was introduced to engage the spouses of skilled workers, recognizing their potential as an untapped labour pool. Within hours of launching, the program attracted significant interest, showing the importance of addressing family needs alongside employment opportunities.

Remote work has also shifted the dynamics of labour mobility, with many workers now willing to commute longer distances less frequently for higher wages in urban centers. This trend has been particularly evident in Copenhagen, where wage differences have led to an increase in cross-border employment. However, rural and remote areas struggle to retain talent due to intense competition. In the engineering sector, the shift towards green technologies, such as electric vehicles, has created a pressing need for reskilling. Panellists spoke to a programme in Sweden that offers engineers 80% of their wages while they upskill, though the fast pace of change presents challenges in planning for future workforce needs.

## Attracting and retaining talent requires more than jobs

Attracting and retaining workers in any region requires a comprehensive approach beyond offering employment alone. Economic arguments for creating common job markets and facilitating cross-border mobility are often blocked by political and regulatory obstacles. In Denmark, despite economic incentives, issues like taxation and housing shortages continue to limit the movement of foreign workers.

In rural areas, various strategies are being used to attract talent. Some regions focus on tourism and university partnerships, while others, like southern Sweden, have introduced Job Busses to showcase employment opportunities in different areas. There are also ongoing efforts to promote vocational

training. One campaign, Home Heroes, uses social media to highlight the opportunities available in vocational fields, showing students that these career paths can offer both stability and high salaries. However, challenges remain, particularly in changing the perception of vocational work and making these roles as attractive as university-educated careers.

Regions that successfully retain talent do so by providing robust social support systems. This includes affordable housing, quality education, and programs that support family integration. For instance, Denmark is working on removing barriers for foreign workers, such as language obstacles, to help integrate families into Danish society. Without addressing these broader social needs, many regions risk losing talent despite offering competitive job opportunities.

## Speakers

### Moderator:



### Lukas Kleine-Rueschkamp

Acting Head of Unit, Local Employment and Skills, Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD

### Speakers:



### Maria Schischkin

Project manager, Wachstumsregion Ems-Achse e.V., Germany



### Makoto Fujimoto

Vice Research Director, The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training



### Jette Jørgensen

Ingka Group Hubs Managing Director, Ingka Group (IKEA Retail), Sweden



### Jens-Kristian Lütken

Mayor of Employment and Integration, Municipality of Copenhagen, Denmark



### Sedat Arif

Deputy Mayor, City of Malmö, Sweden



### Johan Kreicbergs

Head of Public Policy Department, Engineers of Sweden

# STUDY TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



## Study tour A: Øresund Bridge

The Øresund Bridge is a 16 kilometer long marvel of engineering opened in 2000. It plays a vital role in connecting Sweden and Denmark, serving as a critical piece of infrastructure that supports cross-border development and labour market integration across Greater Copenhagen and beyond. It is the second longest combined road and rail bridge in Europe and handles around 120 train crossings and almost 20 000 commuters daily.

### Supporting regional integration

The explicit purpose of the bridge was to support cross-border development and labour market integration. Although the bridge serves as a crucial infrastructure link, it alone is not enough to ensure seamless collaboration between the two countries. There are ongoing challenges related to issues such as taxation, border control, and regulatory alignment. These issues are addressed through political collaboration, exemplified by the Øresund Task Force, which provides political support for cross-border projects. The Øresund Index, a tool that tracks the bridge's contribution to regional development, is another critical aspect of measuring its impact on both sides of the border.

### Integrating sustainability

Designed with a lifespan of 100 years, the bridge's operators aim to extend this by another century, emphasising long-term sustainability. The bridge undergoes a repainting process that repeats every 13 years to maintain its structure. In addition to structural maintenance, a focus on renewable energy is evident. Adding to existing solar panels, in 2023, a 10 000 square meter solar park was built on the artificial island of Peberholm, meaning that self-produced solar energy at the toll station and on the island covers almost half of the link's energy consumption.

### Shared ownership

The project is funded through state guaranteed loans rather than tax revenue, ensuring that only those who utilize the bridge bear the cost. Ownership of the bridge is split equally between Swedish and Danish governments, reflecting the collaborative spirit of the project. This joint investment highlights the shared responsibility for maintaining and developing the infrastructure. The bridge ensures that its own engineering design standards comply with regulations in both countries.

Overall, the Øresund Bridge is more than just a physical connection between Sweden and Denmark—it is a symbol of the region's commitment to fostering collaboration and sustainable development.



“It takes more than infrastructure to get integration right. You also have to look at the tax system, pensions, banking and also spread a good story about living on one side and working on the other. It’s the combination of infrastructure and policy-making that helps create an integrated region.”

## **Linus Eriksson**

CEO, Øresund Bridge Consortium



## Study tour B: Minc – Startup House of Malmö

Established in 2002 and fully owned by the City of Malmö, Minc is one of the first startup incubator programmes in the Scandinavian region, as well as one of Europe's leading startup hubs and communities. It represents the City of Malmö's broader efforts to transition itself from an industrial to a technological city.

Minc provides a comprehensive suite of entrepreneurship support programmes—from its pre-incubator, incubator, and award-winning accelerator Fast Track Malmö to its early-stage investing and co-working space. Other services include coaching, mentoring and networking.

### Malmö as a fertile ground for startup entrepreneurship

Malmö has three foundational strengths as a city conducive to startup entrepreneurship: higher education, mobile technology and gaming.

For example, the presence of world-leading companies such as Sony, Ericsson, Axis and The Astonishing Tribe (TAT) acquired by Blackberry Sweden helped position Malmö as a leader in mobile technology.

Southern Sweden as a whole possesses more than 50 active game studios, of which 30 are located in Malmö. Notable examples include Massive Entertainment, King (Candy Crush Saga), The Game Assembly and Game Habitat.

### Minc's impact for Malmö and beyond

For the past two decades, Minc has generated a wide array of positive socio-economic impact for Malmö and beyond. Its emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion have helped level the playing field for

previously disadvantaged groups in the startup sector, while simultaneously focusing on its financial bottom line to facilitate the creation of successful businesses.

In simple figures, Minc and its 258 beneficiary startups have collectively reported a turnover of SEK 1.5 billion, which also represents a turnover of SEK 6 million per startup. 80% of these startups are still active to this day, and two of them have most notably been sold to Apple. The Minc network has additionally helped create 1 020 jobs for the local economy.

Although Malmö is a relatively small city of approximately 360 000 people, it hosts more than 190 nationalities, making it the fourth most international city in the world after London, New York City, and Washington, DC. Minc thus takes pride in its steadfast commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. 51 languages are spoken inside Minc. 40% of its startups are founded by women, and 50% of investments were channelled toward founding teams with mixed ethnic and national representations. Its financing schemes also have a distinct emphasis on gender equality and other critical issue areas such as sustainability.



## Study tour C: Yalla Trappan

Yalla Trappan, Arabic and Swedish for “Let’s meet by the stairs” is a social enterprise located in Rosengård, a district of Malmö. The district was originally developed in the 1960s and 70s as part of the Million Programme, a housing initiative to address housing shortages. The area is home to many residents who are immigrants or have an immigrant background. In recent decades, Rosengård has faced significant social challenges, including high unemployment and segregation. According to the speakers, approximately 86% of the population is of foreign origin, representing 122 nationalities. Over time it has faced problems of unemployment, segregation and social isolation due to its large immigrant population. However, recent regeneration projects have focused on improving public spaces, fostering community links and working to reduce stigma in the area.

### Creating opportunities and recognising the value of women’s informal skills

Yalla Trappan is a social enterprise started over 14 years ago with a mission to promote labour market inclusion and equality, especially for immigrant and refugee women. Founded in 2010 with just five employees, Yalla Trappan has grown to employ 64 women. Its main focus is to create employment opportunities for women who have been marginalised in the traditional labour market due to a lack of formal education or work experience.

The concept behind Yalla Trappan was to recognise and value the informal skills that many of these women already possessed. When women approached the organisation, they were asked about their skills and the most common responses were sewing, cleaning and cooking. These skills were then transformed into the core business activities of Yalla Trappan, which now operates in three sectors: a sewing studio, a cleaning service and a catering business.

### Social inclusion through economic participation

In addition to employment, Yalla Trappan provides training and career development opportunities for these women, helping them to achieve financial independence while building self-confidence and a sense of belonging in society. The organisation has been particularly successful in bridging the gap between social exclusion and economic participation, providing an example of how business can contribute to both social value and economic sustainability.

The project has received national and international recognition for its success, particularly through partnerships with major companies such as IKEA, which has helped to expand the sewing studio model beyond Malmö. Yalla Trappan's journey from a small cooperative to a thriving social enterprise demonstrates the powerful impact of valuing informal skills and providing meaningful work opportunities for marginalised groups.



# Study tour D: Havhøst (Ocean Harvest)

## Sustainable food production meets environmental protection

Havhøst is a Danish association established in 2011, with the vision of extending urban farming to the sea. The first mussel farm site emerged from the desire to reintroduce food production into urban environments while safeguarding marine life in Copenhagen's industrialized harbor. Since then, ocean farming has gained traction nationwide, and the association now comprises 31 community farms along the Danish coast. These farms, all volunteer-operated, produce seafood for local consumption. While this study tour focused on a marine garden specializing primarily in mussels, other locations have expanded to include oysters and seaweed cultivation.

The aim of Havhøst is not only to promote local food production but also to address environmental challenges induced by human activity. Regenerative ocean farming is defined as “the cultivation of edible aquatic species in such a way that the farming has an overall net positive impact on the surrounding marine ecosystems” (Manifesto for Regenerative Marine Farming). Consistent with this principle, the farms aim to enhance rather than disrupt the marine ecosystem by avoiding the introduction of external substances such as fertilizers. As mussels grow, they purify the water, absorb nutrients, bind carbon dioxide, and contribute to the well-being of other marine species in their environment.

## Local communities in the driver's seat

The dual objectives of regenerative ocean farming—producing local food and protecting marine ecosystems—are unified by the communities that come together to operate the farms. These farms act as hubs for fostering social cohesion, strengthening local food systems, and reconnecting people with

their environment. In a bid to empower local communities, the Havhøst secretariat intentionally refrains from initiating new farms, instead waiting for local citizens to take the lead. Moreover, farm sizes are capped at three hectares, ensuring the focus remains on community-driven activism over industrial-scale seafood production.



## Taking the movement to the next level through knowledge-sharing

Beyond food cultivation and environmental protection, Havhøst plays a central role in creating knowledge-sharing networks within local communities. The farms, both in and outside of Copenhagen, serve as outdoor classrooms where students can explore maritime community gardening and sustainable food production. In addition, Havhøst fosters engagement through initiatives such as sharing seafood recipes to promote the consumption of locally harvested crops and collaborating with the private sector and small business owners. This collaboration includes supporting fishermen in developing more sustainable business models and learning new skills to continue practicing their trade while adopting the principles of regenerative farming.

# Study tour E: Railway District and Spor 10

## A community hub at the heart of an urban redevelopment project

Spor10 is a 6 000 m<sup>2</sup> community hub for people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests opened in April 2023 in an old customs building. It is located in Jernbanebyen, an old railway district that is being developed over the next 15–20 years with the leadership of Urban Partners. The Jernbanebyen project envisions car-free neighbourhoods where traditional streets are replaced with green urban spaces for cyclists and pedestrians. Historical industrial buildings and train tracks will coexist alongside green urban areas, housing, institutions, shops, eateries, communal facilities, and cultural offerings.

## Serving dual purposes

Spor10 plays two roles in this development. Today, Spor10 serves as a community hub. It hosts daily activities of more than 30 actors focused on movement, health, play, creativity, workshop activities, and urban development. Since the space opened in 2023, it has hosted more than 9 000 visitors. At the same time, the vision for Spor10 is to begin building a community in the area planned for development over the next 15–20 years. Accordingly, it also functions as a showroom for Jernbanebyen, hosting tours and events, communal dining, lectures, small conferences, and much more. This allows the project to raise awareness of the space and provide opportunities for community learning and connections. For instance, community dinners are held every Wednesday, helping to foster a sense of belonging and community.

Some challenges arise because, eventually, the building will need to be rebuilt, which will require

finding alternative locations for some of the community initiatives currently hosted in the space. The aim is to leverage the existing community fabric to overcome this future challenge.

## A focus on communities and engagement

With a focus on culture, sports, health, and physical activity, community organizations are an essential part of the space. Urban Partners, the company leading the project, plays a key role in the physical changes to the space, but these changes cannot happen without input from current and future residents. Their input is being integrated into the designs of the area. The goal is to create an attractive space where new residents can already feel a sense of community, and participate in the design of the spaces, incorporating sustainability principles.

Overall, the strategy is focused on creating community, developing new places, and fostering a sense of belonging to the area. The goal is to have people experience the area before its physical development begins. Therefore, it's not just about building a park, a sidewalk, or playground, but about integrating programs, people, and communities to contribute to a healthy, long-term community.



# PLACES Live: Local Initiatives Marketplace (Day 1 & 2)

The OECD's PLACES Live: Local Initiatives Marketplace has become a Forum tradition, offering local programmes and initiatives the opportunity to showcase their work and connect with peers from around the world. Throughout the year, the [OECD PLACES web portal](#) shares these innovative, solution-driven stories, providing a platform for best practices in areas such as jobs and employment, skills, the twin transition, social innovation, and culture.

At the annual Forum gathering, these stories go *live* as practitioners set up their stands and present their initiatives to attendees. This year, we were honored



to host initiatives from across the OECD, including local programmes from Sweden and Denmark, as well as from further afield, such as Australia, Spain, and the United States. The themes covered a wide spectrum of local development topics, ranging from innovation in reskilling and upskilling the workforce to sparking investments in rural regions and developing infrastructure to support growing communities.



## Participating initiatives and programmes

- Centre for Öresund Region Studies & Centre for Modern European Studies
- Fehmarn Belt
- GET-AHED: Green Education and Transition - A Higher Education Digital Buddy
- Helsingborg-Helsingør (HH) Tunnel
- Jobbtorg
- Klimaalliancen and Regions4Climate
- Malmö - Copenhagen Metro
- Medicon Village
- MTU Student Enterprise Camp
- No Wrong Door
- Norway Unlimited
- Øresunddirekt
- Reskilling4Employment (R4E)
- Self-Employment Assistance Program
- SILVER SMEs
- Skills forecast in Flanders
- STRING - green hydrogen corridor
- The People's Transition
- TwispWorks
- WeRIn project (Women Entrepreneurs in Inclusive Regional Ecosystems)
- Region Halland Initiative (Hub for blue bioeconomy)

## PLACES Live Tour

Video



### PLACES Live Tour:

*With the OECD's Shayne MacLachlan*

# Thank you to our Forum partners



## About the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities

The OECD's Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) provides comparative statistics, analysis and capacity building for local and national actors to work together to unleash the potential of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises, promote inclusive and sustainable regions and cities, boost local job creation, and support sound tourism policies.

## About LEED

The mission of the OECD's Local Employment and Economic Development programme (LEED) is to build vibrant communities with more and better-quality jobs for all. Since 1982, the Programme has been supporting national and local governments through tailored reviews and capacity-building activities, as well as research and good practice reports on innovative approaches to local development. The Local Development Forum brings its activities to the wider stakeholder community.

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