RSA Events – Event Report – The Creation and Development of the Regional Studies Association Research Network on Citizen Entrepreneurship (RSARNCE)



Final Report on the Creation and Development of the Regional Studies Association Research Network on Citizen Entrepreneurship (RSARNCE)

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I. Context, Aims, and Lifespan

The **Regional Studies Association Research Network on Citizen Entrepreneurship (RSARNCE)** was established to pioneer a novel interdisciplinary research domain intersecting *regional development* and *entrepreneurship* through the active involvement of citizens—conceptualised as **Citizen Entrepreneurship (CE)**.

The unique Regional Studies Association Research Network on Citizen Entrepreneurship (RSARNCE) will carry out critical and systematic research and development activities on the involvement of citizens as producers, users, innovators and environmental gatekeepers of new entrepreneurial activity in urban regions. The network's distinctive proposition centres around an extended definition of regional entrepreneurship based on the collaboration of citizens with entrepreneurs, policymakers, and urban activists to create sustainable capacities for entrepreneurial governance of regional and local resources as part of the urban commons. Building on antecedents provided by Citizen Economics and Citizen Science, the network introduces a novel dimension to the idea and practice of regional innovative entrepreneurship through the engagement of citizens. The network will build on an inaugural presentation of the project's key concepts and early framework at the EU Regions Week in Brussels in October 2019.

The overarching aim of the network was to advance research capabilities among its members and their regional partners by:

- Co-developing content, structures, and methodologies relevant to CE;
- Collecting original data and developing diverse case studies;
- Testing innovative metrics and methodologies rooted in *action research* and *citizen science*;
- Ensuring direct citizen engagement in shaping the research agenda and contributing to methodological innovation.

The network formally operated between 2019 and 2024, extending into 2025 due to pandemic-related disruptions.

II. Activities and Key Achievements

The network's activities were conducted across four primary countries—**Germany, India, Poland, and the United Kingdom**—with subsequent expansion to **South Africa** and **Latvia**. The core research focus involved critically examining how citizen participation could inform and drive regional transformation across meta-issues such as:

- Environmental improvement,
- Climate change adaptation,

- Habitat regeneration,
- Artisan and minority livelihood development,
- Integration of minority cultures into mainstream socio-economic frameworks.

Network Events and Methodological Advancements

Five dedicated workshops and **one international conference** were convened, with sessions hosted in each member country. Due to COVID-19, two workshops (in the UK and Poland) were held virtually. Each event was tailored to:

- Explore the local manifestations of Citizen Entrepreneurship;
- Facilitate the exchange of cross-regional know-how;
- Define regionally adapted research content and methodologies;
- Identify context-sensitive evaluative metrics.

Workshops sequentially focused on the following dimensions:

1. Conceptual Foundations of Citizen Entrepreneurship;
2. Research methods, with emphasis on *Citizen Science*;
3. Knowledge co-production between academics and communities;
4. Learning outcomes applicable to regional stakeholders;
5. Establishment of a legacy framework for post-project continuity.

Major Conference and Legacy Events

- A transdisciplinary conference in Porto, Portugal, served as both a dissemination platform and a convergence point for scholars from disciplines including economics, sociology, business management, philosophy, and entrepreneurship, fostering cross-disciplinary CE research.
- The final workshop in Germany focused on consolidating findings, broadening outreach to early-career researchers and students, and ensuring continuity through educational integration.

Dissemination and Scholarship

The RSARNCE has contributed to academic and professional discourse through:

- Presentations at various international conferences;
- A peer-reviewed article published in an ABS-listed journal;
- A forthcoming research monograph scheduled for publication in 2025;
- Ongoing development of new research strands and planned outputs for 2025–2026.

III. Impact

The RSARNCE network has had a measurable impact in the following ways:

- Expansion to six countries, reflecting geographic and thematic scalability;
- Diffusion of CE principles across multiple global contexts;
- Curriculum innovation, resulting in the creation of *accredited modules* (at Master's and undergraduate levels) based on the network's conceptual and methodological framework;
- Establishment of an active, cross-disciplinary research community committed to extending the CE agenda.