



JCI GENK

IDEAS THAT BECAME IMPACT.

26 PROJECTS / ONE ENTERPRISING SPIRIT

WELCOME TO GENK

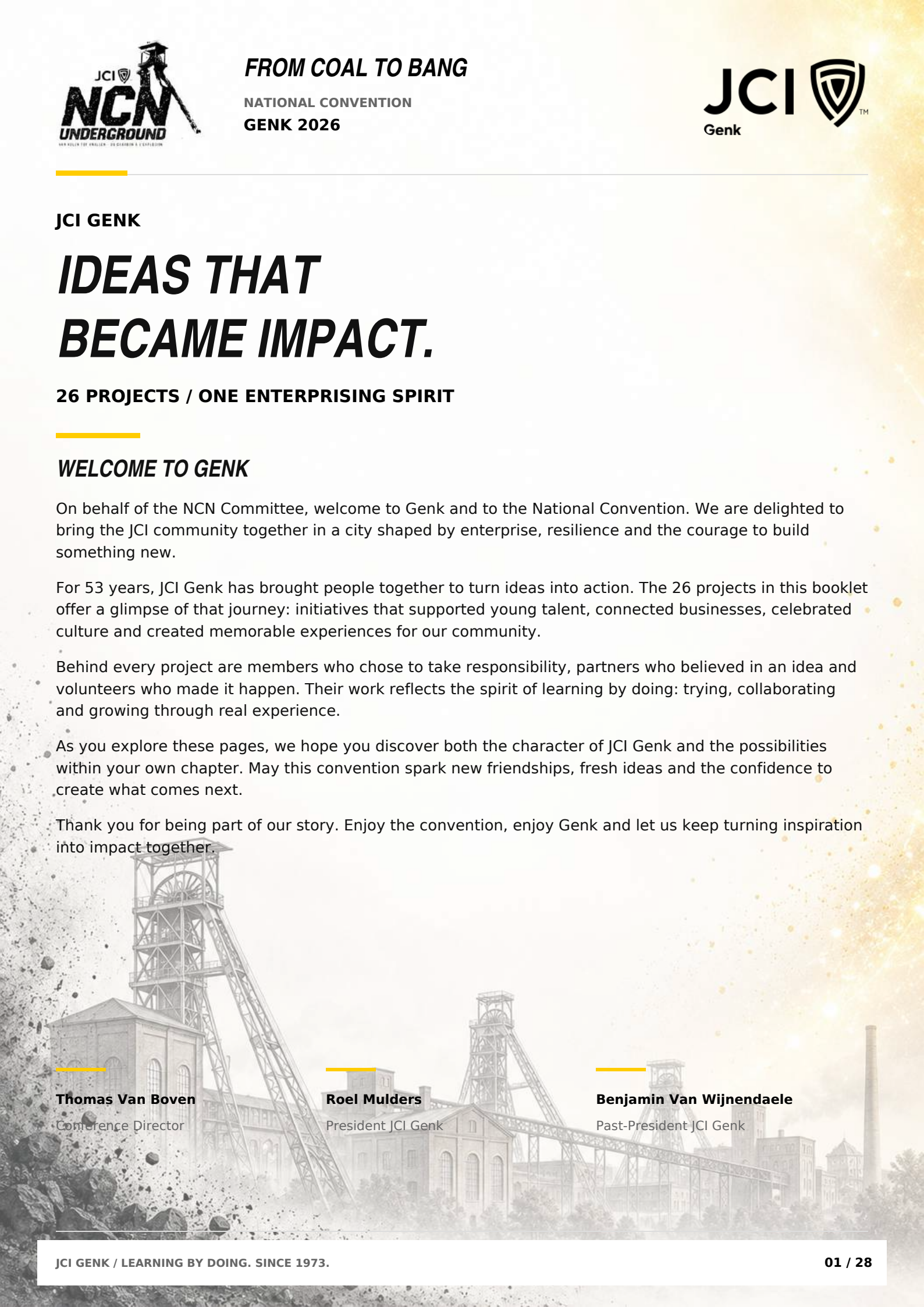
On behalf of the NCN Committee, welcome to Genk and to the National Convention. We are delighted to bring the JCI community together in a city shaped by enterprise, resilience and the courage to build something new.

For 53 years, JCI Genk has brought people together to turn ideas into action. The 26 projects in this booklet offer a glimpse of that journey: initiatives that supported young talent, connected businesses, celebrated culture and created memorable experiences for our community.

Behind every project are members who chose to take responsibility, partners who believed in an idea and volunteers who made it happen. Their work reflects the spirit of learning by doing: trying, collaborating and growing through real experience.

As you explore these pages, we hope you discover both the character of JCI Genk and the possibilities within your own chapter. May this convention spark new friendships, fresh ideas and the confidence to create what comes next.

Thank you for being part of our story. Enjoy the convention, enjoy Genk and let us keep turning inspiration into impact together.



Thomas Van Boven
Conference Director

Roel Mulders
President JCI Genk

Benjamin Van Wijnendaele
Past-President JCI Genk

COMMUNITY

1970s

IK BEN GLIMBURGER

A smile that travelled across Limburg



Original project archive

A campaign for a friendlier Limburg, inspired by Action Smile. JCI Genk mobilised the press, public figures and professional groups to celebrate everyday courtesy. More than 20,000 cars carried the blue campaign sticker, turning a simple smile into a shared regional identity.

20,000+

cars carried the campaign sticker



COMMUNITY

1978

ZONDAGSMARKT

A city tradition, born from an idea



Original project archive

JCI Genk launched the Sunday Market in 1978, bringing market stalls, entertainment and local people together. The first opening even combined an outdoor mass with a performance by Eddy Wally. An ambitious volunteer initiative became one of Genk's best-known traditions.

SINCE 1978

an idea that became a city tradition



CULTURE

1980

PARK 80

Art stepped outside



Original archive image

An open-air sculpture exhibition at the Molenvijverpark brought art into a familiar public space. Park 80 invited people to encounter sculpture outdoors and showed how a young volunteer organisation could create something valuable for the whole community.

ART FOR ALL

sculpture in the Molenvijverpark

INITIATIVE. COLLABORATION. IMPACT.

LEADERSHIP

1981

GENK '81

Genk welcomed the national JCI family



Original project archive

Hosting the National Congress put Genk at the heart of JCI Belgium. Led during the presidency of Frits Vrancken, Genk '81 became a milestone remembered with pride by its organisers. A major event brought local teamwork onto a national stage.

GENK ON THE MAP

a milestone national congress

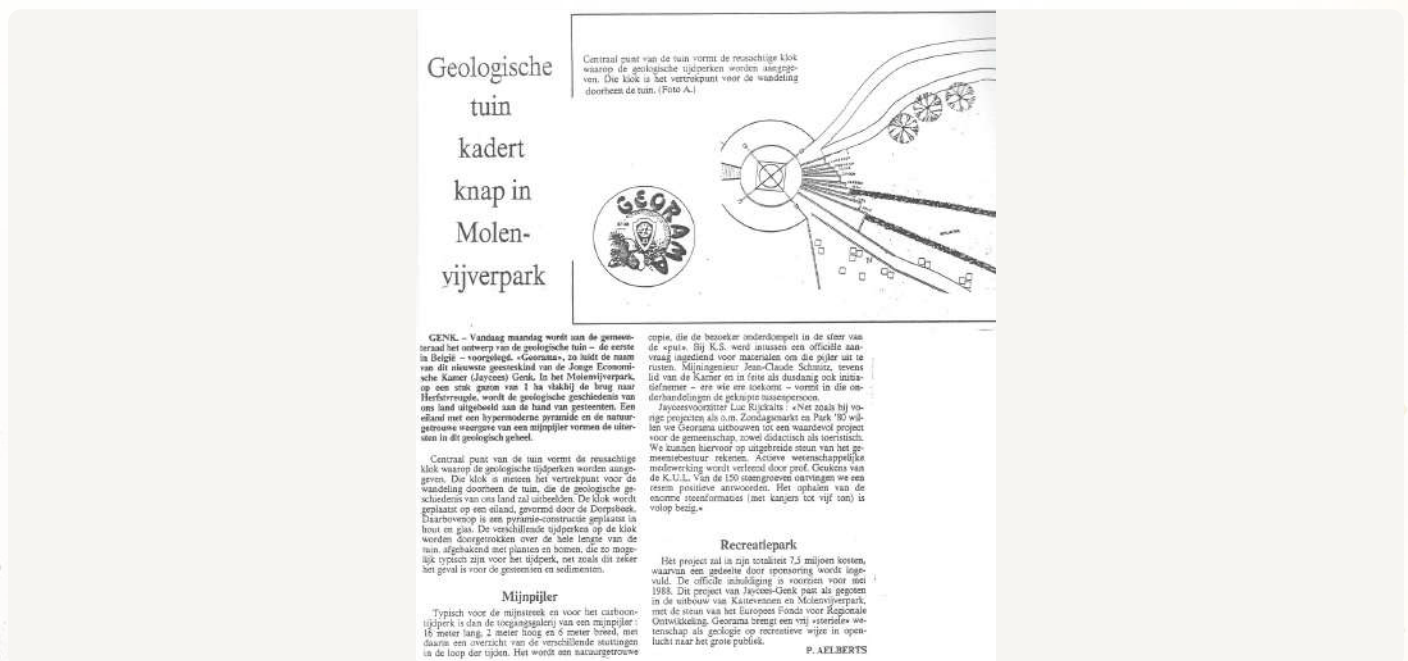


COMMUNITY

1988

GEORAMA

Making deep time tangible



Early Georama design; photograph below is from the JCI Genk period archive

Georama translated geological history into an outdoor learning experience. JCI Genk's idea developed into a geological garden, opened at Kattevennen in 1988. The original archive preserves an early design for the Molenvijverpark: evidence of an ambitious concept taking shape.

570 MILLION YEARS

geological history made accessible



BUSINESS

1989

TOPLINK

Teamwork beyond the meeting room



Original project archive

Toplink connected Genk businesses through an unusual team challenge. Managers competed in activities including four-wheel driving and karting, with helicopter transfers between disciplines. The project turned business networking into an experience built on action, collaboration and a shared sense of adventure.

CONNECT BY DOING

business relationships through shared challenges



CULTURE

1992-1993

CLASSICS

An ambitious idea took the stage



Original project archive

Classics brought a major cultural production to the stage during Patrick Schreurs' presidency. Recalled as a project made with blood, sweat and tears, it captured a defining JCI Genk habit: taking on a demanding idea and making it happen together.

CURTAIN UP

culture powered by volunteer ambition



YOUNG TALENT

1995

PRAXIS '95

Try a profession before choosing it



Original project archive

PraXis '95 helped final-year secondary-school students in Genk explore their future careers. Young people could experience the daily practice of a profession and reflect on their choice. Learning by doing became a practical bridge between school and working life.

A FIRST STEP

helping young people choose their future

PRA  **IS '95**

Naam:
De PraXis '95 is een project van de JCI Genk, dat bedoeld is om jongeren te helpen bij het kiezen van hun toekomstige beroep. Het project bestaat uit een reeks activiteiten, waaronder workshops, excursies en interviews met professionals. Het doel is om de jongeren te helpen om hun interesses en vaardigheden te ontdekken en om deze te koppelen aan een beroep. Het project is bedoeld voor jongeren van 15 tot 18 jaar.

BUSINESS

1995-1996

LEARNING FENIX BY DOING SHEFFIELD

Looking abroad to shape Genk's future



Original project archive

JCI Genk flew 120 Limburg political and industrial leaders to Sheffield on a chartered aircraft. The visit explored lessons relevant to the Fenix project and Genk's future. It earned recognition as the best economic project during Didier Goesaert's presidency.

120 LEADERS

a learning journey to Sheffield



BUSINESS

1998-2000

25 HOURS OF KARTING

Endurance on the track. Unity behind it.



Original project archive

The 25-hour karting project gave the entire chapter a role in delivering a major event. Members shared responsibility for planning, building and running the experience. Remembered by successive presidents, it became a vivid example of teamwork, commitment and learning under pressure.

25 HOURS

one event, a whole chapter working together



LEADERSHIP

2001

NATIONAL CONGRESS 2001

Two chapters. One national stage.



Original project archive

JCI Genk and JCI Hasselt joined forces to host the 2001 National Congress. Securing the event had already helped reconnect Genk with the wider JCI network. Delivering it turned years of preparation into a shared achievement and an intensive school of leadership.

GENK x HASSELT

a congress built through collaboration



COMMUNITY

2002

MIJNATHLON & MIJNLICHTSTAD

Mining heritage, reimagined



Original event poster; photographs below show site preparations

On 17 August 2002, a mountain-bike competition between more than 40 companies met an evening of light and fire at Winterslag. MijnAthlon and MijnLichtstad brought sport, business and industrial heritage together. Around 8,000 visitors attended the evening spectacle.

8,000 VISITORS

at the evening light and fire spectacle



COMMUNITY

2002-2003

GENK ON ICE

A warm meeting place in winter



Original project archive

For a month in winter 2002-2003, JCI Genk created a Christmas market and ice rink in the city. Genk on Ice combined seasonal atmosphere with a demanding operational challenge, showing the chapter's capacity to bring a large public project to life.

WINTER IN GENK

a Christmas market and an ice rink



BUSINESS

2005-2007

INDIGO AWARD

An idea grew from tower to cathedral



Original project archive

The Indigo project grew through strong committees and the involvement of the whole chapter. Its development brought national recognition: in 2007, JCI Genk received awards for best business development programme and best overall project. A shared effort became an outstanding achievement.

2 NATIONAL AWARDS

business development and best overall project



CULTURE

2010

SPEECHLESS

John Cleese. In Genk.



Original project archive

JCI Genk brought John Cleese to C-mine around the opening of the redeveloped Winterslag site. Speechless attracted exceptional media attention and remains one of the chapter's most memorable events. A bold invitation became a remarkable encounter on a Genk stage.

JOHN CLEESE

an unforgettable encounter at C-mine



BUSINESS

1985-2023

JCI ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

Putting young enterprise in the spotlight

«Ik heb ooit een bod van KS afgeslagen»

GENK. – Vrijdag is in het kasteel van Bokrijk de zevende editie van de «Award Jos Thijs» door de provinciegouverneur uitgereikt. De wisseltrofee van de Genkse Jonge Economische Kamer gaat dit jaar naar Gaston Lijnen, afgevaardigd bestuurder van Cometal in Genk. Het bedrijf is vooral bekend omwille van de revolutionaire bekistingstechniek die het in huis heeft.

Volgens de jury is de prijs aan Lijnen – naast andere criteria – vooral uitgereikt omwille van Lijnen's bezorgdheid omtrent de gecontroleerde groei van de onderneming. «Dat is mijn voornaamste boodschap aan startende ondernemers», aldus Lijnen. «Spring niet verder dan je stok lang is. Ik heb nog ooit een bod van de voormalige KS-baas Iyl Gheysels afgeslagen die 70 miljoen in het bedrijf wou pompen. Omdat ik een dergelijke groei niet zag zitten, heb ik het bod afgeslagen», zegt de laureaat.

Cometal heeft zijn succes vooral te danken aan de aluminium bekistingstechniek die Lijnen in 1984-'85 zelf heeft ontworpen. Daarvoor is in samenwerking met de RU Gent een speciale aluminium-uitrusting op poten gezet. In 1985 richtte Lijnen de coöperatieve vennootschap Cometal op.

De voor de bouwsector revolutionaire en vooral tijdsbesparende techniek wordt nu al door 350 aannemers gebruikt. Volgens Lijnen kan met deze techniek tot 70 procent aan muren bespaard worden. «Er bestonden wel gelijkwaardige systemen in het buitenland, maar geen daarvan kan op vlak van kwaliteit de vergelijking met het «Cometal-systeem» doorstaan, aldus voorzitter Jan Coenegrachts van de stichting Award Jos Thijs.

Award Jos Thijs voor Gaston Lijnen (Cometal)

Nieuwe fabriek

Het bedrijf verhuist midden volgend jaar overigens naar het industrieterrein in Opglabbeek, waar een nieuwe fabriek van 40 miljoen, frank in de stijgers staat. Daar wordt ook een opleidingscentrum voor moderne bekistingstechnieken (in samenwerking met scholen en VDAB) gebouwd.

De huidige 25 werknemers zullen volgens Lijnen fors worden aangevuld als de doorbraak in het buitenland geforceerd kan worden. De ontwerper en fabrikant

Gaston Lijnen : «Niet verder springen dan de stok lang is.»
(Foto : J.R.)



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Original project archive

The Award Jos Thijs, founded in 1985, was a precursor of today's JCI Limburg Young Entrepreneur Award. JCI Genk helped establish and shape this tradition, recognising entrepreneurial dynamism and creativity. In 2023, the chapter again took the lead in organising the Limburg award.

RECOGNISE TALENT

from Award Jos Thijs to the Limburg award

GENK

De "Award Jos Thijs"

De stichting "Award Jos Thijs" is een initiatief van de provinciegouverneur van de provincie Limburg. Het doel van de stichting is om de beste jonge ondernemers van de provincie te erkennen en te belonen. De stichting wordt opgericht door de provinciegouverneur van de provincie Limburg.

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COMMUNITY

2011-2012

GENKULINAIR

A city brought together by taste



Original project archive

GenKulinair turned the city centre into a lively culinary meeting place. The archive captures busy stands, cooking demonstrations and a chapter working together behind the scenes. Food became a way to welcome the public and bring Genk's entrepreneurial energy into the streets.

TASTE MEETS TEAMWORK

a culinary celebration in the city centre



YOUNG TALENT

2014-2015

[18-28]

From first idea to entrepreneurial confidence



Celebrating the international recognition of [18-28]

Initiated by JCI Genk and delivered with JCI Limburg and public partners, [18-28] supported entrepreneurs aged 18 to 28. Inspiration evenings, mentoring and pitch training helped young starters develop their businesses. The first edition also brought JCI Genk two world awards.

2 WORLD AWARDS

recognition after the first edition



BUSINESS

2014-2017

JCI GOLF TOURNAMENT & ACADEMY

New connections, on and off the fairway



Original project archive

At Spiegelvelen, JCI Genk created a recurring event for entrepreneurs and golf enthusiasts. Experienced players joined the tournament while beginners discovered the sport through clinics and the Academy. Later editions added culinary experiences, making golf a welcoming platform for business connections.

GOLF FOR EVERYONE

tournament, clinics and a growing network



SPORT & COMMUNITY

2015-2019

BATTLE OF THOR

A personal challenge became a public phenomenon



Original project archive

An idea among members training together became an obstacle run on the Waterschei mining spoil heap. The first edition in September 2015 welcomed 6,000 participants. Battle of Thor combined physical challenge, teamwork and Genk's mining landscape in a large-scale public event.

6,000 PARTICIPANTS

at the first edition in 2015



BUSINESS

2017

INCUBATTLE

Start-ups met. Ideas competed.



Original project archive

At C-mine Crib, start-ups competed across different disciplines, including virtual-reality challenges. IncuBattle brought 280 participants together for networking, learning and team building. What began as several smaller ideas became one ambitious event, complete with an international Incubator of the Year award.

280 PARTICIPANTS

a start-up battle at C-mine Crib



CULTURE

1982-2018

SWING'IN GENK & RETRO GENCK

The sound of a lasting legacy



Original project archive

Swing'in Genk began under JCI Genk's impulse in 1982 and later became Genk on Stage under city stewardship. In 2018, the chapter returned with Retro Genck, a new stage at the festival. Different generations kept the same ambition alive: bringing people together through music.

A MUSICAL LEGACY

Swing'in Genk > Genk on Stage > Retro Genck



COMMUNITY

2019

GRILL'IN GENK

Make grilling thrilling



Original project archive

Companies and residents met around the grill on 7 June 2019. Culinary workshops and a team competition opened the day, followed by public show cooking, food and live music. Grill'in Genk combined business team building with the atmosphere of a welcoming city celebration.

ONE CITY. ONE GRILL.

business team building meets a public celebration



CULTURE

2022

RADIO FA-TAAL

Genk talent, live and on air



Original project archive

On 22 May 2022, Radio Fa-TAAL gave local talent a stage at Thor Park. Visitors could enjoy the performances free of charge, while a radio broadcast extended the experience beyond the site. Music, community and mining heritage came together in one lively public event.

LIVE + ON AIR

local talent with a wider audience



INTERNATIONALISM

1982-2023

MULTI-TWINNING BELLA ITALIA

Friendship without borders



Original project archive

After pandemic postponements, Genk hosted its international friends in April 2023 with a Bella Italia theme. Thirty Finns, fifteen Dutch guests and seven Germans explored the mining heritage by Abarth and Fiat 500. A 41-year twinning tradition came alive through shared experiences and lasting friendships.

41 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

a long-running international twinning tradition



YOUNG TALENT

2024

BUSINESS BREAK-OUT

Breaking out. Thinking like an entrepreneur.



Container conversion and escape-room construction, 2024

JCI Genk turned an H.Essers shipping container into an immersive entrepreneurship experience for Atlascollege students. Working in pairs, young people tackle four escape rooms after lessons and encounters with entrepreneurs. Built by volunteers and backed by over 30 partners, the project makes an entrepreneurial mindset tangible.

4 ESCAPE ROOMS

Designed for 100 final-year vocational students



LEARNING BY DOING.

CREATING WHAT COMES NEXT.

- Twenty-six projects, countless shared experiences and a continuing commitment to turn initiative into impact.

NCN UNDERGROUND / GENK 2026

FROM COAL TO BANG

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE STORY.

