

REMOTE WORK & NEW RELOCATION PATTERNS IN A POST-COVID WORLD

- implications for organisations, cities, regions
and countries



Future Place
Leadership™

THE
REMOTE
LAB

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic has brought about a radical change in ways of living and working, significantly impacting how companies and individuals are looking to the future.

A number of major tech companies lead the way and announced a permanent shift to remote work after the pandemic – and other employers have followed suit. At the same time, we have made quantum leaps in adopting new technologies that facilitate new ways of working. In just a few months' time, the COVID-19 crisis brought about years of change in the way companies and regions conduct business in general, and communicate and meet in particular.

As a consequence, new migration and relocation patterns have emerged – some of which are here to stay. In the US alone, 14 – 23 million Americans are planning to relocate to a new city or region as a result of the growing acceptance of remote work. In short, it is now easier than ever to work in one place and live in another.

In this report our focus is on the future by identifying emerging phenomena related to how we will live and work in the next decade. Special emphasis is placed on the implications for places – towns, cities, regions and countries.

By employing the Signals of Change method, we aim to capture signals of how the future may develop – and how places can identify, understand, manage, and benefit from these phenomena.

Published by the Remote Lab and Future Place Leadership.

Authors and layout:

Elise Perrault

Jenny Sandström

Maria Svensson Wiklander

Marcus Andersson

Nolwenn Lecompte

June 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pandemic has brought about a radical change in ways of living and working, which have had a knock-on effect on how companies and individuals are looking at the future. This report addresses relevant signals for post-covid migration, relocation and living patterns. They relate to temporary and permanent relocations, new ways of working, emerging communities, as well as urban design and city planning trends and implications.

In the signal clusters below, we strive to forecast how the future may develop – and how places can understand, tackle or harness these phenomena.

New relocation patterns:

More than a year after the pandemic, the new ways of living imposed by COVID-19 seem to have disrupted where people want to live and work. Big cities and dense central urban environments have lost their interest in this equation. Spending more time at home, people now want more space and better access to other amenities such as nature. The question is, to what extent are these relocations permanent? And where are people moving? The signals collected in this cluster provide insights into the motivations behind these relocations and the emerging destinations. Far from being episodic, they are driven by structural trends such as housing prices, social inequalities, and digitalisation.

These movements involve varied social groups and are not always voluntary. Much has already been said about COVID-19 acting as a magnifying lens and how new “stay-at-home” and remote working norms have exacerbated social disparities in the cities and heightened people’s desire for more balanced and flexible work habits. This effectively means that both localities and employers will have to adapt to remote working if they want attract workers. This can open opportunities for localities usually considered unattractive peripheries, provided social and ecological issues are considered.

Multi-locational workers:

When people no longer need to live where they work, it opens opportunities for living in multiple locations. The second clusters explores this shift towards multi-locational work. Increase in digital nomadism requires adapting administrative, legal, and infrastructural frameworks. Places around the world are adapting and creating solutions to enable digital nomads to visit and/or stay and work remotely, including relocation programmes, tailored visa tracks, and the development of new housing and work facilities. Similarly, workers willing to travel should be aware of the support offered by different cities and countries. The possibility for distance work is opening up more pandemic-, or crisis-, resistant tourism opportunities, which could be taken advantage of.

Emergent communities:

New movement patterns have allowed the emergence of, and increased the need for, strong communities. Nomads benefit from advice, support and company from others in a similar situation. Individuals looking to permanently move often also benefit from advice given by those who have already been through the experience. Communities can be enabled through spaces such as co-living hubs, or through policies such as talent attraction schemes with networking events in a region.

New investment patterns:

Relocations not only affect people, but also investments and companies. When traditional innovation hubs – such as Silicon Valley – have become too expensive for both companies and talent, some tech giants such as HP have looked for alternative locations. This trend may grow as remote work makes location less relevant as well as levelling the playing field for contesting innovation hubs. The backshoring trend – i.e. moving manufacturing activity back from low-cost countries – may speed up in a post-COVID world and present new opportunities for smaller places that have managed to attract talent and workforce. In addition, when cities are planned in a mono-functional way and remote work leaves offices deserted, whole districts can sometimes be left vacant and unused. On the other hand, it does also mean that companies are no

longer bound to expensive central locations, and can relocate outside of their employees' housing locations, and to smaller activity-based offices. That said, when office space is freed up, cities can benefit by designing better, more sustainable and greener multi-functional urban spaces, with increased awareness of the new requirements for attractiveness.

Reinventing places:

These signals address new thinking around empty buildings and city centres, and how they can be reused to become more useful and attractive locations, in large cities, small towns and ruralites alike. Changes in migration and lifestyle patterns impact the built environment, requiring planning and architectural adaptations. Building on the signals explored in previous clusters, selected initiatives intend to innovate the built environment by bringing together a diversity of functions and values. These new spaces weave together work, leisure, and community (“work, live, play”), and make the most of underused buildings in rural and urban districts.

The key in the future will be to find smart ways to repurpose the built environment in order to accommodate new needs. Does the community need a social centre to build life in the town and retain inhabitants? Does it require a farm to encourage sustainable eating, or would it benefit from a co-living hub to attract more nomads?

ABOUT FUTURE PLACE LEADERSHIP

Future Place Leadership specialises in helping places – rural areas, cities, regions and countries – becoming more attractive, sustainable and connected. In short, we make places great. Thematic focus areas include talent attraction and retention, investment promotion, place branding, placemaking, destination development and digitalisation for places. We have helped places such as the Nordic capitals, Berlin, Bilbao, Basel, Eindhoven, Utrecht, Geneva, Emilia-Romagna, Gothenburg, Finland, Sweden, Scotland, Norway, the Netherlands, Estonia, Ireland, Montreal, Dublin, Cork, and others with analysis, strategy and action plan development, benchmarking and training. We offer trainings, inspiring events and conferences under our sister brand Place Leadership Academy, such as the annual Nordic Place Branding Conference and Nordic Investment Promotion Conference. <https://futureplaceleadership>.

ABOUT THE REMOTE LAB

The Remote Lab is a knowledge and development node for the future of remote work. Our vision is to assist society, organisations, and individuals in the transformation from the norm of the physical workplace to a remote mindset, through both societal and organisational development. The foundation of The Remote Lab is knowledge and we work actively to stimulate more research within the area through our own reports and collaborations with universities, research institutions and environments. This knowledge is offered as services such as external monitoring reports, strategic consultancy services, attitude scans and educational services to both public and private organisations. <https://remotelab.io/>

Future Place
Leadership™

THE
REMOTE
LAB

BACKGROUND

In 2018, the UN released a report indicating that 68 percent of the earth's population would live in urban areas by 2050. Since the outbreak of the corona pandemic, urban developers and researchers around the world have begun to question whether this is still true.

In recent years, employees have shown an increased interest in full-time or partly remote work. At the same time, the pandemic has forced employers to adapt to remote work and we have seen steps within technological development and maturity corresponding to four to seven years, in just a few months (McKinsey, 2020). As an effect of this, large organisations such as Google, Twitter and Spotify now clearly communicate that even after the pandemic, their employees can choose how and from where they want to work.

The pandemic has forced countries to close their borders, and made it more difficult for residents to move freely. This is reflected in lifestyle trends and changing movement patterns that may persist for a long time. People have been confronted with the question of what they value to a greater extent than before, and we observe that many have discovered that they lack closeness to nature, and consider leaving the bigger cities for this.

This report, by The Remote Lab and Future Place Leadership, addresses several current examples of changing movement patterns and priorities in living conditions. The purpose is to give nations, regions, municipalities, companies and organisations insight into ongoing events that may affect the norms surrounding how we think about our residences and working life, since this affects where and how talent recruitment takes place in the long run.

Despite the fact that the majority of workplaces today state that operations will not return to what they were before the pandemic, only 32% have a clearly-stated and well-communicated policy for whether employees will be able to continue working remotely after the pandemic (McKinsey, 2021). Few organisations also have an overall concrete strategy for how they will make the organisation more remote-friendly.

With greater flexibility, younger individuals are moving to suburbs or smaller cities to a greater extent than before, partly driven by a desire for cheaper housing closer to nature. There is a clear global movement away from major cities such as San Francisco, London, Auckland and Stockholm, which are now experiencing net losses of residents.

Residents of the inner city move to greener and calmer suburbs, to their hometowns in the countryside or to calmer cities closer to nature and green areas.

Phenomena such as digital nomads - individuals who can move to several countries within a year, or live permanently in a motorhome while working remotely - are also growing. In the past year, the number of digital nomads in the United States has increased by 140 percent, to 10.9 million people living and working without a fixed address.

It is important for employers to understand what the workforce of the future values and how priorities and conditions change, to determine how they should act to continue to attract and retain employees.

Several studies, including The Remote Lab's "Attitudes in a New Age", show that a majority of employees want a more flexible work situation and thus are less likely to be full-time in a single workplace (The Remote Lab, 2020).

A larger proportion of individuals than before are also more interested in working abroad or living outside the big cities and working in co-working hubs. Employers need to consider this in the development of work routines, terms of employment, workplaces and also to understand the office's function in the future. If people move and employees spread to different geographical locations, companies will have to

reduce their office space and it then becomes relevant for employers to ask themselves how to assess the need for premises in the future.

Transforming the organisation to become completely distributed not only requires adaptation of working methods, but will affect the entire organisation from the company's vision, mission, operations, processes, to the product portfolio and much more. The industries or companies that succeed in reaping the benefits of having people working anywhere will be the winners - not only by enabling creativity in creating new products and services but also by attracting the top talent.

Of course, there are also risks and challenges with these new migration patterns and how they will affect society and working life in the future. Åre, which is currently the fastest growing municipality in Sweden, is experiencing a price increase for housing, not only in the village of Åre but also in surrounding villages. If a housing applicant has not previously been part of the housing market in a big city such as Stockholm, it is difficult to compete in bidding. More houses that were previously permanent residences have also become fixed-term housing where the owners are registered in other locations, which can result in a net loss in tax revenue.

Another aspect of relocation patterns is that the target group, who are agile and have the opportunity to work remotely, are often highly educated high-income earners.

What happens to segregation and the socio-economic balance in the societies they leave behind is as yet unknown, and a development which could be problematic.

It is therefore important for municipalities and regions to closely follow the migration patterns that exist and in what way they will affect local communities, cities, municipalities and regions.

Competition for the most attractive talent will also intensify. Through the opportunity to employ anywhere, the price competition can also make it possible for employment in countries with lower wages. However, this is not a new phenomenon but has taken place for many years, in areas such as production, amongst others.

We can also see many examples of companies actively bringing back their production to Europe. In the same way that companies have the opportunity to hire remotely, talents also have the opportunity to be hired remotely. This will create greater competition for companies intending to employ staff in the towns where they are established. In this case, values and commitment to the company's vision and mission will play a decisive role for the workforce of the future when it comes to which organisation they choose to work at.

THE REMOTE WORKER

As of 2019, the share of employees working remotely regularly, or at least sometimes, was greater than 25% in most Northern European countries, including Sweden, Finland, and the Netherlands, whereas in 15 of the 27 EU member states it was less than 10%. Between these two extremes, there were countries such as Belgium, France and Portugal where the share of remote work ranged between 13 and 19%. Countries in Northern Europe are also those with the largest growth in remote work since 2009, although increases also occurred in several other member states including Portugal, Estonia and Ireland. (Eurofund, 2020)

Remote work also varies between sectors. The sectors that expect remote work to continue are also those that started working remotely in the first place, namely IT and communication. The finance and insurance sector is the second largest remote work sector with almost 20 percent remote workers. White collar and knowledge workers are greatly overrepresented, while significantly fewer in the production sector have worked remotely during the pandemic.

In its report from 2020, Eurofund lists sectors that are particularly suitable for remote working based on an index for “technical teleworkability” which is based on how great the need for physical meetings is for the business to function.

The index includes work tasks, work methods and work tools.

Six industries that are considered to most suitable for remote work are finance and insurance (93%), information and communication (79%), education (78%), professional, scientific and technical activities (76%), real estate activities and public administration (75%), and defence (75%). Industries that, according to the report, are the least suitable for remote working are, among others, healthcare and health (30%), trade (27%), hotels and restaurants (16%) and production and construction (10-20%).

During the pandemic, many industries were forced to switch their services from physical to digital, something that is expected to continue even after the pandemic. We see concrete examples of this, in the banking sector for instance, where many local branches are now closed in favor of more digital services.

Prior to the pandemic, women worked remotely to a lesser extent than men; during the pandemic this reversed, in favour of women. Despite this, research reports indicate women would be more likely than men to say no to a job if it were not possible to work remotely.

Individuals with high levels of education and salary are overrepresented in remote working. All in all, this largely indicates that diversified

SIGNALS OF CHANGE

"Signals of Change" is a core methodology, developed by [Institute for the Future \(IFTF\)](#), which is the world's leading futures education and training organisation. Signal scanning, per IFTF, involves continuously finding and cataloguing signals as one key component to researching alternative visions of the future to help individuals and organisations make better decisions today.

IFTF defines a signal of change as a recent small or local innovation—a new product, service, behaviour, initiative, policy, data point, or technology—with the potential to scale in impact and affect other places, people, or markets. Signals are specific events or innovations happening today that have the potential to disrupt the status quo, or scale in both size or geography. Signals help capture emerging phenomena sooner than traditional social science methods and are used as evidence to show that a forecast or scenario is plausible. Continuously scanning for signals helps us develop the habit of collecting observations as we read news, conduct research, and move through daily life. For research purposes, signals are documented both with a description of the phenomenon (the "What") and interpretation of possible implications (the "So What").

In this report The Remote Lab has scanned and collected these signals on Remote work & new relocation patterns in a post-covid world, providing resources and knowledge for others to take into consideration when planning actions and strategies for the future.

We have grouped these signals into five clusters which we discuss more in the following slides. These are:

1. New relocation patterns
2. Multilocational workers
3. Emergent communities
4. New investment patterns
5. Reinventing places

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

To understand what the future might look like, we have identified “Drivers of Change” - or the big forces reshaping today’s landscape into something new. Drivers are large, long-term underlying directions of change that will shape the future and should span across multiple domains to be as diverse and comprehensive as possible. Along with “Signals of Change”, they are components of evidence and building blocks for plausible, provocative forecasts.

IDENTIFIED DRIVERS OF CHANGE

1. Globalisation (a connected world)
2. Digitisation (from analog to digital)
3. Development in telecommunications, 5G, Automation and AI
4. Increased acceptance of remote working and flexible working hours
5. Climate destabilisation
6. Pandemic
7. Decentralisation
8. Sharing economy

NEW RELOCATION PATTERNS

This cluster addresses new trends in living preferences in different locations. Whereas big city centres have been highly attractive until now, relocations patterns from expensive cities show a renewed interest for more peripheral locations, including rural areas.

OUT OF BIG CITIES

WHAT: In 2020 London lost 700,000 inhabitants. Early in that year, a study indicated that 33 per cent of Londoners wanted to move homes, and half of them wanted to leave the British capital as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, after repeated lock-down periods, people care more about having gardens and green spaces, and many of those who do not want to move are staying for economic or work-related reasons. During the pandemic, 1.6 million (26%) of Londoners worked remotely outside the city centre, and many want to continue to do so. One third of British residents say that a continued flexible work situation would make them move.

SO WHAT: If employers become more flexible and offer increased opportunities for remote working for certain roles, more employees may be inspired to move without it negatively affecting the company.

Businesses can also save money on office space. The fact that we are moving away from a physical office as the norm may also, in the long run, mean that we move away from large important central cities as engines of development. A distributed drive creates not only diversified development areas but also a more distributed economy.

<https://www.thehrdirector.com/business-news/covid19/covid-19-accelerates-migration-from-london-as-1-6m-plan-moves-out-of-the-capital/>
<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/escaping-the-city-post-covid>
<https://www.cbre.us/research-and-reports/COVID-19-Impact-on-Resident-Migration-Patterns>



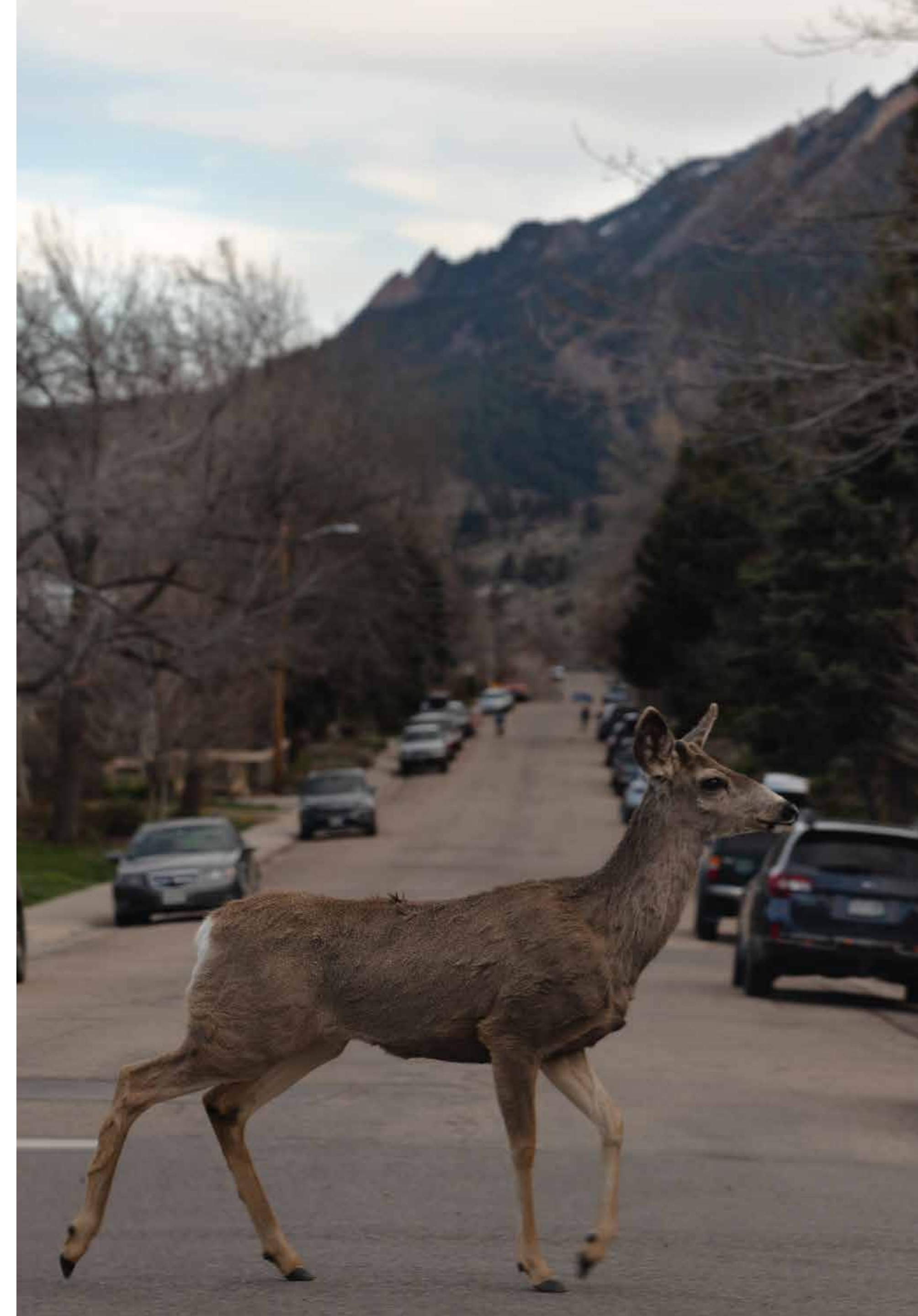
REMOTE WORK CAUSING PERMANENT RELOCATIONS

WHAT: US moving companies have been used as a measure of changes in US internal migration patterns between 2019 and 2020 – before and during the pandemic. More people are now moving for personal reasons such as family health and well-being; changes in working conditions (such as remote working); and requests for lifestyle changes and improved quality of life. Several states with large cities such as Washington DC and New York are among those with a net loss of population, while more rural states such as Vermont and North Dakota have experienced a net increase in population. Permanent moves have increased by 2 per cent compared to 2019 and temporary moves have increased by 27 per cent.

Half of respondents say they will not return to jobs that do not offer remote work after the pandemic and 75 per cent report that they have the same or increased work productivity when working from home compared to the office. Almost a quarter of full-time employees are willing to take a pay cut of over 10 per cent to work from home at least part of the time, and half of them state that they would move if they could work from home all or most of the time. Up to 23 million Americans plan to relocate as a result of remote working, which increases the rate of migration by four times from pre-pandemic levels. People are willing to move further away than a normal commuting distance to get access to accommodation.

SO WHAT: To ensure they retain and attract talented employees, companies need to adapt to the permanent emigration of employees from cities and the fact that some employees will not want to return to companies that do not offer a remote working option. For post-Corona remote working to be successful, companies will need to develop and implement policies and strategies to take care of employees' well-being through social contexts such as co-working hubs for remote workers, and to take care of the business by ensuring that the work environment in employees' home offices is conducive to productivity.

<https://www.thehrdirector.com/business-news/covid19/covid-19-accelerates-migration-from-london-as-1-6m-plan-moves-out-of-the-capital/>
<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/escaping-the-city-post-covid>



MOVING FROM CITIES TO RURAL AREAS

WHAT: New Zealand is facing a net loss of inhabitants from its cities in favour of a net increase of inhabitants in rural areas. One in three respondents (32.2%) in a recent survey has considered moving from Auckland over the past two years due to house prices and access to housing. Another 36 per cent of respondents thought the idea of moving was a good idea, even though they had not considered it before. Those who had not considered moving stated that they felt worried about whether they would be allowed to keep their jobs and that they would not be able to find a new job in more remote areas. With an increase in remote work, this will be an easier choice. Other studies have found similar results, with more and more New Zealanders choosing to move to the provinces due to the cost of living.

SO WHAT: Employees can now work remotely further from the office than ever before and commute less often (for example, once a week). New Zealand has invested in infrastructure and rapidly expanded broadband across the country. Rising house prices and a growing interest in a healthy lifestyle among New Zealanders is opening up new opportunities for regional areas. Instead of the smaller city centres dying, there is now potential for development and the growth of rural New Zealand looks promising.

<https://www.newzealandmovers.co.nz/blog/property-crisis-1-in-3-have-looked-at-leaving-auckland>

<https://www.infometrics.co.nz/kiwis-shifting-from-cities-to-the-regions/>



SUBURBANISATION

WHAT: In 2020, all the Nordic city capitals have recorded an increase in relocation numbers. Increasing housing prices combined with new “stay-at-home” regulations have pushed inhabitants to move away from dense urban living environments. However, this does not necessarily spell the end of urbanisation as we know it. Two-thirds of those who moved out actually remained within the same region, and in the case of Stockholm one-third moved into suburban areas. In terms of age disparities, young people aged 20-29 are the main group moving to Stockholm, while 25-34 year-olds are moving out of Stockholm. This needs to be understood within a larger trend of urbanisation in the Nordics, with domestic migration directed towards larger city regions. From 2010 to 2018, the regions containing Sweden’s three largest cities have experienced positive migration, both domestic and international

SO WHAT: The suburbanization trend highlights the difficulty of accessing housing markets, especially for young people, but offers potential for the development of multi-polar urban regions. It does also, however, raise issues around the connection of different poles while ensuring the mobility of people and workforces. Finally, the urban sprawl presupposed by this relocation pattern can be problematic for environmental sustainability if it were to translate into higher reliance on cars and overexploitation of soils.

<https://pub.norden.org/nord2020-001/#18388>

<https://www.dn.se/ekonomi/flykten-fran-storstaderna-under-pandemin-global-forandring-eller-kortvarig-trend/>



HOUSING PRICES

WHAT: A large proportion of those who move from big cities state housing prices as the reason for the move. During the corona pandemic, the thoughts of having a garden and green areas nearby has almost changed from a desire to a need. In Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, house prices have risen faster than prices for condominiums (over 10% per year), which clearly shows an increased interest in houses, but also a greater need for affordable housing. In areas directly next to Stockholm, house prices have increased the most. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, the trend is different. There, several rural areas have seen a faster increase of housing prices, over 20 per cent, compared to Amsterdam where prices increased by only 3.4 per cent.

SO WHAT: Affordable housing will continue to be needed, and for those who cannot afford the rising house prices in metropolitan areas, the countryside will be a cheaper alternative. Even in some parts of the countryside, you can see that immigrant city dwellers are driving up house prices, which creates both challenges and benefits for those already living in the area. If the trend continues, a potential disruption to urbanisation may occur favouring growing rural areas through the increases dispersion of talented and knowledgeable workers. This places greater demands on organisations to accommodate remote working, but can also be an advantage with greater diversity among employees and market opportunities.

<https://www.dn.se/ekonomi/villapriserna-stiger-snabbt-over-tio-procent-pa-ett-ar/>

<https://www.dn.se/sthlm/har-har-bostadspriserna-stigit-mest-i-stockholms-lan/>

<https://nltimes.nl/2021/01/15/amsterdam-increasingly-losing-residents-countryside>



MOVING BACK HOME DURING CORONA

WHAT: The effectiveness of New Zealand's strategy for dealing with the coronavirus pandemic from the outset has attracted many New Zealand expatriates to return to the country. It is expected that as many as 100,000 (10%) of the country's expatriates will return. This will provide a "brain gain", where citizens who would otherwise have assisted other countries, such as Australia, with their skills/knowledge, instead return – to New Zealand's benefit. However, the country must still find a way to retain returnees when the pandemic is over – the risk being that they may leave again due to New Zealand's relatively small labour market. New Zealand can only hope that returnees who were motivated to return because of security and an appreciation of how the pandemic was handled, are also inspired to remain in the country. In general, people who are forced to return to their country of origin (due to deportation, visa expiry, etc.) usually feel resentment about the situation.

SO WHAT: The return of expatriates to countries which have handled the coronavirus crisis effectively can have advantages for the country. However, countries such as Sweden or the United Kingdom where government actions have been criticised may, in the long-term, find it difficult to attract citizens. In the worst case scenario, citizens may actually leave and move elsewhere. While Sweden is doing relatively well in terms of maintaining population levels this is in large part to an influx of short-term corona refugees who arrived incentivised by fewer restrictions and limitations. Longer-term, confidence may need to be rebuilt before Sweden is considered a safe country to live in.

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200827-new-zealands-brain-gain-boost>



WEALTHY COVID-19 REFUGEES

WHAT: In the spring of 2020, many of New York's millionaires and billionaires moved out of the cities to places like Long Island or Palm Beach in Florida to await the end of the pandemic. Some bought homes there just to escape the city and lockdowns – in the Palm Beach Four Seasons Resort, a trading platform has even been opened by a hedge fund manager who moved dozens of employees and their families to Florida. Sotheby's, Pace and Acquavella have all opened temporary galleries and auction houses in Palm Beach to cater to their newly moved clients.

SO WHAT: There have been similar trends, on a more moderate scale, where residents of countries with strict restrictions have temporarily moved to work in countries with more relaxed restrictions, or to cities with more green areas and proximity to nature. The fact that companies and services are already following their target markets and establishing themselves in smaller cities indicates that this is a phenomenon which triggers innovative thinking and new markets, while also potentially creating a more permanent move for these businesses. There is a great interest in living further away from big cities, and companies with a flexible business strategy can find new ways to generate income by reflecting the behaviours of their target markets.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/business/wealthy-covid-refugees-lure-top-art-galleries-to-palm-beach>



URBAN EXODUS

WHAT: In Asian megalopolises – in India in particular – lockdowns have caused mass movements of poor migrant workers from the cities in which they work to their home villages in the countryside. An estimated 120 million migrant workers form the backbone of the Indian economy. These workers are employed in informal sectors, including in construction, food preparation and service, and delivery, and often live in precarious and congested housing conditions. When a strict lockdown was announced in March 2020, and again one year later, millions of migrant workers found themselves unemployed and without access to shelter, food, or water. Because public transport had also been shut down, they were forced to walk to their home villages which, in some cases, were thousands of miles away. This contrasts greatly with trends of the last decades where urban migrants have built and participated in the development of Asia's biggest cities: between 2000 and 2010, 200 million people moved into Asia's cities, and before the current pandemic 25-30 people migrated to Indian cities every minute.

SO WHAT:. Considering the importance of these urban migrants for economic development, and the attraction of cities when it comes to employment, it seems unlikely that the urban exodus will endure beyond the pandemic. It does, however, demonstrate the need to better integrate human rights, sustainability, and quality of life objectives into urban planning, especially in poor neighbourhoods where high proportions of migrants congregate. In European cities, immigrant populations have been particularly vulnerable, and the quality of housing and living environment, access to healthcare, difficulties in working from home, and reliance on public transportation have been issues that can be acted upon.

<https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/asias-urbanization-just-beginning/>

<https://asiafoundation.org/2020/08/19/covid-lays-bare-the-flaws-in-asias-booming-megacities/>

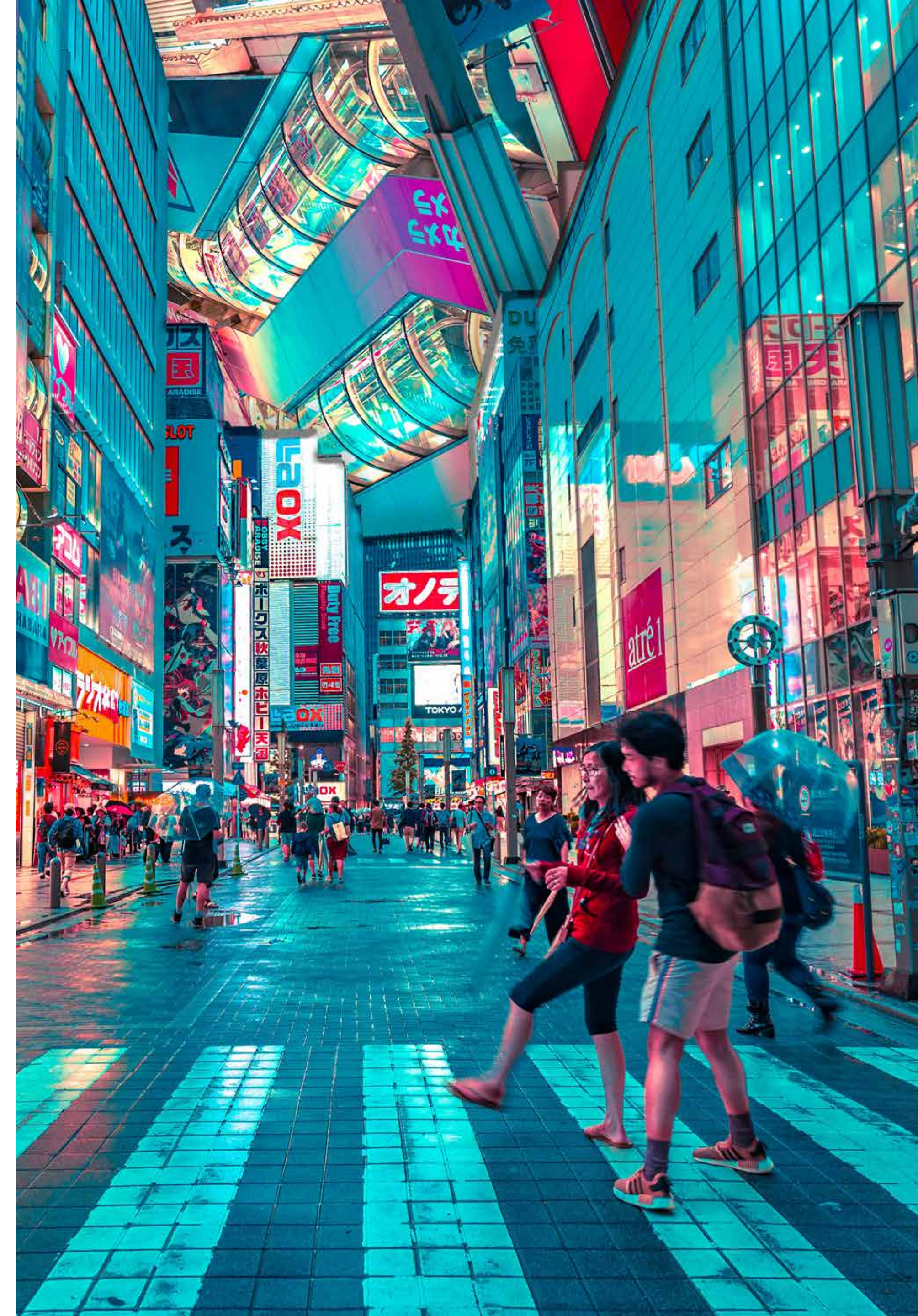
[https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Future of APacificCities_post-COVID19.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Future%20of%20APacificCities_post-COVID19.pdf)



BOOMERANG GENERATION

WHAT: Since the 1990s and a period of Japanese economic stagnation known as the “Lost decade”, a new social phenomenon has developed impacting primarily young people. Negatively referred to as “parasaito shinguru” (“parasite singles”), or “boomerang generation”, millions of Japanese have been forced to move back with their parents, and delayed the age of accessing their first home. In 2000 Japan counted 10 millions of “parasite singles” revealing the difficulties to become economically independent. But with the 2008 crisis and the current pandemic, similar trends have been noticed in Europe. In the UK, a quarter of young adults are living with their parents. Since the first lockdown in France in 2020, 30% of people under the age of 35 have been forced to return their apartment and move back to their parents’ homes. In the USA, this concerned 3 millions of American.

SO WHAT: The “boomerang generation” phenomenon is deeply rooted in higher precarity among younger generations despite higher levels of education. Young people are still the first group moving into cities, but it may change if they can no longer provide sustainable living environments. There is potential for places willing to invest in new forms of affordable housing to attract and retain young graduates. At the same time, generations of young people moving back to their parents’ home may be enticed to stay if they were to manage to integrate socially and economically.



MULTI-LOCATIONAL WORKERS

This cluster discusses how places are adapting to new relocation patterns and ways of working such as living in different cities or countries only a few months at a time. It highlights the emerging needs of multi-locational workers, and strategies to attract them.



CITY RANKINGS FOR NOMADS

WHAT: The Nomad List is a website created by and for digital nomads to rate cities in the world based on factors that affect their quality of life. The website contains rankings and reviews of cities based on parameters such as happiness, temperature, cost of living, humidity, LGBTQ friendliness, family life, and inclusion, as well as information on how to apply for a work visa and residence permit, and where to work remotely. At the time of writing, top cities include Lisbon, Taipei, Bali, and Berlin. Stockholm is in 46th place on the list and Malmö in 248th, which shows great potential for improvement within Sweden.

SO WHAT: This list demonstrates that cities need to consider their overall infrastructure, culture, and services to remain relevant. Currently, many cities focus on trying to revive dying city centres characterised by closed shops and restaurants, instead of paying attention to the overall impression and attractiveness of the entire district or region. Living in many different cities has quickly become a widespread lifestyle for a relatively picky target group. More cities should therefore consider how best to look at all aspects of an active and sustainable lifestyle for digital nomads and new international long-term visitors, in order to attract a new group of temporary residents - while at the same time create added value and a nicer environment for those who already live on the site. Why? Because these people may come with ideas, inspiration and entrepreneurial drive that will benefit their new temporary home.

www.Nomadlist.com



TECH TALENT DESIRED

WHAT: Around the world, conditions have improved for tech talents who want to work remotely and settle where they want. As a result, cities, regions and countries are trying to attract tech talent to come and test the lifestyle. The 90 Day Finn campaign is an initiative by the Finnish government to attract talent from the American technology sector, preferably from the west coast, to experience Finland for three months. The program arranges housing, preschool and schooling for families, and also provides access to relevant business networks and creates opportunities for candidates to continue working remotely from co-working hubs. The program also offers continued support for those who want to stay permanently after the 90 days, such as help with obtaining a permanent residence permit.

Remote workers who are moving permanently to the American city of Tulsa are offered \$ 10,000 in cash, a desk at a local co-working place and help finding housing. Tulsa also invests in technology, schools, and education so that the workforce of the future can be educated and live there. Similarly, Vermont is offering \$ 10,000 in relocation costs for Silicon Valley workers in search of a mountainous and natural lifestyle. In recent years, there has been a widespread movement where tech workers on the US east and west coasts are moving from the expensive big cities to cheaper, smaller cities and the pandemic has further accelerated that trend.

SO WHAT: These are clear examples of cities and countries seeing remote work as an opportunity to attract people to settle in, or help develop, an area. When people no longer need to live where they work, new incentives to move are created for those who want to avoid cramped and expensive cities. The campaigns have been very successful, Finland received 5,000 applications for just 50 places in the 90 Day Finn campaign, while in the US even more extreme numbers of applications have been received in their campaigns. For example, when Bentonville in Arkansas launched their campaign they received 25,000 applications for 25 places. The target group is willing to move, and now smaller cities are in a competition to deliver the most attractive lifestyle to this group. Companies that can influence their hometown to work with them on attracting their ideal employees may find it easier to recruit talent in the future.

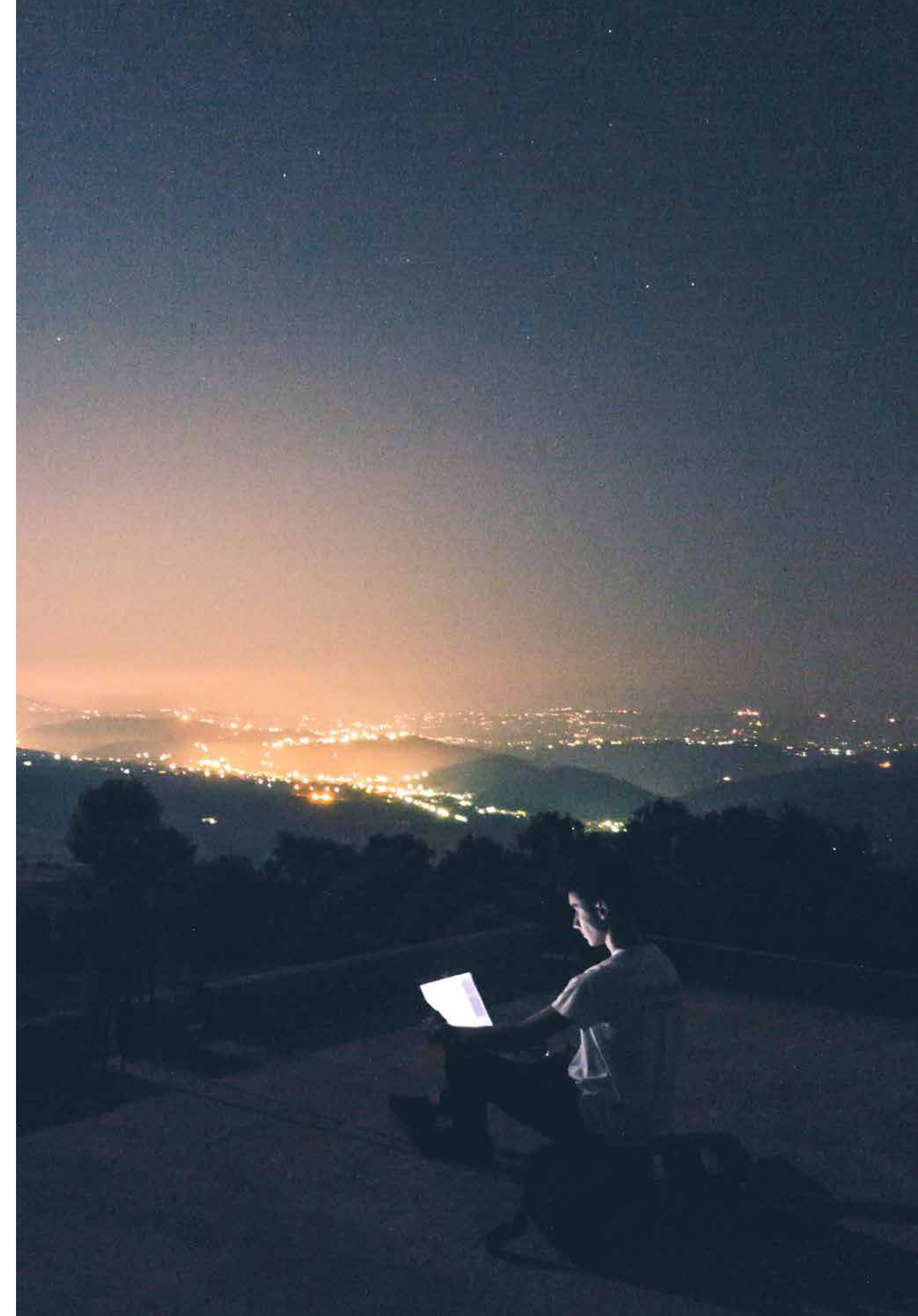
<https://www.thelocal.se/20210121/seven-surprising-things-about-swedens-secret-startup-hub-business-region-orebro-tlccu>

<https://www.helsinkibusinesshub.fi/90-day-finn/>

<https://www.techrepublic.com/article/what-tulsa-and-other-cities-are-doing-to-woo-remote-workers-away-from-silicon-valley/>

<https://www.nextgov.com/cio-briefing/2019/11/tech-talent-may-be-shifting-away-superstar-cities/161555/>

<https://eu.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/local/vermont/2018/05/31/vermont-betal-fjärr-arbetare-flytt-incitament/659553002/>



WORK VISAS

WHAT: The fact that a large proportion of knowledge workers during the corona pandemic worked remotely has proven to be favourable for places such as the Bahamas. The Bahamas is ideally suited to accommodate “long term” visitors who wish to work or study remotely while simultaneously enjoying and exploring a new destination and culture. The islands have therefore started a “Bahamas Extended Access Travel Stay” program, where participants can easily apply for a 1 year visa to stay and work in the country, and are then recommended living areas according to their budget. Estonia has also created a simple process for applying for and obtaining visas for remote workers outside the EU who want to live in the country for up to one year. The requirement is that the employee is officially employed by a company outside Estonia, or works mainly with non-Estonian customers.

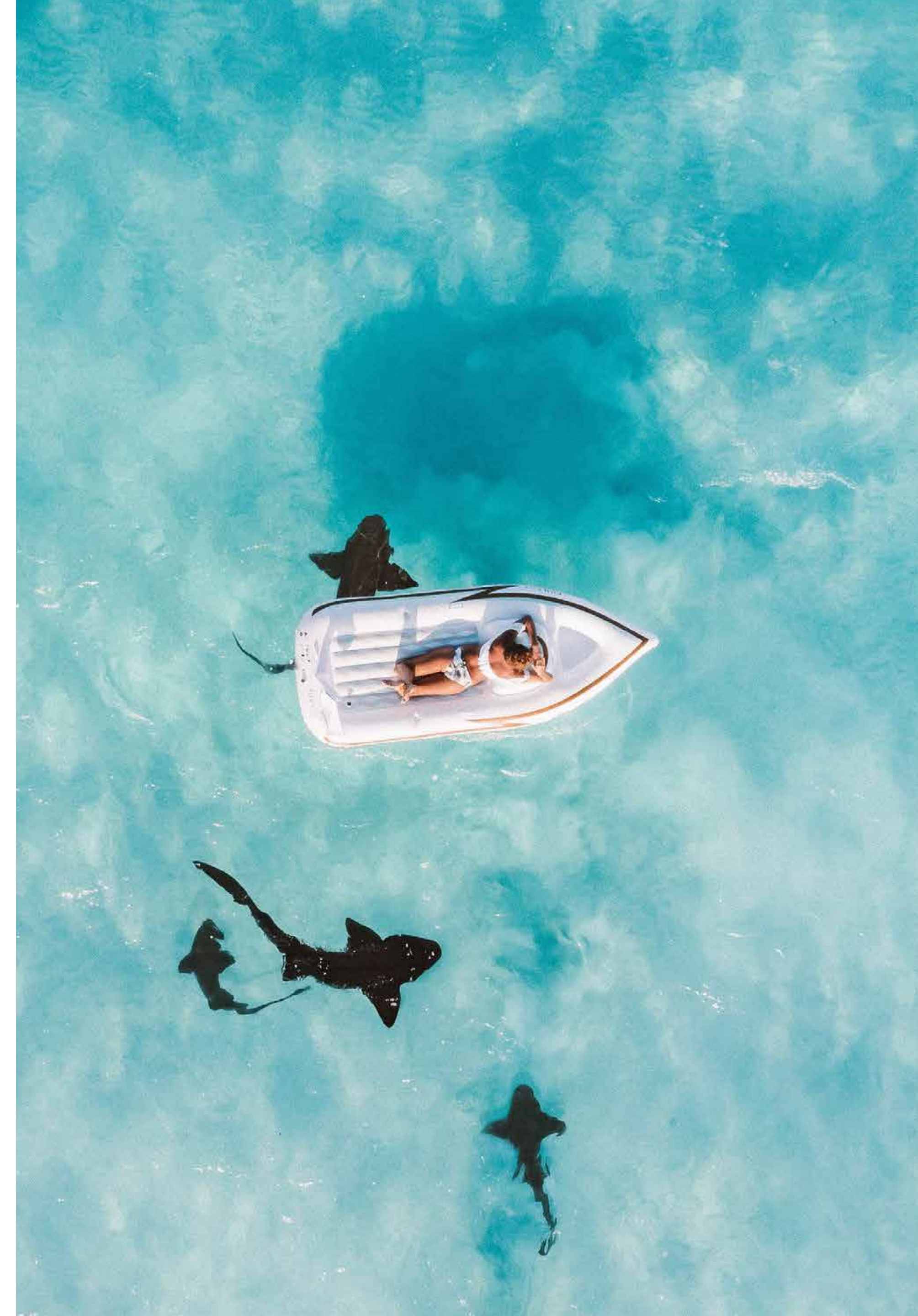
SO WHAT: Many countries and cities are starting to see hosting remote workers and allowing them to participate in the local lifestyle as an opportunity to take advantage of a temporary influx of talent that may benefit local developments. Places that were previously considered primarily lifestyle-related tourist destinations are transforming into destinations for longer stays which are attractive to qualified officials. They can also create financial benefits through new service offerings linked to that particular target group. On a larger scale, entire countries can attract talent and develop better conditions for remote workers who want to live there for a limited period through strategic positions and by creating incentives for local actors to explore ways to make longer stays possible.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kaeliconforti/2020/12/19/how-to-work-remotely-in-the-bahamas-for-up-to-a-year/?sh=79a4a1925cf4>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2020/09/08/digital-nomad-the-new-and-cool-trend-of-working-from-paradise-or-anywhere-in-the-world/?sh=20bffba44246>

<https://www.bahamasbeats.com/>

<https://e-resident.gov.ee/nomadvisa/>



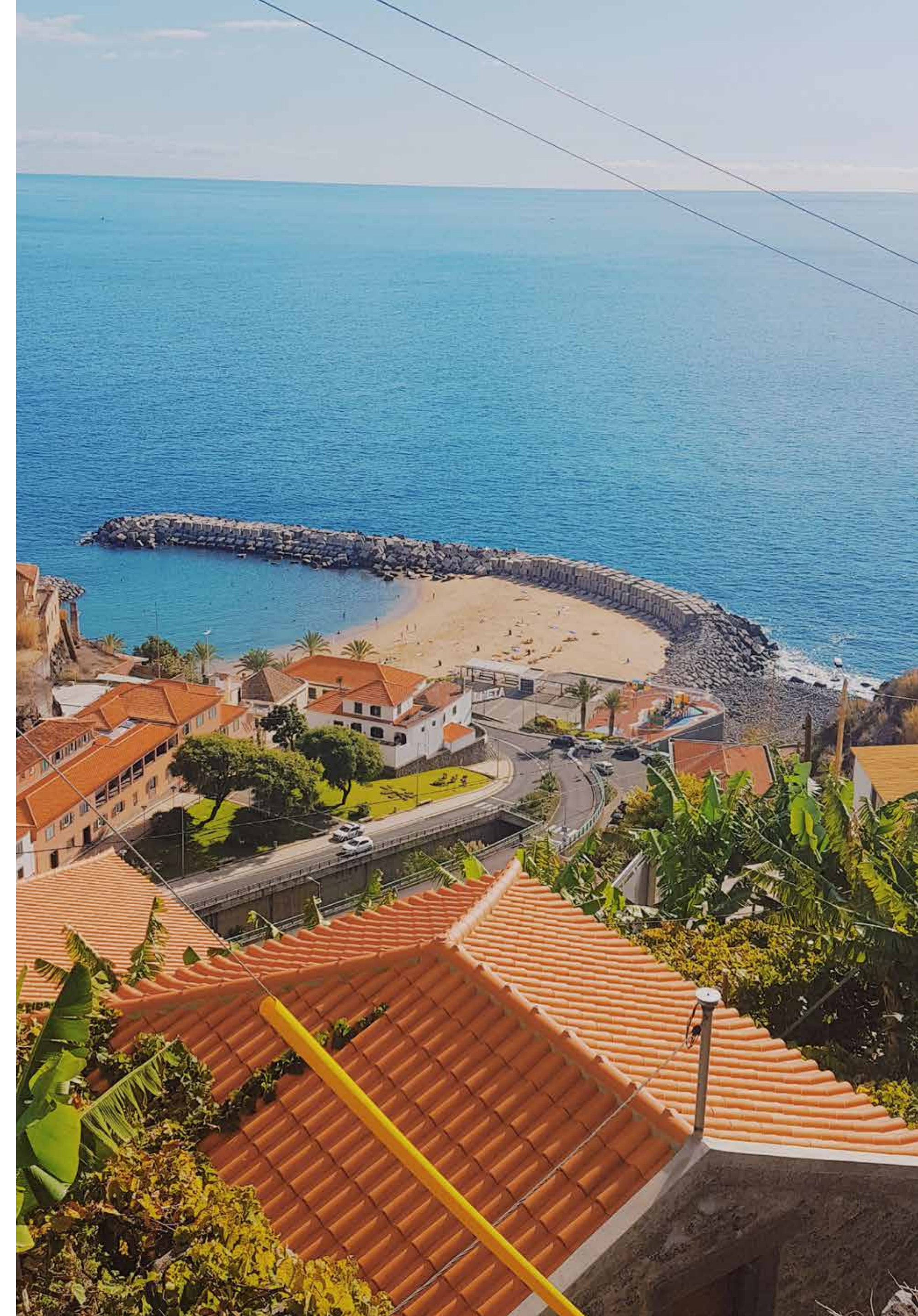
NOMAD CITIES

WHAT: Through a government initiative, the Portuguese island of Madeira has built a community entirely focused on digital nomads. There, they offer 100 places to incoming temporary residents. Five thousand people have already submitted applications for the initiative, which aims to bridge the seasons of the tourism industry and reduce the region's dependence on short-term visitors. The project has partnered with local hotel, real estate and car rental companies to create a package for visitors and offers them free workspace in the local cultural centre, as well as access to a Slack community and free WIFI from 8:00 to 22:00.

SO WHAT: Public Investments are being made to ensure that regions that have been completely dependent on incoming tourists can receive visitors who generate income for longer periods and even during the low season.

Regions and cities, many of which have suffered greatly from reduced visitors during the pandemic, understand that restructuring of the tourism industry is necessary to diversify income streams. Hotel companies can further develop their concepts to focus more on longer stays; and local communities can build infrastructure and services for the target group of remote workers. This may be the star of a long-term change in the tourism industry, which clearly revealed its weaknesses throughout this pandemic.

<https://www.euronews.com/travel/2021/01/29/europe-s-first-digital-nomad-village-is-opening-on-a-tiny-volcanic-island>



INFRASTRUCTURE FOR REMOTE WORK

WHAT: The co-living company Common has encouraged American cities to apply to become hubs for remote working and build combined co-working and co-living hubs to attract remote workers. Five cities have so far been selected for the project. They offer various financial incentives (usually \$ 10,000 or help with house purchases) and other support such as a free bike to long-term guests. The campaign was launched before the pandemic and will only be developed after it has subsided. To date, cities have received tens of thousands of applications from people looking for lower house prices and a better quality of life.

SO WHAT: The great interest, despite the interruption of the pandemic, shows the willingness of workers to move from large cities to continue full-time remote working. As an effect of the pandemic, an opportunity has been created for hotels, real estate companies and co-working hubs to develop and expand their operations by attracting long-distance, short- or long-term guests to their cities. There is a greater demand for cheaper housing than what large cities offer, so the market potential for developing rural hubs for remote workers could be considered a very good investment.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-26/how-small-cities-are-trying-to-lure-remote-workers>



CO-LIVING

WHAT: Co-living is a relatively new concept where visitors are offered accommodation in hotel-room-sized rooms, with or without bathrooms, and access to a shared kitchen, living room and community activities. In larger cities such as London, co-living is experiencing strong growth as a result of the current housing crisis and an increase in people joining the global digital nomad movement which encourages a flexible lifestyle. The cost is often cheaper than renting an apartment, and there is often also access to common workspaces so that the residents can have a desk, meeting room and internet connection to be able to work remotely. Generally, the target group for co-living have few possessions and are willing and able to living in many different countries around the world.

SO WHAT: Since the outbreak of the pandemic, interest in co-living and long-stay concepts has increased, especially among city dwellers who want to get away from isolation. It is widespread today in many cities and communities, ranging from capitals such as London and Stockholm, to smaller cities in the Canary Islands. In Sweden, we find it in the ski resort Åre, among other places. During the pandemic, a new phenomenon of "covid refugees" has emerged. Covid refugees move to countries like Sweden where restrictions are less severe than in their home country, or who escape lockdowns by moving to warmer climates and environments. While the trend may be temporary, with improved infrastructure and a greater focus on the target group there are indications it could continue long-term. Because this group often has few possessions, opportunities exist for development of sharing services, such as car or bicycle pools, which would also contribute to the local economy.

<https://www.fastighetsvarlden.se/notiser/dios-satsar-pa-nytt-colivingkoncept-are-forst-ut/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/sep/03/co-living-slutet-av-urban-ensamhet-eller-cynisk-företags-sovsalar>

<https://www.tf1.fr/tf1/sept-a-huit/videos/confinement-ces-francais-qui-font-du-teletravail-depuis-les-iles-kanarieöarna-03256659.html>

<https://fr.euronews.com/2020/11/20/l-archipel-des-canaries-pour-teletravailler-au-soleil>



EMERGENT COMMUNITIES

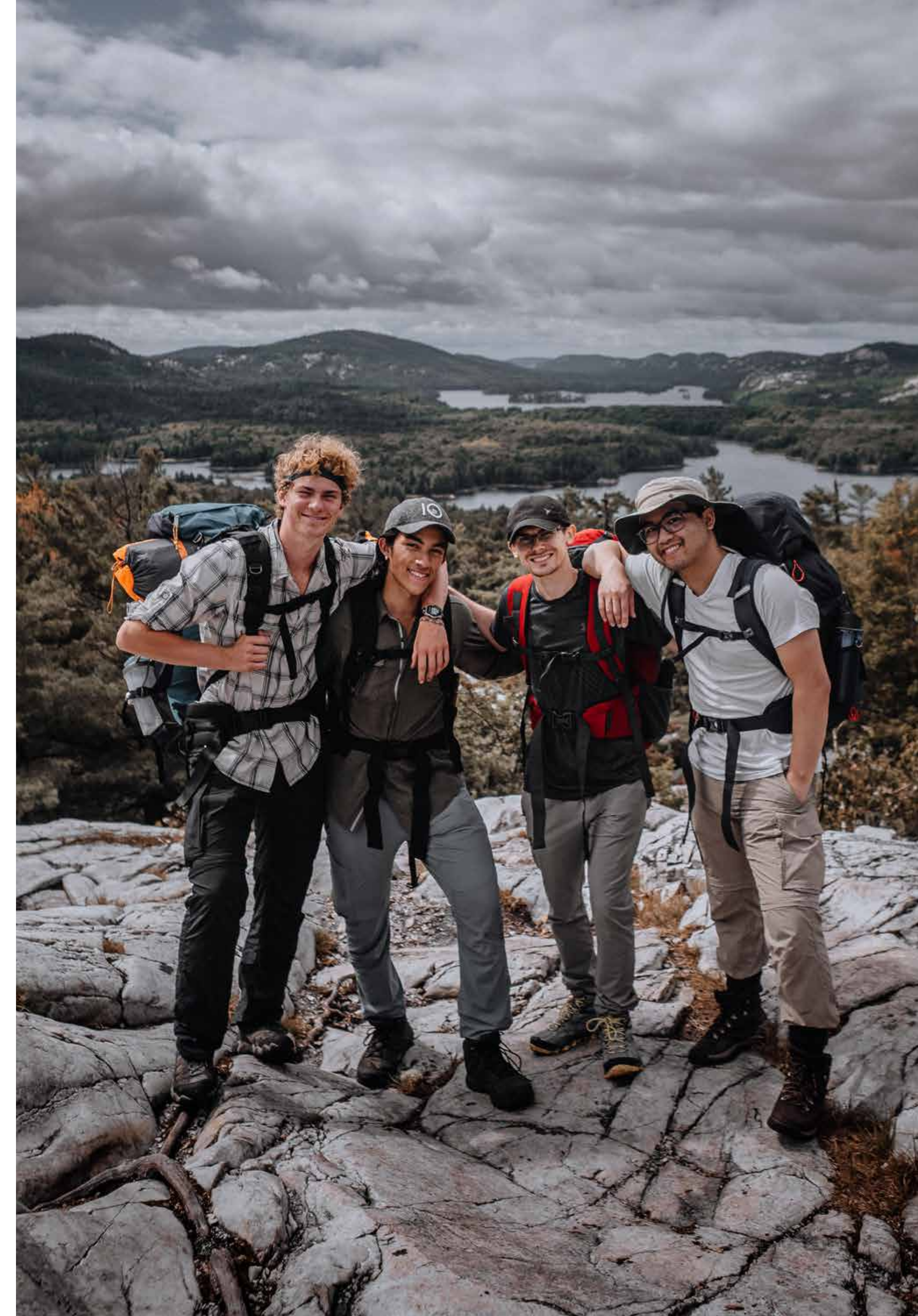
The signals here address the ways in which new movement patterns are enabled, and themselves shape community values. Offers centred around community and solidarity will help places attract workers.

WI-FI - TRIBE

WHAT: A “Wi-Fi tribe” is a group of digital nomads who travel around the world, share a home, and work together. Participants pay a membership to belong to a group when they travel and to cover housing costs. The price varies depending on the continent and accommodation, and the group chooses which cities they want to visit for a year. “The Tribe” builds the sense of community by dividing the participants into groups of 12 to 25 people so that they can work and venture together in the different countries.

SO WHAT: Communities that are independent of physical places are created by people who want to travel and experience different parts of the world. The tourism industry has been hit by a sharp decline in holiday visitors due to the pandemic, but the potential for remote workers is growing. The cities that will benefit most from the new target group of long-term visitors are those that not only invest in collective housing and workspaces, but also identify opportunities for collaborations with local communities and associations. By collaborating with local associations, activities facilitators, food producers, and cultural workers, new initiatives can be developed to meet the needs of remote workers who want to experience the daily life of the city they are visiting.

<https://wifitribe.co/how-it-works>

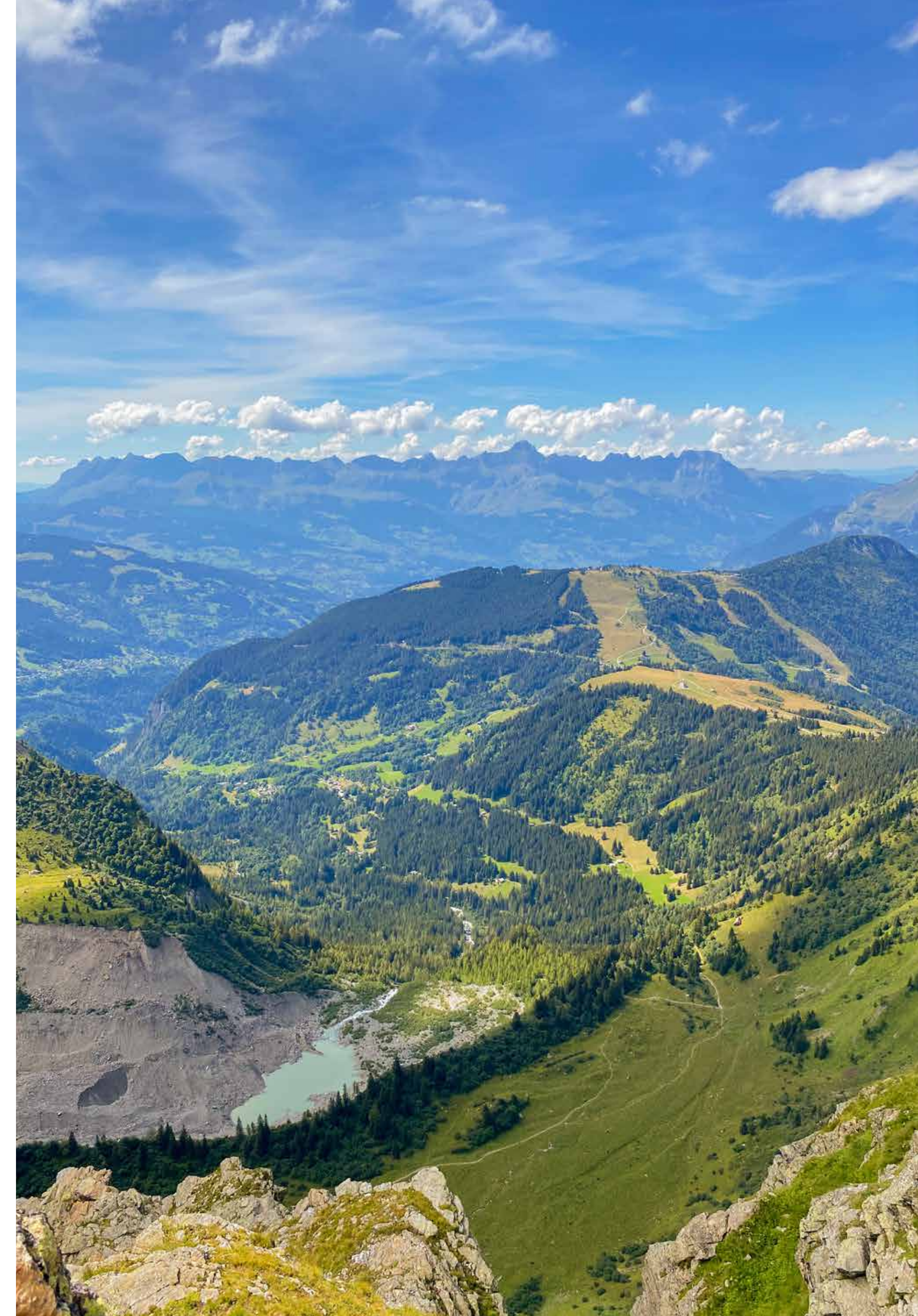


THE IDEAL GREEN PLACE

WHAT: Vivrovert (translation: Living in Greenery) is a website designed to help people in France who want to move to less densely populated areas. On the website, people already living in these areas can sell their properties, and city dwellers who are looking for housing can refine their search based on lifestyle criteria. For example, search criteria could include how close (or far) the place is to mountains or beaches; how good the broadband is; how much crime occurs; population density; weather conditions; and accessibility. Vivrovert is also a platform where those who are interested in moving can support and give advice to each other.

SO WHAT: Vivrovert is an easy way for people to find the perfect place to live outside the major cities of France. The community behind the service also helps people who want to move by lowering the thresholds so that it becomes easier and less intimidating: there is support and advice from those who have already gone through the change. It encourages people to stay in France, while at the same time having the opportunity to change their lifestyle. The local ambassadors and community play a crucial role that no marketing campaign in the world can surpass.

<https://vivrovert.fr>



DEVELOPING NORWAY'S ISLAND WORLD

WHAT: Træna is a small island with 500 inhabitants, 60 km from the mainland of Northern Norway. The island stimulates its local development by inviting international individuals to live there temporarily, for a shorter or longer period of time, and helps them to develop projects in various categories such as art, gastronomy, business, anthropology or photography. The goal is to develop the island community in an innovative, creative and sustainable way, with contributions from both residents and visitors. Arctic Coworking Lodge is a combined co-living and co-working hub that has been established on Lofoten, Norway, to attract digital nomads to the adventurous life there, with surfing, climbing, skiing and hiking. They have also opened a small café to create a more social and creative exchange of ideas among the remote workers. It has become popular with digital nomads who sometimes get their on their own boats, and who stay for weeks or months at a time.

SO WHAT: Small communities can benefit from remote workers and the digital nomad trend by attracting these temporary residents who can participate in, and contribute to, the development of society. Essentially these communities are benefiting both economically and through a creative and diverse “brain gain”. All individuals who come there can contribute to local development through innovations or development for the benefit of the local community, while appreciating the lifestyle and activities of the various places. Through this grassroots-driven development, the places also get attention that benefits their marketing and they are often out and about around the world talking about how they have built up their community around the development of the place.

<https://airtraena.wordpress.com/english/>

<https://svenskanomader.se/arbetsliv/arctic-co-working-lodge-lockar-aventyrliga-digitala-nomader-till-lofoten/?fbclid=IwAR0cjOFmEDzfiEY90kVfy9oSLB-geM4fivMVd-a8>



SAVING VILLAGES

WHAT: Project Kaxås, Sollefteå's "broadband villages", and Falkenberg and Örnsköldsvik's empty houses in Sweden are all examples of resident-led initiatives. They are based on a desire to create growth in villages, to save or develop the local schools, shops and other socially important functions. The village of Kaxås for instance was initiated to save the school, and plays on its strong focus on sustainability, outdoor life, and good conditions for remote working. The concept of Broadband Villages was tested near Sollefteå, where two or three households from a local community attempted to be as self-sufficient as possible with a good broadband connection allowing them to work remotely. The project also aimed to reduce emissions from commuting and enable local economy outside cities. Falkenberg and Örnsköldsvik are two examples of municipalities that carry out a survey of vacant houses. Individuals who do not use their old family farm or holiday home are encouraged to rent/sell them to new residents, which improves life in, and the image of, the countryside. Entrepreneurs, who are often attracted from the cities, play an important role in the development of the local area.

SO WHAT: The above initiatives are all based on a desire to recreate rural communities, and make them more attractive to city dwellers who want a sustainable and active lifestyle close to nature. With remote work becoming more common and accepted, there is a focus on basic needs such as a good Internet connections. Local communities of people who can work remotely is becoming a value-adding proposition for rural and regional areas. Villages can benefit greatly from smaller investments in digital infrastructure to develop their otherwise declining local communities, as remote workers increasingly want to live outside the big cities. This also contributes to regional development and sustainability goals, not only by reducing the need for commuting, but also by building the local community and economy as people spend more time where they live.

<https://projektkaxas.se/>

<https://www.land.se/landkoll/kartlaggning-av-odehus-gav-falkenberg-nya-invanare/>

<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/halland/vill-locka-foretagare-till-tomma-hus-pa-landsbygden>

<https://arkitekten.se/nyheter/staden-har-borjat-spela-ut-sin-roll-som-livsmiljo/>



REDESIGNING REGIONS

WHAT: Lozere is a quiet area of central France that recently launched a campaign to attract remote workers to move to the region, while encouraging local farmers and businesses to develop through digitalisation. They actively support the growth of small businesses in the region, especially in the smaller communities. There is a special focus on developing local food production, digital technology and the use of technology in health-care and other areas. What has been seen is that the growth of local companies has been a decisive factor in enabling a normally functioning society during the pandemic. It will also provide long-term benefits for Lozere. The region helps families to settle there by helping to find work, housing and access to other community functions and services.

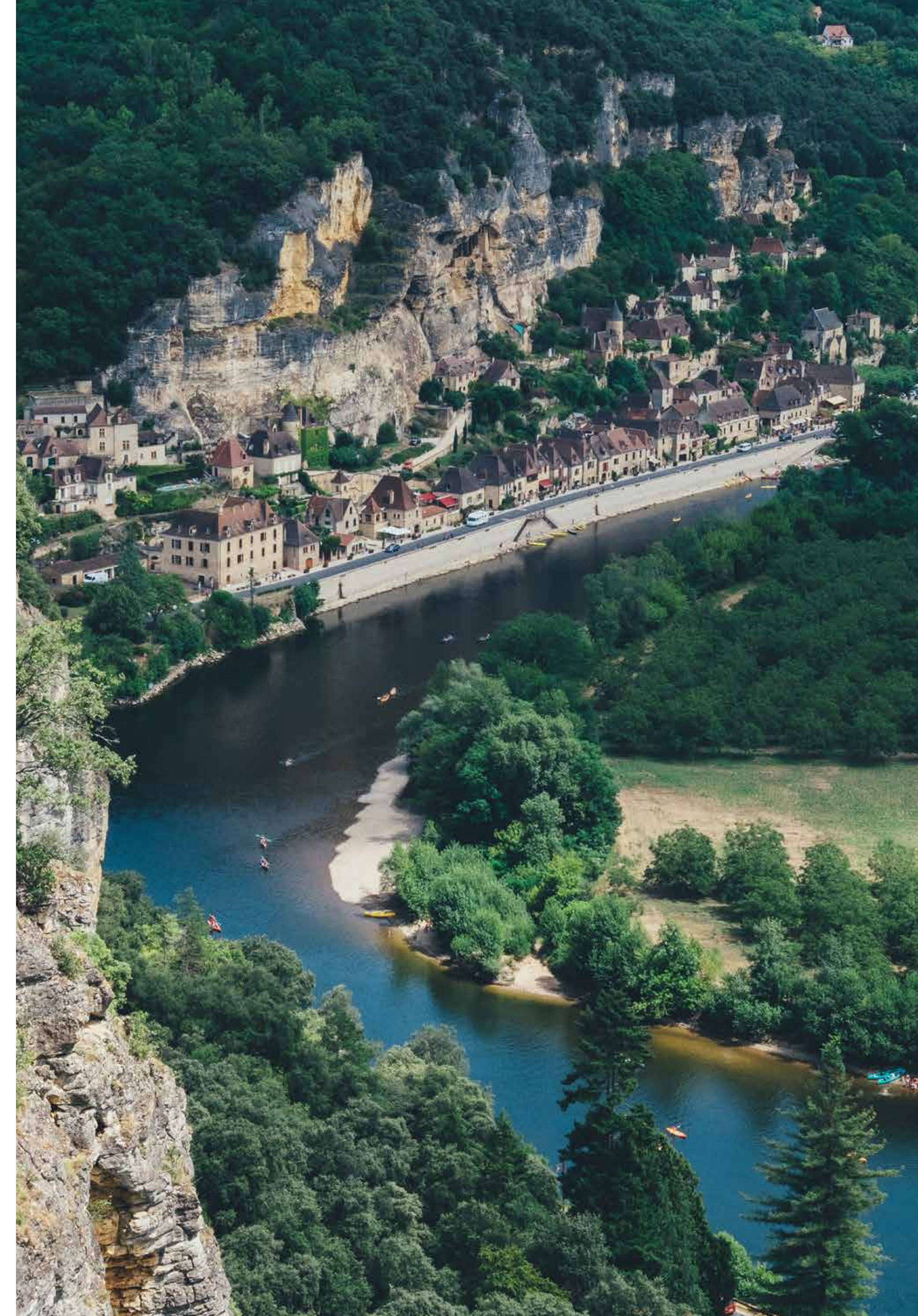
SO WHAT: In smaller and more isolated communities the corona crisis has increased the need for digital support in health, culture, legal support, and remote working, among other things. Concurrent to the development of self-sufficiency, these communities also want to attract more residents and potentially generate better returns on local investments. Developing and growing local communities and production decreases the isolation and dependency of these communities on larger support structures, and makes them more resilient during crises. Larger local investments in infrastructure for remote working and the digitization of societal functions can thus create benefits for regional development.

<http://lozere.fr/lamenagement-du-territoire/nouvelles-technologies/le-teletravail.html>

<http://lozerenouvellevie.com/topicality/lozere-developpement-laureat-fabriques-de-territoire/>

<http://solozere.com/>

<http://lozere-developpement.com/>



NEW INVESTMENT PATTERNS

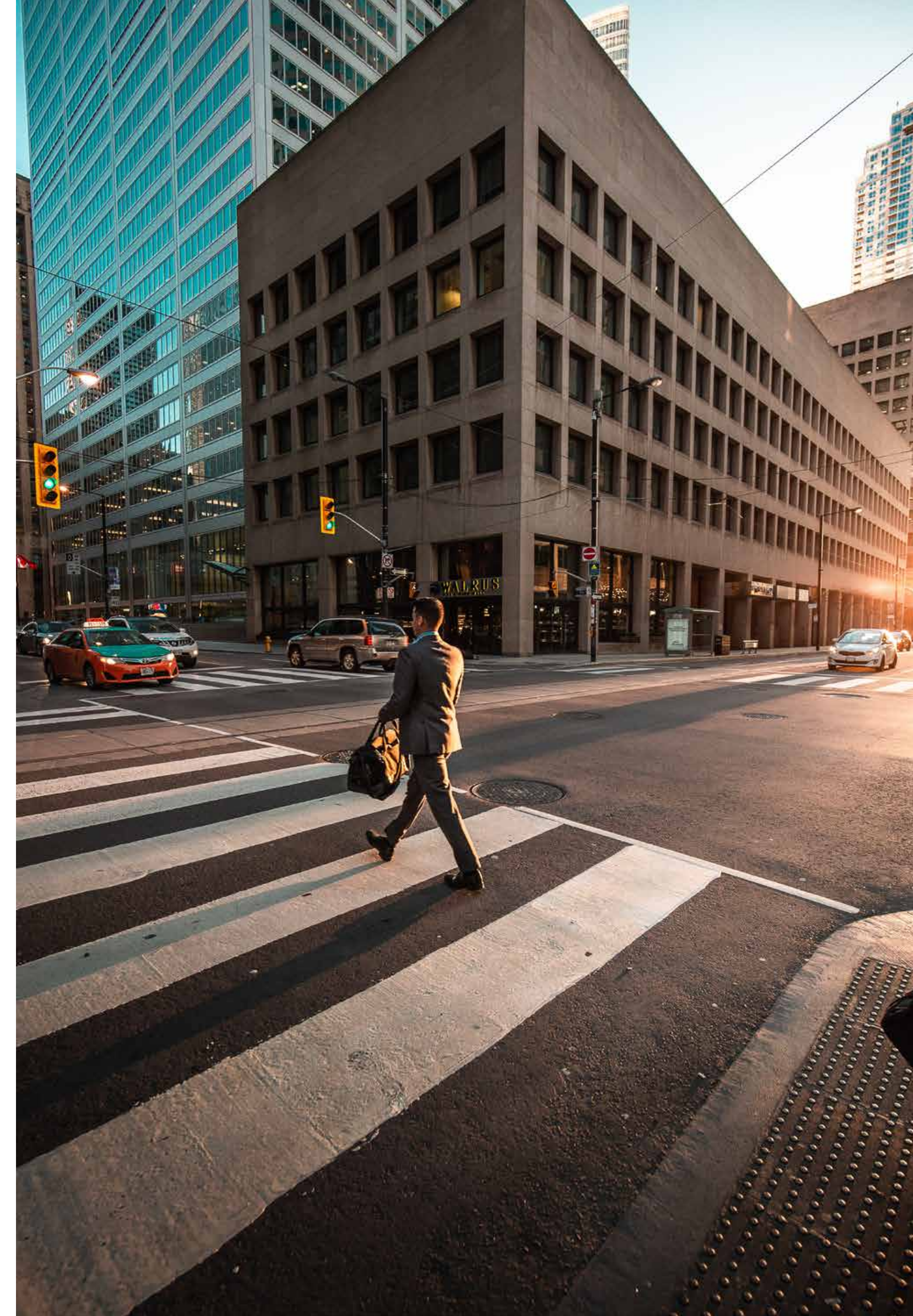
This cluster addresses how larger corporations are reacting and taking advantage of emerging work habits. This cluster shows three dynamics at local, national, and global scales.

DOWNSIZING THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

WHAT: Wellington and Auckland in New Zealand are both experiencing strong relocation from their central business districts. The Bank of New Zealand has reduced its branches by a third and Contact Energy (one of New Zealand's largest energy, electricity and broadband providers) has closed offices in Auckland and Wellington after implementing remote working permanently. Other large companies are also moving from the city centre to the suburbs.

SO WHAT: Reducing office space or closing offices reflects a company's permanent transition from working in the city to working closer to home instead. This is no longer a phase but a long-term trend that is beginning to take shape. It is particularly interesting to see in New Zealand because the country has so far been one of the least affected during the pandemic. As a result, future investments in office space may be reduced as they no longer need to accommodate individual work, but instead focus on activity-based creative collaborations, and business districts are relaxed in favour of a more sustainable, green and multifunctional urban environment.

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/big-business-moving-nz-s-two-largest-cities-work-home-trend-ramps-up>



RELOCATIONS FROM SILICON VALLEY

WHAT: The year 2020 saw major relocations from Silicon Valley giants making headlines. Tech companies like Hewlett-Packard and Oracle have announced moving their headquarters to Austin and Houston, Texas, and Elon Musk has also threatened to leave the Bay Area. Texas is not the only emerging tech destination, with states like Arizona, Florida, or Nevada, appealing to start-ups. At the same time, studies nuance the actual trends showing that 96.9% of startups stayed in the Bay Area during 2020, and of those that changed city 12% relocated to Texas, 21% to New York City, and 21% to other locations in California.

So what is the reason for these relocations? Much has been said in the news about California's unwelcoming taxes and high cost of living driving companies and employees to curb their expenses through increased remote working. But these hubs didn't emerge overnight and Texas, which hosts NASA's headquarters and has invested in science and engineering programs, has been a major tech hub of 50 years. Miami, on the other hand, is already home to many Latin-American headquarters.

SO WHAT: If the reasons behind these relocations are ambiguous, there is however a noticeable shift from belonging to Silicon Valley being a must, to the emergence of a variety of hubs which offer different synergies and a better quality of life for employees. A lot of this is accelerated by opportunities for remote work that renew the emphasis on home location instead of office location for employees. One implication is that a more level playing field is emerging – meaning that a range of places now may have the opportunity to position themselves as up-and-coming innovation hubs.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/02/tech/silicon-valley-hpe-to-texas/index.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/28/opinion/silicon-valley-exodus.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/28/opinion/silicon-valley-exodus.html>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/tech-companies-leaving-san-francisco-exaggerated-telstra-survey-austin-texas-2021-3?r=US&IR=T>



BACKSHORING

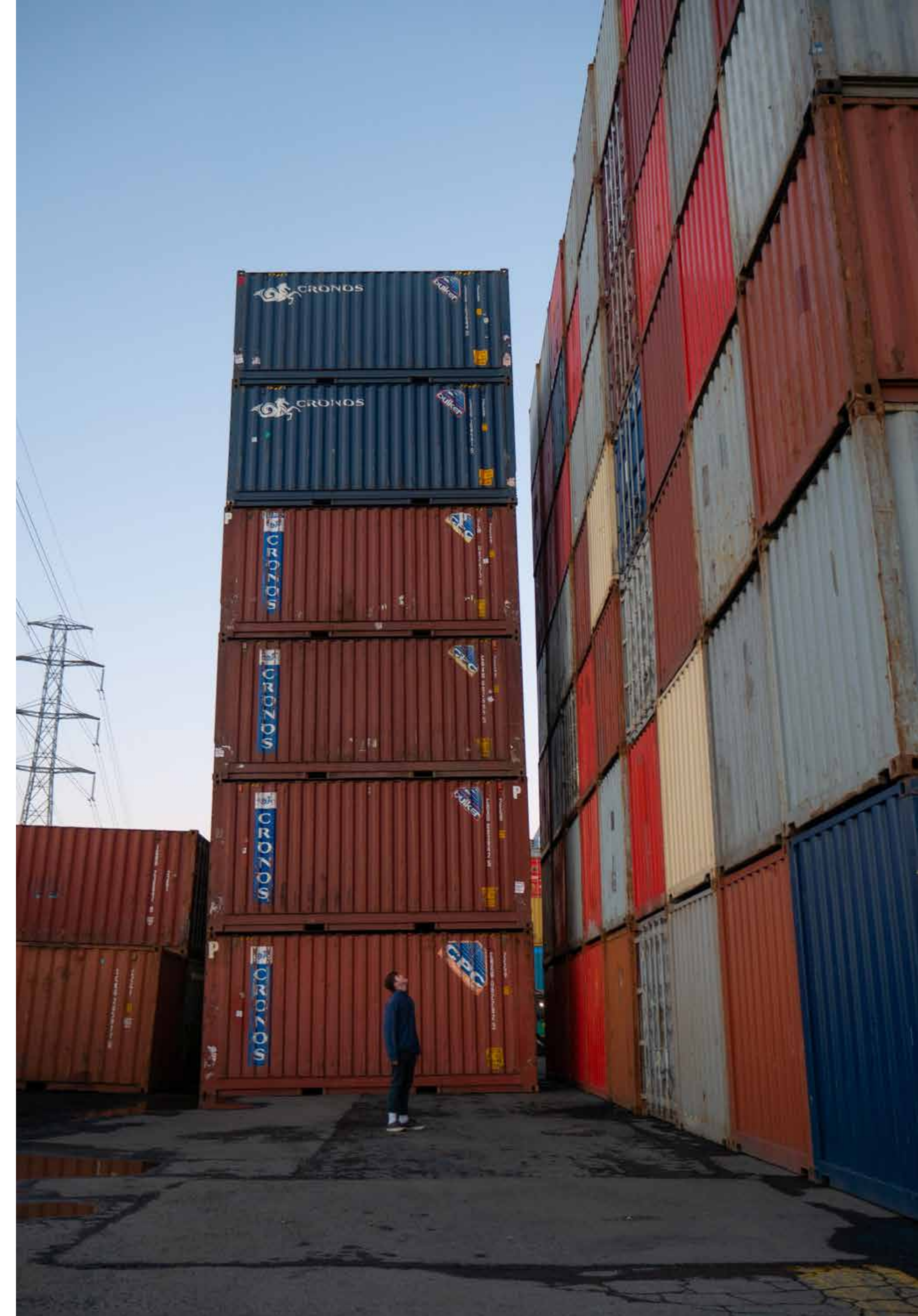
WHAT: In February 2021, Swedish optic company Synsam announced the relocation of its manufacturing activities from China to Östersund – a 64,000 inhabitants municipality – in Sweden, thus creating 200 jobs. This happened at a time when “backshoring” – the process of bringing productive activities “home” – made it to the top of the European political agenda. With COVID-19 driven supply shortages, and trade rivalry between China and the USA, backshoring is seen as a way to secure and ensure the resilience of value chains from exogenous shocks such as pandemics, extreme weather events, and political conflicts, while also dealing with concerns around technological sovereignty. The French government, for example, as part of its recovery plan has launched an “open call for relocalisation projects” backed by a 1 billion Euro subsidy envelope. In terms of competitiveness, manufacturing costs are now less relevant for companies, especially in light of the environmental agenda.

SO WHAT: COVID-19 has highlighted a number of issues of global supply chains and placed unprecedented pressures on the security of companies and nations. If appropriate incentives are in place, the backshoring of production plants won’t necessarily affect economic growth and employment. While many companies use relocations as opportunities to automate manufacturing process, they could also support small and rural municipalities’ attractiveness strategy. Becoming an attractive location for remote workers may become a viable strategy to also attract backshoring activities, as investments increasingly follow talent and workforce.

<https://jamtlandstidning.se/nyheter-naringsliv-ostersund/200-nya-jobb-till-ostersund-nar-synsam-flyttar-hem-fran-asien-det-har-betyder-ofattbart-mycket/103244>

<https://www.latribune.fr/opinions/tribunes/qui-seront-les-grands-gagnants-des-relocalisations-en-europe-878712.html>

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/653626/EXPO_STU\(2021\)653626_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/653626/EXPO_STU(2021)653626_EN.pdf)



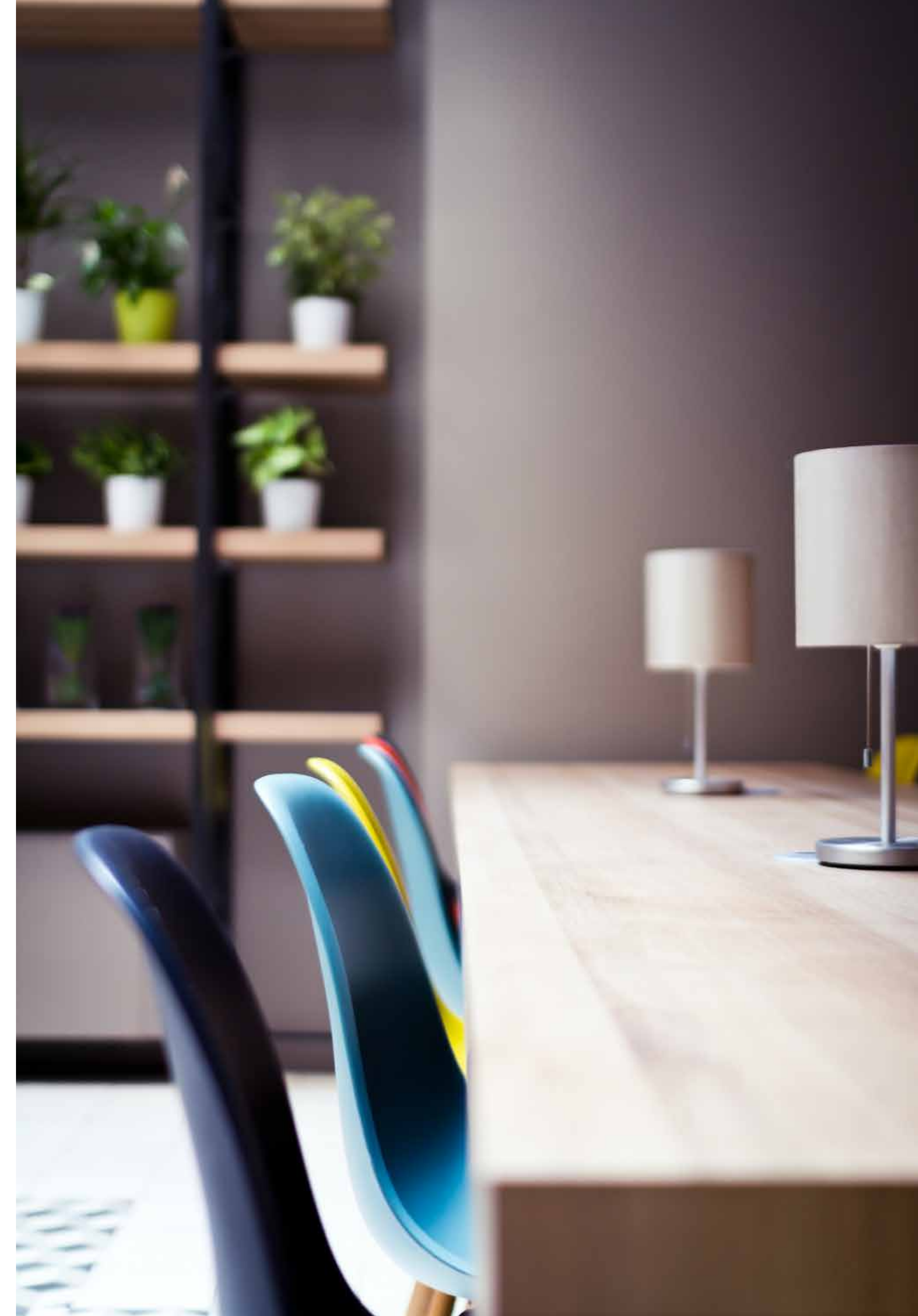
REINVENTING PLACES

These signals address new thinking around empty buildings and city centres, and how they can be reused to become more useful and attractive locations in large cities and small towns alike.

HYBRID PLACES

WHAT: The past decade has seen the emergence of “hybrid” places designed to facilitate a diversity of purposes, uses, and users. They can integrate production and office spaces like co-working spaces, or fablabs, public services, retail, cultural, and social activities. The city of Genk in Belgium offers access to housing, public spaces, and restaurants, and has turned a former coal mine into a cultural destination as an incubator for artists and creative entrepreneurs. In the rural French region of Creuse, the “café de l’espace” (“space café”) serves drinks and food like any café, but also welcomes schools for activities, ensures postal services during the day (after public postal office closed), and in the evening hosts artists and inhabitants for concerts. Similarly, Western Africa has seen the development of fablabs, democratizing access to new technologies and entrepreneurship. Conceived and financed through collaborative processes, hybrid places are meant to bring value to their locations.

SO WHAT: Hybrid places can transform territories such as shrinking or growing villages, empty city centres, or de-industrialising areas, by offering new activities and opportunities to citizens in one location. They also promote new forms of socialisation and more economic opportunities. Municipalities could include hybrid places in their talent attraction strategies, offering new residents and remote workers with creative meeting places that match and complement their values, such as solidarity and community building, innovation, dynamism, as so forth.

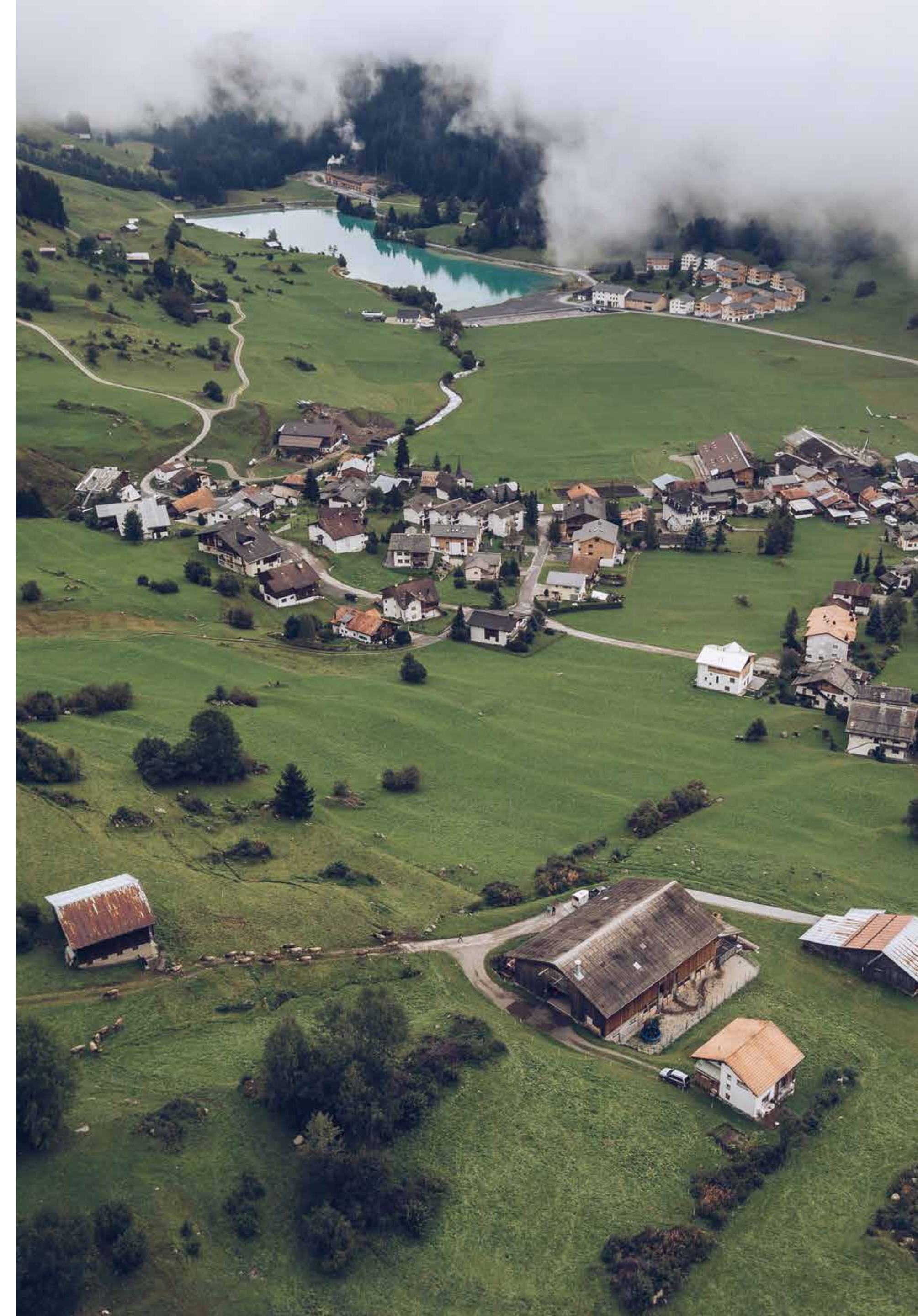


RURAL REVITALIZATION PLANS

WHAT: Against a backdrop of urbanisation and suburbanization trends in European countries, town-centres of rural towns and villages were degrading with buildings being left vacant and property owners struggling to finance essential renovations. The relocation of citizens to rural areas during the COVID-19 pandemic, and an increased awareness of and interest in the rural way of life, has driven national governments to launch new plans to revitalise rural towns and villages. In Japan, an urban exodus of remote workers in their 20s and 30s has resulted in the country's newly elected Prime Minister, Yoshihide Suga, making the revitalisation of Japan's countryside a key goal for his time in office. Similarly, the Irish government plans to create 400 remote working hubs in derelict rural buildings, as part of a five-year rural development policy. "As we recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, an unparalleled opportunity now exists to realize the objectives of achieving balanced regional and rural development," declared Ireland's Rural and Community Development Minister.

SO WHAT: These ambitious plans not only acknowledge the renewed interest in rural places and spaces, but also the untapped potentials of their built environment for accommodating new forms of living, working, and creating. The challenge for rural municipalities will then not only be to attract remote workers, but also to create conditions allowing them to add value and contribute to the local community and its development.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/11/japan-tokyo-cities-city-countryside-pandemic-coronavirus-covid-19/>



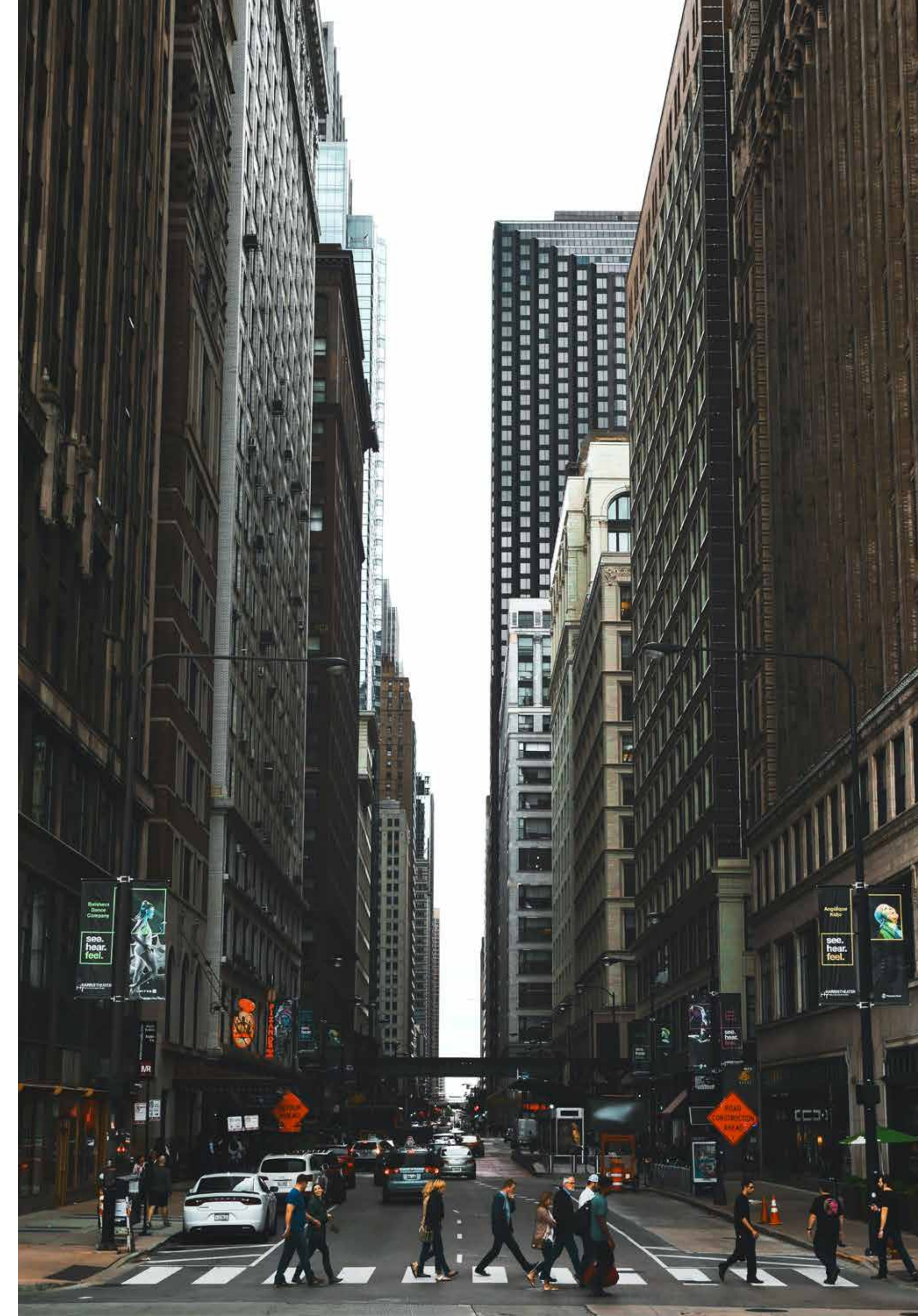
REPURPOSING CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

WHAT: At an urban scale, the effects of the pandemic are particularly visible in central business districts (CBDs), where deserted streets and offices seem to be here to stay. Despite the progress of vaccination programs, occupancy rates remain low. In the USA's 10 largest urban CBDs, visits by employees stand at 27% of pre-pandemic levels. The future of mono-functional urban areas is being challenged by the delocalisation of companies and an increase in remote working. Will CBDs become the industrial areas of the 80s? Already governments are working on solutions to repurpose empty buildings. The South Korean government has announced it will buy empty hotels and offices and transform them into 114,000 homes. Singapore is also pushing a plan to convert offices and excess car parks into residences, shops, restaurants, and even indoor farms.

SO WHAT: The loss of attraction of CBDs shows the demand from workers for more flexible and creative workplaces. In a post-pandemic world, remote working doesn't only mean "home-office". Instead, "the office of the future will likely be less a single building in a single location (...) It is evolving into a 'network of spaces and services tied together with technology'." Because of their central locations in dense urban areas, the transformation of CBDs also needs to serve the management of social and environmental challenges met by cities.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-05-14/the-post-pandemic-future-of-central-business-districts>

<https://news.trust.org/item/20201201081716-r2efr>



CONTACT INFORMATION

FUTURE PLACE LEADERSHIP:
ma@futureplaceleadership.com
+46 70-867 36 34
futureplaceleadership.com

THE REMOTE LAB:
maria@remotelab.io
+46 70-380 00 07
remotelab.io

Future Place
Leadership™

THE
REMOTE
LAB