

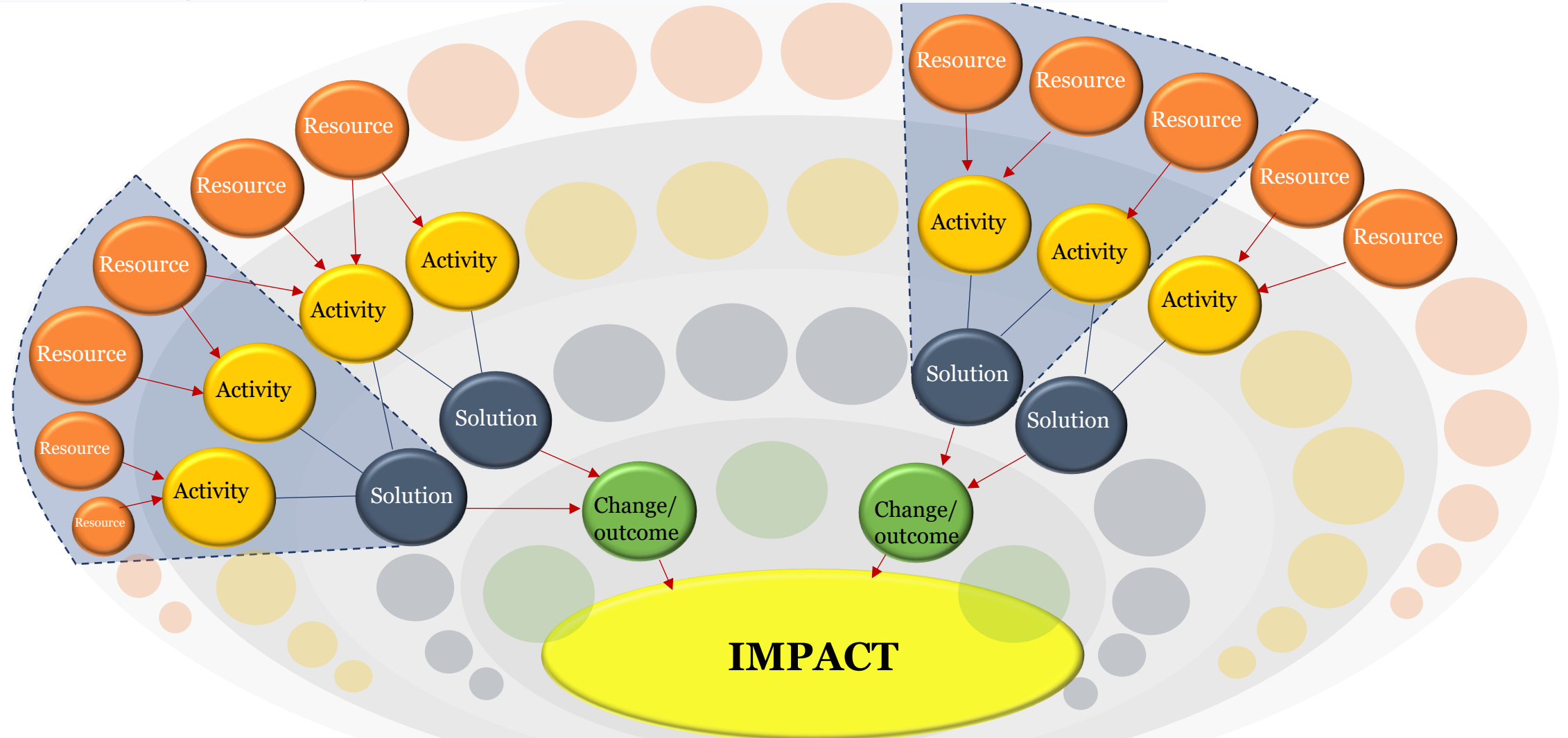
The Role of Regions in Enabling the Formation of Learning Communities

Why regions matter?

Sari Rautio 21.11.2025



Impact is created in a system – cities and regions are orchestrators and building the ecosystem - the helix model



European policy is converging on this place-based view.

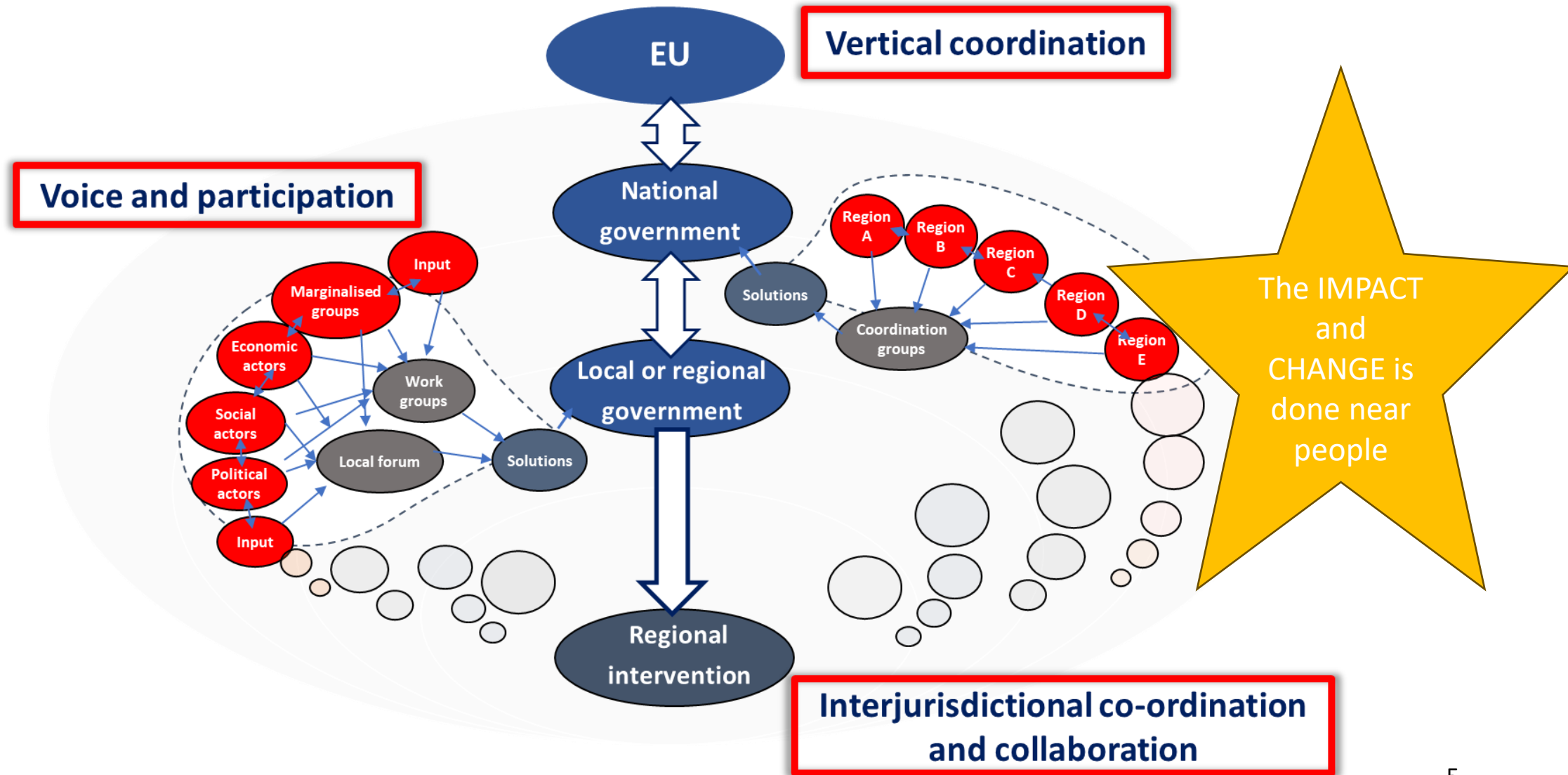
twin pressures of **technological disruption** and **demographic change** are re-shaping
how people learn, work, and participate in civic life

Where the life happens?

Learning communities as regional ecosystems

- **The Learning City/Region.** Learning benefits are social and economic, accruing to people, firms, and public bodies; the “learning city” is therefore a place-based framework that links providers with community needs across the life-course. Regions translate this into neighborhood-level access, intergenerational participation, and stronger ties between learning and wellbeing.
- **The Knowledge Triangle (KT).** Synergy among education, research, and innovation is not incidental—it must be deliberately organized in spaces and processes that let pupils, VET learners, students, researchers, entrepreneurs, and officials co-create and test solutions. KT becomes tangible in regions through co-located facilities, shared staff, joint curricula, and challenge-driven project portfolios.
- **Innovation ecosystems.** Effective regional ecosystems provide physical, social, and digital learning spaces—innovation gardens, living labs, challenge platforms—where learning and innovation reinforce each other. Regions are the scale at which such spaces can be integrated into land-use, procurement, and investment decisions.

Improving governance - and impact



What regions actually do: eight enabling roles

1. Orchestrate the Knowledge Triangle locally
2. Make learning visible, portable, and continuous
3. Build the digital backbone for learning
4. Use procurement and public projects as learning engines
5. Stand up Regional Innovation Valleys with an education core
6. Attract and retain talent
7. Invest in learning spaces—physical, social, and digital
8. Tell a coherent story and measure what matters

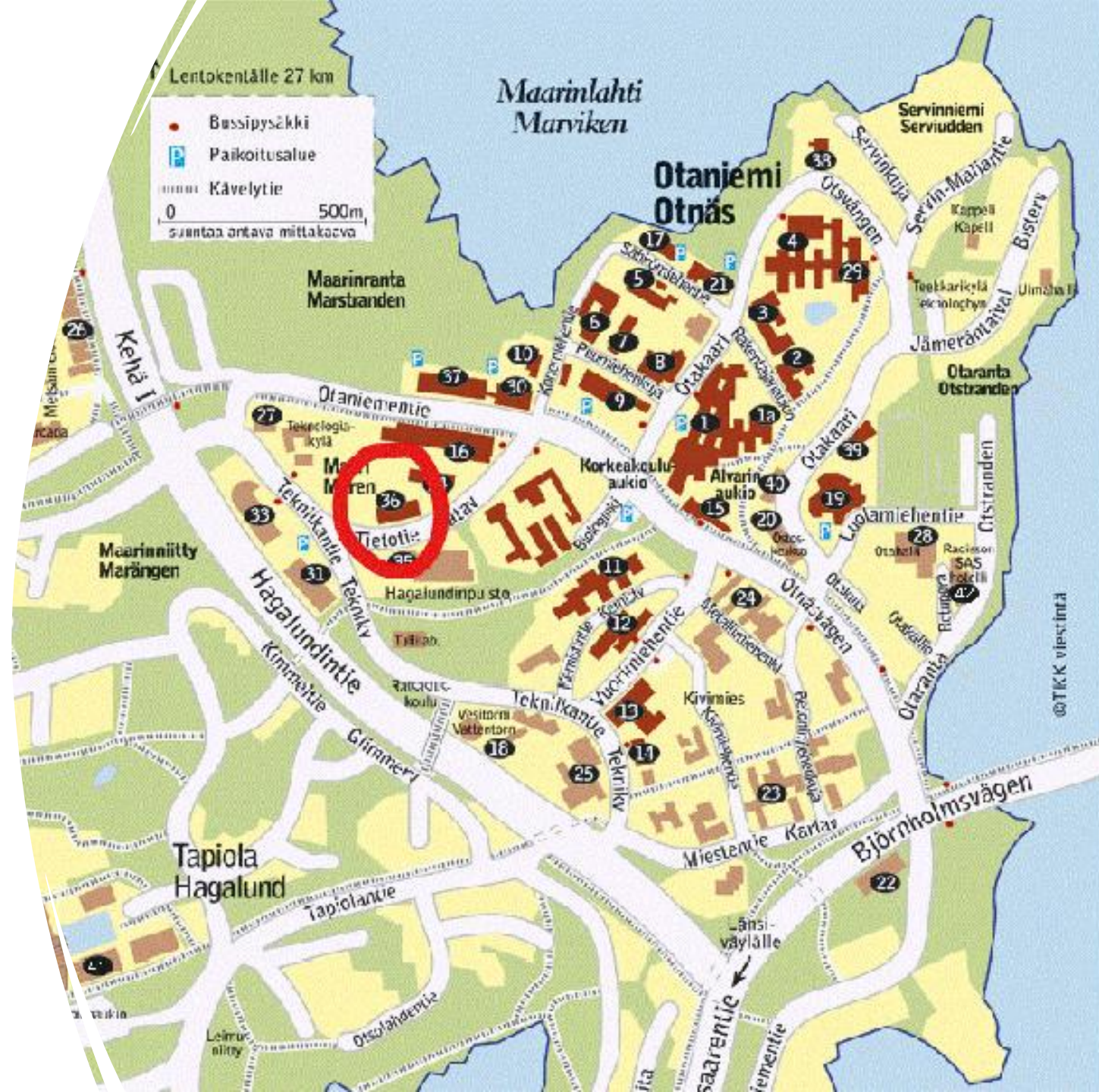
Case insight: **Espoo** as a regional learning community

Map **Digital Compass** targets to local population baselines;

Sign **University Compacts** for civic engagement and lifelong learning;

Design a **Regional Innovation Valley** with an education spine; and

Launch a **Talent Partnership** to retain and attract learners and graduates.



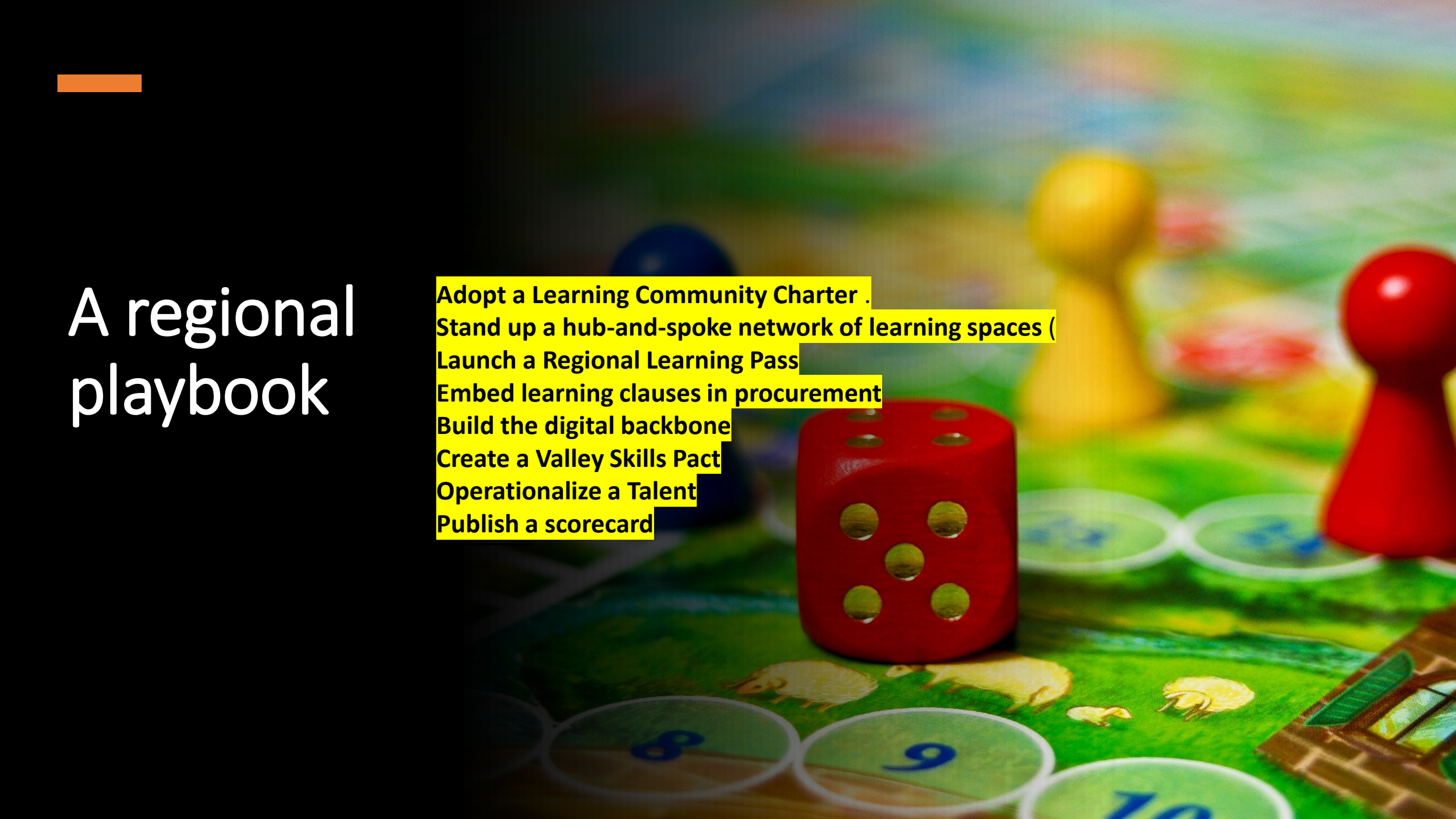
What changes when regions lead?

When regions act as ecosystem orchestrators:

- **Learners** encounter relevant, engaging pathways; adults see on-ramps back into learning tied to **local opportunities**—consistent with evidence that community-based and intergenerational learning improves **health and wellbeing as well as employability**.
- **Providers** align programs **with real demand**
- **Employers and SMEs?**
- **Public value** increases: regional projects double as learning platforms; **social inclusion and competitiveness** advance together—the central promise of the STEM Plan and Digital Compass.



A regional playbook



Adopt a Learning Community Charter .
Stand up a hub-and-spoke network of learning spaces (
Launch a Regional Learning Pass
Embed learning clauses in procurement
Build the digital backbone
Create a Valley Skills Pact
Operationalize a Talent
Publish a scorecard



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**Nobody can do everything
but everybody can do
something**

#together

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