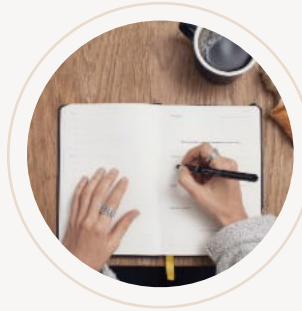




# Letz Retail

*Civil Society*



*Guide*

# INTRODUCTION

Over the last years, small businesses set in previously successful commercial areas have faced a number of challenges, including the crisis and the growing competition of online shopping. Many businesses that operated in areas which were once the commercial centre of the town or neighbourhood, were forced to close. This had a spill over effect on the hospitality and cultural businesses, which suffered from a reduced number of visitors.

In many medium-sized and bigger towns, large malls on the outskirts offer a "one-stop-experience" for shopping, culture and hospitality, generating even more difficulties for the smaller ones in the centres to subsist. COVID-19 crisis has created additional challenges and put more pressure on small businesses trying to compete with established online shopping companies and large malls.

The deterioration of commercial areas is raising interest from municipalities and civic organisations, as the reduction in retail, commerce, hospitality and cultural activities in these kind of areas results in an overall deterioration of the area, with less movements of persons. Many municipalities are looking for solutions which can help them give new life to these areas and spaces.

Trends related to increased awareness among consumers about sustainability issues, the impact their decisions have on the environment, and the "slow"-movement (which advocates a cultural shift toward slowing down life's pace, and of which the "slow-food" movement is the most well-known), generate ample opportunities to bring about the so-much desired change. Proximity products and services are gaining ground.

Also, consumers nowadays not only acquire a product or services, but look for an "experience" or a statement with regards to their preferences and lifestyles. Attracting consumers to the commercial areas requires added value to be provided, e.g. an experience, or a combination of products or services not easily found somewhere else, or with clear added value, e.g. sustainable, ecological, environmental-friendly.





Although there are already some initiatives springing up in commercial area, which cover the consumer demands with regards to sustainability, proximity and the slow movement such as shops which offer products in bulk so the consumer can buy exactly the needed amount, or those offering local ecological produce, there are many which have not adapted to this new setting.

It is difficult for a small commerce, retail, hospitality or cultural/creative business to provide answers to the aforementioned challenges individually, and when they do, the impact is limited to the specific type of consumers they address. Hence intense collaboration through the joint creation, design and implementation of new products and/or services, offering the consumer the needed experience is key.

LETZ RETAIL provides an answer to the aforementioned challenges by offering a learning programme aimed at owners, managers and self-employed persons of small retail, commerce, hospitality and cultural/creative businesses in commercial areas in decay (or at risk of) which gives them the knowledge, skills and competences to:

- Adapt their individual offering to the new environment;
- Co-design, co-create and co-work to develop new (or adapt and combine) existing products, services and experiences.
- Respond to trends related to sustainability, green & circular economy.

By acquiring these skills, they will be able individually and jointly provide an answer to the demands of the sustainable conscious and digital-native consumer, open to the slow-movement concept and compete through differentiation offering a different and unique experience.

LETZ RETAIL goes to the root of the problem, the lack of a collaborative spirit between actors to unite willingness, needs and opportunities in an informal and constant way, that leads to the success of local businesses.

LETZ RETAIL has developed a learning programme that develops the knowledge and competences, through the use of co-creation, co-design and co-working techniques and tools, to find relevant solutions such as offering the clients/visitors new experiences, activities, products and/or services.

Complementary to the learning programme and with the aim to ensure take-up while safeguarding the approach and quality of the results, LETZ RETAIL GUIDES are elaborated. These are a set of concrete and focussed guides for each of the relevant stakeholders belonging to the ecosystem of commercial zones/areas, and how these can take advantage of the approach and learning programme.



## **LETZ RETAIL Learning Guide**

Aimed at the direct target group and will outline how they can acquire the skills and competences on co-creation, co-design and co-working through the LETZ RETAIL learning programme.



## **LETZ RETAIL Train the trainer guide**

Address how (VET) trainers, training bodies and educational institutions can build upon and leverage LETZ RETAIL.



## **LETZ RETAIL Guide for Innovation Intermediaries & business associations**

Aimed at those organizations and associations that offer services and support in relation to the commercial area/zone's ecosystem, such as business associations; commerce associations, chambers of commerce, and incubators, accelerators or hubs.



## **LETZ RETAIL Civil society guide**

Aimed at civil society organisations/ NGOs active in the areas and/or working with the targeted sectors, such as those focussing related to sustainability, green & circular economy or urban regeneration on how to leverage LETZ RETAIL to realise their objectives in cooperation with the target groups/other stakeholders



## **LETZ RETAIL Policy Brief**

How public bodies can stimulate co-creation, co-design and co-working among the target groups and the commercial zone/area's ecosystem, both through targeted commercial and business development programmes as well as through VET training policies for the target group.



# Target Group

The LETZ RETAIL Civil society guide is aimed at civil society organisations/ NGOs active in the areas and/or working with small business owners from the field of commerce, retail, hospitality or culture/creativity, especially those focussing on sustainability, green & circular economy or urban regeneration.

This guide presents the LETZ RETAIL learning materials and the way to adopt them, in order to support entrepreneurs, retail owners and managers of the targeted sectors to introduce new skills, and/or make changes that will boost competitiveness and attract more customers by applying co-creation, co-design and co-working techniques in order to develop new (joint) services/ products.

The LETZ RETAIL materials are created in such a way that allow civil society organizations and NGOs to

work with the small businesses for revitalising the neighbourhood they are situated, as well as with entrepreneurs and shops owners in these city areas who are in risk of closure.

The materials are ready for use or can be easily integrated in existing training programmes offered by these organizations. When the materials have been developed, the negative economic effects on small retailers caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have been taken into account. The learning programme includes 25 best practices from around Europe and it can be tailored to the individual needs of each learner, providing opportunity to focus on a specific area, or having a more practical/theoretical approach. It is important to note that the use of the materials is free of charge. The learners are only required to register/ subscribe to the course.

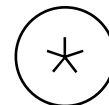
# LETZ RETAIL FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND NGOS

The following chapters give insight on the LETZ RETAIL learning materials and facilitate the implementation of the LETZ RETAIL programme in order for civil society organisations/NGOs active in the areas and/or working with small business owners from the targeted fields to integrate the materials in their existing offerings towards small business owners and entrepreneurs, focusing on the revitalisation of the area they work by becoming more competitive, green and sustainable.

The materials on co-creation, co-design and co-working can enrich or improve any small retail owners' offerings towards the customers, as the training is focused on the skills and knowledge needed for developing new (joint) services/products, improving competitiveness, attracting new customers and becoming a more sustainable business, that operates in the green & circular economy.

The LETZ RETAIL learning materials include an extensive research report, in which the most important skill set for entrepreneurs in the field of retail, hospitality and culture are explained. The report is based on several surveys and interviews conducted with the target group. A total of 25 best practices by small business owners from around Europe, in which they share a problem they had and the ways they overcame it using co-creation, co-design and co-working. And the LETZ RETAIL online learning environment, in which you can find all the learning materials, together with the case studies and practice/assignments after every unit and more tips and tricks that will help any retail owner, manager or entrepreneur to learn about the most important skills he/she need in order to collaborate and develop new joint products/services and answer to the current market trends

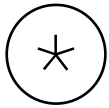




## The learning modules

The LETZ RETAIL learning programme consists of 10 Units, and each unit represents one module.

They are as it follows:

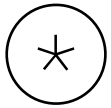


1. **Creativity** - explaining what is creativity and how can be used in order to help the learner to generate, envisage and define their business idea in the framework of collaboration/ co-creation using different creativity techniques;
2. **Collaborative Leadership** - explaining what collaborative leadership is and what it means to lead collaboratively, in particular in the context of co-creation, co-design and co-working;
3. **Teamwork** - recognizing the power of teamwork to improve organizational processes and performance in co-creating, co-designing and co-working with others;
4. **Communication** – improving communication as a way of developing and maintaining relations within the team of co-workers, as well as with outside partners and customers;
5. **Networking** - understanding how to use networking in order to lay the foundations for co-creating, codesigning and co-working with partners and customers;
6. **Negotiation** - mastery in negotiation as a key to success for a co-creation, co-designing and co-working initiative and collaboration;
7. **Problem Solving** - understanding how and when to applicate Problem Solving in order to further develop action involving co-creating, co-designing and co-working within the organization as well as with partners and clients;
8. **Change Management** - managing the changes for your organisation and with your team, preparing them for co-creating and co-working with others;
9. **Co-Creation & Co-Design** - applying co-creation and co-design approaches and techniques for ideating and developing new products or services;
10. **Co-Working** - Managing to create the most effective environment where co-work, co-creation and co-design can be deployed and external collaboration is utilized to obtain new entrepreneurial skills and insights.

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When developing the learning content, it has been taken into account the negative economic effects from the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic put an additional strain on small commerce and retail, which were already competing with large shopping malls and online stores for customers. The months-long lockdowns have led to the closure of many businesses in areas which were once the commercial centre of the town or neighbourhood.





Even more, the pandemic has affected consumer behaviour and entrepreneurs, business owners and managers of small businesses have to take actions and adapt quickly to the new market trends. That is why the LETZ RETAIL learning programme is structured in a way, to make the units practical, useful and interactive at the same time. A small business owner has to be time-efficient and consequently studying each unit takes about 30 minutes (excluding the additional learning resources). In addition, learners can decide for themselves with which unit to start and how much time to spend on the supplementary learning materials.


All modules have the same structure – they include a short introduction into the topic, a theoretical part where the main concepts of the subject are presented, some tools that help apply the discussed concept into the business situation of the learner, additional learning resources for deeper understanding of the topic, and “Tips and Tricks”, that can inspire some easy tryouts.

In addition to this, each unit includes several case studies which looks at a different challenge related to sustainability, green and circular economy, attracting more customers or providing a new product/service, experience by small business owner or entrepreneur predominantly from the partner countries (Luxembourg, Spain, Greece, Bulgaria, The Netherlands and Cyprus).

Since the LETZ RETAIL learning programme was developed with a particular target group in mind – owners, managers and self-employed persons of small retail, commerce, hospitality and cultural/creative businesses in commercial areas in decay (or at risk of) the presented case studies are focused on the businesses that work in above

mentioned sectors. Each best practice looks into the context of the business environment and a special focus is placed on the way in which the said problem was overcome by collaborating with other businesses from the same area/neighbourhood to create a new product/service by using co-creation, co-design and co-working.

All modules also included assignments, which allow the learners to test out their knowledge. Learners can choose for themselves if they would like to test their knowledge on a given topic first and then proceed with the theoretical part. This will allow them to see their weaker point and point them where they need to pay extra attention. It is recommended that after each completed theoretical part the learner re-do the assignments and compare the progress they have made.



**Assignment 1: SET GOALS**

As a leader that wants to introduce creativity, it is important to know how you will achieve it and how to help others be more creative as well. So let's be creative! Pick an important issue from your life or the life of your business, which is on your mind. Take a blank sheet of paper you, and write the question on the top, then write 15 answers underneath, whatever comes to your mind. Repeat the process for 7 days. You will probably have many interesting ideas among your answers, that prove that you are creative already.

**Description**

Welcome to the Letz-retail course! If you work in a small company in retail, hospitality and cultural/ creative sector in urban areas in (or at risk of) decay and you want to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to co-create, co-design and co-work, take a look at the course that the partnership of Letz-Retail has prepared for you. You will find the following chapters:

- Unit 1 - CREATIVITY
- Unit 2 - COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP
- Unit 3 - TEAMWORK
- Unit 4 - COMMUNICATION
- Unit 5 - NETWORKING
- Unit 6 - NEGOTIATION
- Unit 7 - PROBLEM SOLVING
- Unit 8 - CHANGE MANAGEMENT
- Unit 9 - CO-CREATION & CO-DESIGN
- Unit 10 - CO-WORKING

Each unit consists of a theoretical part (presentation), case studies from existing successful companies, videos, quizzes and practical exercises, where you can put all theory into practice, using your own organisation as your learning environment. interested? Take the course for free!

[Read more](#)

If you would like to connect with the creators or the other users of LETZ RETAIL online course, please feel free to post on the LETZ RETAIL Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/letz.retail>. Join the community of entrepreneurs that use co-design, co-creation and co-working to grow their business!

[Subscribe Now!](#)



# Online learning environment

LETZ RETAIL online course is available through LETZ RETAIL project website: [www.letzretail.eu](http://www.letzretail.eu). It includes all modules, best practices, additional learning resources and “Tips and Tricks. The course is available in several languages - English, Bulgarian, Dutch, French, Greek and Spanish. Each learner can choose for themselves in which language he/she would like to study.

## Lessons

Unit 1 - CREATIVITY	
Unit 2 - COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP	
Unit 3 - TEAMWORK	
Unit 4 - COMMUNICATION	
Unit 5 - NETWORKING	
Unit 6 - NEGOTIATION	

Not only does the website provide access to the LETZ RETAIL online learning environment, but it includes the information about the LETZ RETAIL project, explains the background and idea behind the project, and presents the LETZ RETAIL consortium. All the information on the website is available in the 6 languages.

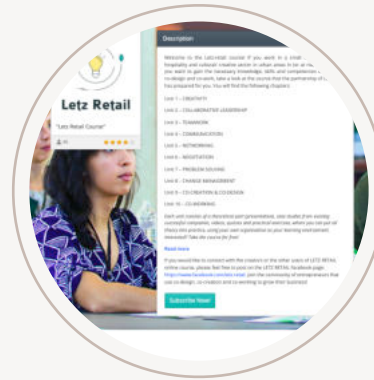
Accessing the learning platform happens immediately upon opening the website, after clicking on “Our course” button



## Registration

*Once registered for the LETZ RETAIL training course, the learners can begin by taking a look at all the lessons and select the unit they would like to start with. One of the main advantages of the LETZ RETAIL course is that it gives the learners freedom to learn at their own pace and adapt the content according to their individual needs.*

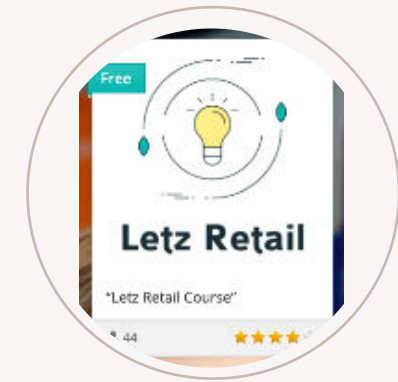
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## Letz-Retail Online Course

*Also, if a learner is seeking some inspiration, the organization of the units offers an easy way to access the case studies of every module and look for creative ideas/solutions. In the same way the assignments can be quickly accessed, without having to go/scroll through the entire learning unit just to access them. This further facilitates the learning and speaks for the user-friendliness of the LETZ RETAIL online learning environment.*

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## The Unit

*In order to facilitate learners in deciding with which unit to begin, once a certain unit is selected, a short presentation of the course appears. It includes a brief introduction of the module's topic and a table that contains the knowledge, skills, actions and performance criteria that outlines the module's purpose and intended learning outcomes*

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Although the online learning materials are created with a main focus on the use of co-creation, co-design and co-working, they also present sustainability and green and circular economy. All theoretical parts are backed by practical examples from different countries. Each unit is combined of the same elements:

- ❖ **Theory:** Includes the theoretical part of the unit. It presents the most important bits of information the learner needs in order to become familiar with the presented topic in a motivating way so that he/she proceeds with it. It is written in an engaging and easy-to-understand way even if the learner decides to take the course in another language. The theoretical part ensures that the learner will obtain the knowledge, skills and competences presented in the introduction part of the module. Important to emphasise here, is that the content is presented in a visually attractive way. There are no extensive text blocks and the elements of it are: Introduction, Essential knowledge and Inspiration to learn more (with accompanying resources).
- ❖ **Examples/case studies:** Examples within the module topics, that are about companies who faced certain problems and ways they have solved it using co-creation, co-design and co-working.
- ❖ **LETZ PRACTICE!:** Each unit ends with a practical part where the learners can put their knowledge into practice with some short hands-on assignments. If they prefer, the learners can begin any given module by going through the practical part and testing the skills and knowledge he/she already has. In this way the learner will know where to focus their attention when learning the theory.
- ❖ **Tips & tricks:** Some useful tips and tricks are provided in order to prepare for the most effective implementation of the unit's knowledge, skills and competences.



# The role of civil society organisations and NGOs

Over the past few decades, a large number of books, courses, coaching and consultant agencies offering assistance on entrepreneurial or business topics appeared. Although they offer some knowledge on innovation and creativity, they lack focus on the actual needs of small retail owners, especially those competing with online stores and large shopping malls, or the ones in commercial areas in decay (or at risk of).

The role of civil society organizations and NGOs begins with a new perspective on cooperation and creativity. In order for small business owners from the field of commerce, retail, hospitality or culture/creativity, especially those focussing on sustainability, green & circular economy or urban regeneration to be able to compete in times of COVID restrictions and lockdowns, especially with online stores, they need to be able to quickly adapt and offer a unique service/product, that is not sold online.

Most of the time a product/service like that comes from the combination of several offers in a new, creative way, out of which something new and unique is created. The conscious customer today is looking to invest not in possessions, but in experiences and small businesses can offer just that if they develop the needed skills to collaborate and create joint products.

A collaboration like this requires trust and sharing information. It changes the way innovation is done. In order to have a successful co-creation and co-design processes business must share ideas freely and openly. Instead of competing with one another for a scarce number of customers in a way that someone is left behind, businesses can offer combined services/experience and/or product, so that all of them attract the customers and expand their clientele.

Civil society organizations and NGOs working with such businesses can use LETZ RETAIL learning materials to support entrepreneurs, retail owners and managers by inspiring them to co-create and co-design new joint services and products that will most certainly boost competitiveness and attract more customers. These organizations can support effectively the entrepreneurial journey and help businesses work together by overcoming the fears connected to openly sharing ideas and customers. What is more, in this way these organizations will cooperate with the small businesses for revitalising the neighbourhood they are situated, thus changing the area they live/work by making it more customer-friendly and a place of creativity.

The COVID-19 pandemic left many small retailers to deal alone with the negative economic effects caused by

the prolonged lockdowns. Civil society organizations and NGOs can integrate the LETZ RETAIL materials in their existing offerings and assistance, targeting businesses from the field of commerce, retail, hospitality or culture/creativity, especially those focussing on sustainability, green & circular economy or urban regeneration. By doing so, they can expand their training portfolio and will be able to offer small retail owners an innovative training course that is time-efficient, on the point and free of charge.

For many business owners who are already suffering the setbacks caused by COVID-19 this can be a way to find inspiration without having to go into expensive coaching, hiring a professional consultant or signing for a pricey business course.



# CONCLUDING REMARKS

The months-long lockdowns, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have put additional strain on small commerce and retail, which were already competing with large shopping malls and online stores for customers and have led to the closure of many businesses. As a way to fight these negative consequences the LETZ RETAIL materials are developed, focusing on creativity and collaboration with the purpose to inspire small business owners to co-create and co-design.

However, there are some who won't jump on board immediately, as they require more persuasion in order to see the opportunities behind the development of a joint service/product.

One way to spark interest in a person who shows restraint towards collaboration is to begin by sharing some of the best practices from around Europe. By hearing about how others who have experienced similar or the same challenges as them have overcome these problems by using co-creation, co-design and co-working to create a new joint product, can inspire a desire to learn more or even give it a try in the sceptics





Learning Detours



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