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19 November 2026

ATELIER

innovATive Education for SociaL Inclusion via Co-dEsign pRactices

International co-design practices for the social inclusion of vulnerable people

A catalogue by the ATELIER project

Part 1

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Funded by the European Union. The opinions expressed, however, belong to the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the European Union or of the Erasmus+ National Agency INDIRE. Neither the European Union nor the granting administration can be held responsible.

Co-funded by the European Union

1. Introduction

The catalogue "International co-design practices for the social inclusion of vulnerable people" is conceived within the ATELIER project and it is one of the main components of the **ATELIER Learning Program**.

ATELIER - innovATive Education for sociaL Inclusion via codEsign pRactices is an Erasmus+ project co-funded by the European Union in 2023 under the "Cooperation partnerships in higher education" call. The project focuses on fostering **collaboration between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and civil society organisations (CSOs).** It aims **to develop innovative learning and teaching practices based on co-design principles to address the challenge of social inclusion.**

ATELIER stems from the belief that such challenging objectives could be achieved only by **merging the competence and expertise of professionals in both the worlds of education and practice of social inclusion** — a collaborative stance which is itself the foundation of social inclusion that works. This catalogue is, indeed, the result of the joint work of an **international partnership bringing together eight organisations**, including Higher Education Institutions and Civil Society Organisations, convinced that design can be a powerful driver of effective social change: Politecnico di Torino (from Italy, in the role of coordinator), S-nodi (Italy), Observatório Lusófono de Atividades Económicas OLAE - Lusofona University (Portugal), National University of Science and Technology Politehnica of Bucharest (Romania), Caritas Europa (Belgium), KC Kompetencenter (Sweden), Akadimos (Greece), and Synthesis Center for Research and Education (Cyprus).

By adopting a **trans-disciplinary** take on social inclusion practices, **the ATELIER Learning Programme combines the analytical and critical perspective of Social Sciences with the transformative approach of Design**. It tries to redefine learning for future practitioners in the field of social inclusion and design for impact, towards participatory and reflective processes that engage people and communities as active agents of impactful initiatives fulfilling their needs and desires. Moreover, it is intended for an international target audience, including **university students** (in Design, but also in other fields, such as Educational Sciences) as well as **early-career professionals** — interested in or already engaged in practices and projects for social inclusion — offering them introductory grounding.

One of the specific objectives of the ATELIER project is to develop innovative and **evidence-based** models (and related implementing tools) by setting up a trans-disciplinary and continuous collaboration between HEIs and CSOs and **analysing existing innovative practices and case studies** of design for social inclusion (community-based and capability approach-inspired) **all over Europe** to outline actors involved, available competencies, contexts, mindsets, strategies, models and enabling conditions as well as learning materials already available on the topic. To achieve this objective, ATELIER established the International Transdisciplinary Study Group, with at least one member from each project partner. Since the project's inception, the International Transdisciplinary Study Group has employed various tools **to map representative cases internationally.** This catalogue collects those cases which encompass **projects, practices, and experiences that intentionally or unintentionally leverage co-design elements to support social inclusion initiatives.**

2. Methodology

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The case study research in ATELIER aims to **develop a theoretical framework and methodological approaches based on evidence collected on co-design practices across Europe**. These frameworks and methodologies are intended to assist researchers and practitioners and will be integrated into practice through a cyclical process of learning and action-research projects.

The research methodology follows Eisenhardt's (1989) process design model for case study research. Eisenhardt's (1989) model for case study research outlines a systematic, iterative process for building theory from qualitative data. It begins with defining straightforward research questions and selecting cases through theoretical sampling to ensure the relevance and richness of data.

The model emphasises the use of multiple data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, to enable triangulation. Data collection and analysis occur concurrently, allowing emerging insights to shape ongoing data gathering. Detailed within-case and cross-case analyses are conducted to identify patterns and themes, followed by iterative hypothesis-shaping and comparison with existing literature. The process concludes when theoretical saturation is reached, resulting in a theory closely tied to the empirical data. This approach balances methodological rigour with flexibility, making it particularly effective for developing new theoretical insights.

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532–550

2.2 Tools

The vast diversity characterising the ATELIER working team necessitated the development of various tools to ensure that all partners were aligned with the project's themes and that objectives were pursued with coherent perspectives. This was essential to create a **shared understanding** of what could be considered co-design within the project, identify which case characteristics were of interest for mapping purposes, and determine how the research knowledge should be represented in the catalogue. Consequently, the group developed several tools to guide the research activities:

- A participatory workshop among the project partners on the meaning of co-design relevant to the project, with the collection of one case study each, to set the tone among the partners;
- A set of keywords to guide the research, eliminate ambiguities, and define shared parameters for the concepts covered by the project;
- A webinar about the theoretical framework and the definition of the Research Questions to support the International Transdisciplinary Study Group members throughout the research;
- A checklist for assessing the coherence of each case with the project;
- A shared template for the collection of case information;
- A consent form.

The number and variety of tools developed to support the case study research activity enabled the merging of diverse visions and opinions and the fine-tuning of the varying levels of experience and expertise among the partners. These tools also reflect the outcome of many thoughtful and insightful discussions about the nature of co-design and the challenges in arriving at a definitive answer.

2.3 Keywords

Based on the outcomes of the participatory workshops, the project partners developed a set of five keywords, each accompanied by a series of attributes and explanatory notes. Together, these provided a shared conceptual foundation and enabled the project to take its first steps with a common understanding. The keywords are **co-design**, **practices**, **inclusion**, **vulnerable people**, and **transformation**.

CO-DESIGN

Engaging:
users (both end users and production/ management stakeholders) and designers are involved in the design process of a product, a service or a system.

"Extended Togetherness":
collaboration at multiple stages of the project design phase + implementation.

Co-design also as:

Co-Creation:
"Co-creation refers to any act of collective creativity, i.e. creativity shared by two or more people".

Co-Crafting:
"Transformative manual work that is done in groups, in a collaborative setting, and that brings people to give shape to matter, whatever it may be. Co-crafting happens based on an agreed project and in a dimension of constant exchange of skills, care and dialogue among the participants."

Co-Production:
"Collective and participatory process, during which both the design and subsequent delivery is made possible through an equitable and reciprocal relationship between professionals, technicians, policymakers, people who use them, and the community involved."

PRACTICES

Transformative And Tangible:
bringing meaningful, concrete, practical, and appropriate changes.
"A transformative project approach refers to a design that aims to generate significant and positive changes in the structures, processes, or outcomes of an organisation, sector, or community. This type of approach goes beyond the simple management or implementation of a project and seeks to profoundly influence the context in which it takes place". Kotter J.P. (1996).

Participative:
open, inclusive and cooperative; experiences and skills from individuals and organisations participating are given value.

Contextual:
attentive to or/and influenced by the circumstances or settings in which the practice takes place; the context adds meaning to the case/practice.

Systemic:
based on active interaction between the components of the system; enabling the system/context where the practice takes place; carried out with a win-win approach where everyone involved is a beneficiary of the project/practice.

INCLUSION

Democracy:
offering conditions for people's active participation, freedom of expression, and decision-making.

New Order:
creating contexts inspired by a different "order" of things and functionings and more just/equal power dynamics; thanks to the case, people in society who are susceptible to hardships or oppression can live up to their full potential and capabilities.

Positive Feelings:
eliminating barriers and providing opportunities to experience positive feelings associated with being part of a group or community, such as contentment, fulfilment, well-being, a sense of belonging, self-esteem, appreciation, acknowledgement/recognition, ease, and trust.

Kotter J.P. (1996). *Leading Change*. Feltrinelli

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Access To Rights / Needs:
individuals or groups that experience discomfort or hardship due to their being excluded from expressing one or more rights or fulfilling their needs.

Disadvantaged By The Power Structures:
individuals or groups that are oppressed or more susceptible to harm.

TRANSFORMATION

Innovative:
the project is a transformative action which leads to a tangible improvement.

Preferable:
the project leads up to preferable conditions from the ones at the beginning / the context is positively impacted after the project.

Empowering:
the agency of the people (community) of/ around the project has increased after the project.

Social Justice:
the project challenged and, in some ways, redefined the structures/mechanisms related to the expression of rights or the fulfilment of the needs of the community involved.

2.4 Research Questions

Through an internal webinar involving all the project partners, research questions have been formulated and agreed on. Research questions try to highlight the project's focus on competencies and practices and were drafted as follows.

FOCUSING ON COMPETENCIES:

- What knowledge and skills are perceived as fundamental by professionals for practical co-design projects?
- What competencies are predominantly present in working groups involved in co-design processes?
- Is there a perceived gap in competencies that professionals would like to address?
- How are the competencies of working groups articulated in terms of responsibilities and roles?
- How are working groups shaped concerning applied practices?
- Do working groups change according to the context's needs? If so, how and why?

FOCUSING ON PRACTICES:

- What recurring elements, approaches, or implementation structures can be observed?
- How are co-design practices innovative and transformative compared to traditional approaches in addressing vulnerabilities?

Before selecting or proposing a case study, each partner verified that the case meets all preliminary requirements. The checklist is presented below:

"DOES THIS CASE FIT OUR RESEARCH?"

Here are four entry criteria to be taken into account:

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY:
The case involves people experiencing vulnerability, which is primarily understood as a systemic social condition (often caused by unjust power structures) that prevents them from fully participating in society, exercising their rights, and meeting their needs. As a result of the attention paid to the condition of vulnerability experienced by people, the practice promotes an experience of inclusion.

EMPOWERING / BUILDING CAPABILITIES:
The practice promotes the creation of new capabilities/relationships/resources for the project's beneficiaries. Cases where the intervention is limited to assistance or service delivery and doesn't lead to the empowerment/growth of potential, skills, or opportunities should not be considered valid for our research.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY:
The case involves collaboration among at least two stakeholders (beneficiaries, operators, community, policymakers, etc.) across at least two "moments" of the practice/project (i.e., ideation-design and implementation). Cases where the beneficiary's participation is limited to the concept phase of the project (consultation) or the implementation (collaborative work) should not be considered valid for our research. Multi-stakeholder projects and collective projects can be a hint.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/DISCIPLINES:
The cases should report experiences involving at least two areas of expertise/disciplines. Multi-competences and multidisciplinary working teams are expected. "Multi" is not limited to formal education careers but also to expertise from fieldwork and personal sensitivity.

Although not all criteria had to be met to the same degree, the selected cases were evaluated for their overall coherence across all specified criteria. This thorough vetting process ensured that each case aligned appropriately with the project's aims and could contribute meaningfully to its goals.

2.5 Template For Information Collection

Finally, the International Transdisciplinary Study Group developed a template to facilitate the collection of information on the cases and to ensure the production of homogeneous and comparable data sheets. The proposed template was created by adapting several examples of sheets developed for similar purposes, such as ProSa by Dors Regione Piemonte—Centro di Documentazione per la Promozione della Salute.

To complete the template, partners from the International Transdisciplinary Study Group were given two options: either request that the contact person fill in the template using the pre-filled example provided as a reference, or have the partner and the contact person could complete it together during a longer call or meeting. This second collaborative approach allowed the contact person to provide guided responses throughout the document. The template used to collect the data is the one displayed in the catalogue.

Ethical considerations were taken into account in the ATELIER case study research. The informed consent form ensured that participants were fully aware of the research's purpose and how their data would be used. Confidentiality and data protection protocols were strictly adhered to throughout the research process.

3. How to use the catalogue

The catalogue is conceived to **help students, professionals and researchers** engaged with ATELIER's topics and field of practice and observations to compare their knowledge and experience with international case studies and lessons learned.

In the following pages, **case studies are presented with a uniform structure along the lines of the template used in the data collection** and research phase. Each case study is therefore narrated through specific in-depth sections, the same through which the data collected were divided into macro-areas of analysis. A section devoted to general information: description of the project and context, presentation of the main objectives to be achieved and what results were obtained, the type of beneficiaries and the number of beneficiaries and workers involved. This section is followed by a focus on: the vulnerabilities addressed, the capacities generated, the degree of participation of the beneficiaries involved and finally on the multidisciplinary nature of the case study.

For ease of reading, each section is colour coded and marked with a reference symbol.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY

EMPOWERING/BUILDING CAPABILITIES

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

MULTI-EXPERTISE/DISCIPLINES

The case studies are organised into **thematic clusters to facilitate the exploration of recurring topics and approaches**. In addition to this thematic organisation, at the end of the catalogue readers will find a **list of labels** associated with each case study. These keywords are intended to support readers in identifying relevant content across the catalogue.

For a critical reading and a comparative and aggregated analysis of the collected case studies please refer to the **Trans-disciplinary Analytical Report on the Catalogue of 50 Design for Inclusion Practices** available on the project website atelier-project.eu and on the platform S-nodi Education.

Finally, **this catalogue is also an integral part of the MOOC entitled "ATELIER – Co-design for Social Impact and Inclusion"**, which is freely available as an **open-access course** on the UNITE! platform. The MOOC is available in in seven languages (English, French, Swedish, Romanian, Greek, Italian, and Portuguese) and upon successful completion of the course, participants can receive an Open Badge.

PARTNERS OF THE PROJECT

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COMMUNITY, MUNICIPALITY AND REGENERATION

This is the section associated with projects that link municipalities and communities in order to improve the living conditions of the population through urban and community regeneration actions.

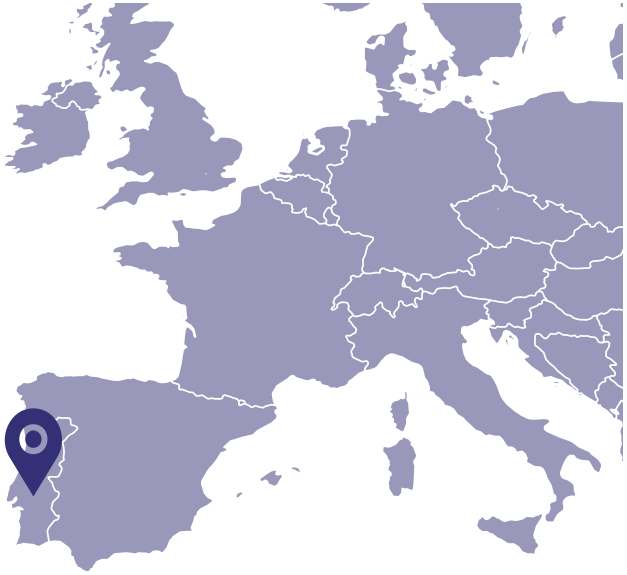
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Águeda Living Lab

2018 - Ongoing

Municipality of Águeda

Águeda, Portugal





Useful Links

Project Website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration

Young people / Innovation / Access to technology

Texts by Margarida Oliveira, Associação de Investigação Observatório Lusófono de Actividades Económicas

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The Águeda Living Lab (ALL) is a **collaborative initiative** by the **Municipality** of Águeda, developed in partnership with **local entrepreneurs and stakeholders**. ALL provides a technological space for the community to converge and engage in creativity, innovation, and knowledge sharing. It offers Experimentation Workshops primarily for young people, covering topics such as Robotics, Modelling, and 3D Printing. The lab is equipped with Digital Fabrication and Rapid Prototyping tools like Laser Cutters, 3D Printers, Vinyl Cutters, and CNC Milling Machines, accessible to the community for project development. ALL also hosts workshops on Photogrammetry, 3D Modelling with Blender, Introduction to Arduino, and Raspberry Pi, fostering a hands-on approach to technology. Additionally, it organises **community-wide events** such as the Portuguese Micromouse Contest and Interactive Technological Installations in the city, promoting a culture of exploration and experimentation.

The context

Águeda is a municipality known for its vibrant community and entrepreneurial spirit. **The Águeda Living Lab was established to harness local talent and creativity, providing a space where individuals can explore and experiment with new technologies**. The lab supports the local economy by encouraging innovation and providing resources for digital fabrication and prototyping. It also aims to bridge the gap between education and industry, preparing young people with the skills needed for the future.

Main objectives

- Foster innovation and creativity within the community
- Provide hands-on technological education to young people
- Support local entrepreneurs and companies in developing their projects
- Promote community engagement through technology-focused events
- Enhance skills in digital fabrication and rapid prototyping

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Young people, local entrepreneurs, companies, and the broader community of Águeda.

Number of people working on the project

Approximately 20 individuals including staff, volunteers, and experts.

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Hundreds of young people, entrepreneurs, and community members participate in workshops and events annually.

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

Around 30 organisations including local businesses, educational institutions, and technology partners.

Main achievements and goals obtained

- Successful implementation of numerous experimentation workshops
- Development of a community space equipped with advanced technological tools
- Increased engagement in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) among young people
- Enhanced support for local entrepreneurial projects
- Recognition for innovative community engagement initiatives

Monitoring and evaluation

Formal monitoring and evaluation system is in place involving regular assessments, feedback from participants, and periodic reporting to track progress and impact.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



The project addresses educational inequalities and access to technology. It promotes equal opportunities for learning and innovation, empowering young people and local entrepreneurs.

Target of the project

The project targets **young people and local entrepreneurs** who may lack access to advanced technological tools and educational resources. By providing hands-on learning experiences and access to digital fabrication equipment, ALL helps bridge the gap in technological skills and supports innovative project development

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

- Enhanced technical skills in robotics, 3D printing, and digital fabrication
- Improved problem-solving and creative thinking abilities
- Access to a network of like-minded individuals and industry experts
- Opportunities to develop and prototype innovative projects

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project aligns with **policies promoting education, innovation, and economic development**. It introduces innovative practices that support the municipality's goals of fostering a skilled and creative community.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Participatory activities carried out within the project

- Experimentation Workshops for young people
- Community workshops on Photogrammetry, 3D Modelling, Arduino, and Raspberry Pi
- Portuguese Micromouse Contest
- Interactive Technological Installations in the city

Example of output delivered by the project

- Prototyped projects developed by local entrepreneurs and students
- Educational materials and resources on technological topics
- Reports and recommendations for improving community engagement through technology

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

Beneficiaries are involved through **public consultations, surveys, and workshops** to identify key issues and contribute to the development of educational and technological programmes.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Beneficiaries participate in **implementing workshops, developing projects using lab equipment, and providing feedback** on activities to ensure they meet community needs.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Beneficiaries are part of the project **management teams**, **contributing to decision-making processes**, **monitoring, and evaluation** through regular feedback sessions and community meetings.



MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Project Coordinators: Oversee overall project management and coordination

Technology Experts: Provide guidance on digital fabrication and rapid prototyping

Educators: Conduct workshops and training sessions

Community Leaders: Facilitate community engagement and participation

Volunteers: Assist in various project activities and initiatives

Areas of expertise and disciplines involved in the project

Technology and Engineering (10 people)
Education and Training (5 people)
Community Development (5 people)
Entrepreneurship and Business (5 people)

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Collaborations exist with local businesses, educational institutions, and technology partners to enhance the effectiveness of the project.



Area programs for a socially sustainable Malmö

2010 - 2015 (still ongoing in parts)

Municipality of Malmö

Malmö, Sweden





Useful Links

Project Website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration
City / Collaborative Dialogue / Community activation

Texts by Lari Pitkäkangas, KC Kompetenscentre Idéburen sektor

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

In 1995, the Swedish government launched the first area-based initiative, "Special Initiatives in immigrant-dense neighbourhoods", to respond to the current debate concerning the failings of the integration policy. **The area-based policy and projects aim to reverse the trend in marginalised neighbourhoods in Sweden's major cities from 1995 to 2014.**
The empirical material is from the projects Area Programs for a socially sustainable Malmö (2010-2015) and Lindängen towards the future (2012-2014), **Malmö municipality.** The city of Malmö explained that the overall goals of the Area Programs were to: "Create social sustanability where formal and informal structures and processes work together to create viable, healthy and participatory communities" - **"Area Programs can be seen as platforms for joining together many different actors to generate and realise "social innovations",** that is, new ideas for achieving social goals. By developing, strengthening, anchoring and disseminating sustainable change processes, the Area Programs can contribute to a broad **learning process**, not only in Malmö but among many cities that are struggling with similar challenges. Through sustainable development work in this area, Malmö can make an impact on both European and global levels." (Stadskontoret Malmö city 2010:3)

Main objectives

In the projects, the social problem to tackle consists of four interrelated factors: long-term unemployment, foreign background, segregation and lack of social responsibility. The strategy is to mobilise public, private and civil sector actors so that they – despite society's exclusion of people of foreign background in situations of long-term unemployment – **take their social responsibility and make available resources to individual residents to prepare them for becoming active citizens.** The focus was laid on an area with a statistically significant deviation from the rest of the city. General objectives of what the programmes should have as outputs or impact:

- the efforts in the areas result in improved living conditions, increased security and more jobs and contribute to a sustainable city in all aspects
- schools attract students from all over Malmö
- areas are attractive and safe
- people with different conditions and backgrounds choose to live and stay here
- physical development as fundamental force that supports social development to such an extent that it becomes a model for social change
- the business and innovation climate is such that entrepreneurs choose to establish themselves in the areas
- cultural and leisure activities attract people from all over Malmö and Scania



Primary target users/beneficiaries

Citizens and associations working in the areas.

The context

The area-based policy and specifically the two projects in Malmö have stated ambitions that their activities – their claims for change regarding the social problem and the policy target groups - will enable structural change, which can be derived from the project's own goal of creating social sustainability and that "all Malmö residents should be included and integrated into society and get a share of welfare" (Mayor of Malmö, Reepalu, 2010:2). The area-based projects are thus conceptualised according to rhetoric that assumes that they have the opportunity to counteract the social segregation and exclusion processes that lie behind the development of marginalised residential areas.

Awards and Acknowledgements

https://bidmalmo.se/medierosor-for-bid-malmos-insatser-i-sofielund/

https://bidmalmo.se/bid-sofielund-blev-bast-i-europa/

Number of people working on the project

There were 6 coordinators in total, several officers from the city departments, several from the associations, and many volunteers from NGOs. Since the Area programs actually included all the city departments, there were probably about 50 people in total.

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

About 30.000 ppl.

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

There are about 10 departments, five city districts, 20 organisations, and state-run stakeholders like the police, fire department, correctional services, and health organisations. The operational plans were developed by collaboration groups (working groups) with representatives from Malmö's various administrations, property owners/managers, associations, police and emergency services, coordinated by the area coordinators in each residential area.

Main achievements and goals obtained

The programme's significant achievement was the **establishment of a diverse portfolio of methods operating at a local level, encompassing approximately 30 projects.** These initiatives, while varying in success, notably fostered increased collaboration between the city and property owners, reducing crime rates due to heightened activity in the areas. The project's goals were comprehensive, spanning societal and citizen-focused objectives. The primary aim was to enhance and implement socially focused area-based initiatives, particularly in marginalised neighbourhoods. This involved creating a continuous process of citizen-based **collaborative methods** for Malmös, stimulating structural change, mitigating and comprehending social issues, identifying social constructions of target groups, alleviating poverty and segregation, and promoting social sustainability, inter-sectoral cooperation, and social mobilisation.

Monitoring and evaluation

Several research studies were conducted during and after the project.

Both Swedish and the translated English version are shown below:

Karlsson, Sandra och Göran Cars. 2013a. Följeforskning av Områdesprogrammen för ett socialt hållbart Malmö: Programmen som byggs runt fysiskt skelett och sociala muskler. Datum: 2013-01-11. Slutrapport av processutvärdering för Malmö stad.

Karlsson, Sandra and Goran Cars. 2013a. Area programmes for a socially sustainable Malmö: The programmes that are built around physical skeleton and social muscles. Date: 2013-01-11. Final report of process evaluation for the city of Malmö.

Karlsson, Sandra och Göran Cars. 2013b. Lindängen mot framtiden: Följeforskningsrapport STEG 1: Programmeteori Diskussionsunderlag till workshopen den 30 september 2013. Datum: 2013-09-23. Delstudie av processutvärdering för Stadsområdesförvaltning Söder, Malmö stad.

Karlsson, Sandra and Goran Cars. 2013b. Towards the future: Follow-up research STEP 1: Programme theory Discussion material for the workshop on 30 September 2013. Date: 2013-09-23. Sub-study of process evaluation for Urban area management South, Malmö city.

Karlsson, Sandra och Göran Cars. 2014. Lindängen mot framtiden: Följeforskningsrapport STEG 2: Formulering och prioritering av följeforskningens frågor. Datum: 2014-09-08. Delstudie av processutvärdering för Stadsområdesförvaltning Söder, Malmö stad.

Karlsson, Sandra and Goran Cars. 2014. Towards the future: Follow-up research report STEP 2: Formulation and prioritisation of the following research questions. Date: 2014-09-08.Sub-study of process evaluation for Urban area management South, Malmö city.

Holmberg, Helene. 2014. BID Sofielund: ett varaktigt lyft för ett utsatt område? Slutrapport. Olofstorp: Kunskapsproduktion AB.

Holmberg, Helen. 2014. BID Sofielund: a lasting lift for an exposed area? Final report. Olofstorp: Kunskapsproduktion AB

Karlsson, Sandra och Göran Cars. 2015. Lindängen mot framtiden: Följeforskningsrapport STEG 3: Svara på utvärderingsfrågorna. Datum: 2015-01-28. Slutrapport av processutvärdering för Stadsområdesförvaltning Söder, Malmö stad.

Karlsson, Sandra and Goran Cars. 2015. Towards the future: Follow-up research report STEP 3: Answer the evaluation questions. Date: 2015-01-28. Final report of process evaluation for Urban area management South, Malmö city.

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ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY







Target of the project

The projects wanted to tackle four interrelated factors that determine a social issue: long-term unemployment, foreign background, segregation and lack of social responsibility. The statistical sources describe the context as follow:

Composition of the population:
High proportion of young people aged 20-30

Higher proportion with foreign background than the Malmö average.

Higher proportion of persons born outside the Nordic countries in 2010 than the Malmö average

High proportion of refugees and family immigrants

Education
The pupils in the schools in the areas show lower results than the Malmö average

Higher proportion of children of preschool and school age who have a foreign background than average in Malmö.

Lower proportion with post-secondary education than in Malmö on average.

Business, income and employment
Few job opportunities

Fewer persons aged 20-64 in employment than the Malmö average

Acquired and disposable income per person, 20-64 years, is significantly lower compared to the city's average.

The average number of grant months of financial assistance per household excluding introduction benefits is higher than in the city on average.

Housing
Few or no new developments in the areas after 1975. The statistics from marginalised residential areas indicate that they generally show low grades, low levels of education, high unemployment, and high levels of public financial assistance. Residential areas need more job opportunities for their residents because there are few jobs. Housing policy: since something needs to be built but is not, the areas cannot offer new housing or new premises for commercial activities, which would also mean new job opportunities locally. The variable "few or no new builds since 1975" finally indicates that no investment interest appears to exist, either from the public or private sector.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Collaboration between public actors creates added value and positive effects on the local area level, both for those who work with the collaborative processes and for the citizens who benefit from the collaboration's outcomes.

Cooperation between public and private actors seems potentially to have positive effects. However, it requires continuity over time that allows for the institutionalisation of new forms of work and ensures implementation. In more specific terms, this meant, for instance:

- faster and more effective state agency service;
- safer areas through better surveillance;
- more associations create more activities;
- jobs created in the area;
- more awareness about the situation and engagement in changing it;
- several projects with co-creation in focus include urban gardening, bike workshops, after school activities, social gatherings, and events.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The projects worked in parallel to change how the residents experienced their life situation and for them to change their living strategies while working to change how public, business and civil actors experience the residential area and the residents, and instead of working "as they have always done" change how, when, where and with whom they work through the projects alternative development model.

The projects were based on the assumption that **(1)** the residents must be prepared to take advantage of any opportunities for change in their life situation made available through the area-based projects and **(2)** public, business and civil sector actors involved in the projects must be convinced that they must make such opportunities available.

The role of the projects was to arrange for both the residents and the public, private, and civil sector actors to take their respective responsibility for the development of society and to change it.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Participatory activities carried out within the project

Green Urban Gardening - co-gardening mobilising youth and elderly in Sofielund.

BID Sofielund a network of landlords/property owners creating an incubator together with several immigrant associations.

"Kristina from Duvemala and El Sistema orchestras consisting of preschool and primary school classes at two schools in Holma and Kroksback. In schools, everyone has better self-confidence, a better atmosphere and a greater community.

Young people help young people: job seeking, mentors, individual development. Young coaches and area guides help other young people find their inner compass.

A women's Association "Active Women in Hyllie" initiated and managed the idea of an Infocentre in the middle of the residential area.

A Community house: "Allaktivitetshuset" at Hermodsdal opened in September 2013. rewarding and free activities to the residents of the area. The range is varied and based entirely on the wishes and demand of the residents.

Example of output delivered by the project

- Centre for Associations at Nobel21
- Community Centre - Allaktivitetshuset
- BID - network for landlords/property owners
- Urban Gardening Networks
- YallaTrappan - migrant women create business opportunities for themselves

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

Generally, citizens' participation was very local, but they were separate from creating the programme. However, there were some dialogue meetings pre-launch. The citizen participation strategy of area-based projects can be understood primarily as using individual citizens as leverage to influence public, private and civil sector actors to assume their responsibilities – public actors for welfare services and private actors for their land, real estate and business activities.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

In some areas, there was extensive participation, primarily through active associations. In other places, it was more about creating temporary teams of highly skilled and professional staff, creating cases for the citizens to participate in. One of the reasons why area-based interventions are often described as having positive local and individual effects is that the additional resources mean that residents have increased access to social power bases, and, at least temporarily, for the citizens directly involved in the actions of the area-based projects.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Many of the local activities were made by the citizens and managed by them. But generally, area-based projects can only temporarily create the conditions for residents to gain increased access to social power bases, not by their power but by motivating authorities, activities, and companies and organisations that have the resources to make them available to the residents of marginalised neighbourhoods in specific forms. This means that the area-based projects have no control over the type or form of the social power bases the participating actors choose to make available to the residents and the area.



MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

The **coordinating working group** consisted of a **city manager** and **area coordinators.** It did not include any outside actors. Coordinators had frequent meetings. They eventually started to work more locally and had less "common" goals. The public, private and civil actors who have chosen to participate can thus be said to have joined the social development in the different areas as a result of the municipal area-based programme and projects. However, the work was not part of their ordinary mission, but time, personnel and any financial resources they provide are part of selective operations that the actors in ordinary activities would not be able to maintain.

Areas of expertise and disciplines involved in the project

The coordinators' backgrounds were generally in **social work**, but they also had **experience** working **with civil society organisations**. Listing all the staff from the municipality departments involved in these projects is impossible. Generally, there were **public**, **business**, and **civic stakeholders.**

Collaborations and alliances with external community

The programme promoted external collaboration, as one of its goals was to invite all relevant stakeholders to the programme. All levels of state and local stakeholders were invited.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Within the city and among the organisations in the areas.



Biovilla: Innovation and Sustainability Hub

2010 - Ongoing

Biovilla, European Commission, Local NGOs, Community Members, Sustainability Experts

Palmela, Portugal





Useful Links

Project website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration
Rural areas / Environmental sustainability / Innovation

Texts by Margarida Oliveira, Associação de Investigação Observatório Lusófono de Actividades Económicas

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Biovilla is a space dedicated to **innovation, experimentation, and unity for sustainability**, leveraging human creativity to address some of humanity's most pressing challenges. Located in the Arrábida Natural Park in Palmela, Portugal, Biovilla focuses on sustainable living practices, environmental regeneration, and social innovation. Recognised as a "Rising Star" by the European Commission, **Biovilla aims to bring value and regeneration to the local environment while contributing to the global social innovation ecosystem**. The project includes educational programmes, community workshops, sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, and collaborative projects with local and international partners.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Residents of Palmela, sustainability enthusiasts, environmental organisations, social innovators, and global sustainability networks.

Awards and Acknowledgements

Recognised as a "Rising Star" in the Business and Biodiversity category of the European Business Awards for the Environment by the European Commission.

Main objectives

- Promote sustainable living practices
- Foster environmental regeneration and conservation
- Encourage social innovation and community engagement
- Provide education and training on sustainability
- Contribute to the global social innovation ecosystem

The context

Biovilla is situated in the Arrábida Natural Park, a region known for its rich biodiversity and natural beauty. The project operates in a context of environmental conservation and social innovation, aiming to provide sustainable solutions to local and global challenges. By engaging the local community and collaborating with international networks, Biovilla seeks to promote sustainable living and environmental stewardship in Palmela and beyond.

Main achievements and goals obtained

- Recognition as a "Rising Star" in the Business and Biodiversity category of the European
- Business Awards for the Environment
- Successful implementation of sustainable agriculture and eco-tourism projects
- Development of educational programmes and workshops on sustainability
- Increased community engagement in environmental conservation
- Contribution to local and global sustainability initiatives

Number of people working on the project

Approximately 30 individuals including staff, volunteers, and sustainability experts.

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Thousands of individuals, including local residents, visitors, and participants in educational and sustainability programmes.

Number of organisations/ institutions involved

Around 20 organisations including NGOs, educational institutions, environmental groups, and international networks.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



It promotes inclusive and sustainable solutions to environmental challenges, fostering community resilience and engagement.

Target of the project

The project targets local residents, sustainability enthusiasts, and social innovators who seek sustainable living solutions and environmental conservation. Vulnerabilities addressed include environmental degradation, lack of sustainable practices, and limited access to sustainability education.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

- Enhanced knowledge and skills in sustainable living and environmental conservation
- Stronger community networks and relationships
- Increased access to sustainability resources and education
- Greater involvement in social innovation initiatives

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project aligns with local policies on environmental conservation and sustainability. It introduces innovative practices in sustainable living and social innovation, enhancing coherence with Palmela's overall strategy for environmental stewardship and community development.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Participatory activities carried out within the project

- Community workshops and forums on sustainability
- Collaborative eco-tourism and sustainable agriculture projects
- Educational programmes and training sessions

Example of output delivered by the project

- Sustainable agriculture products used by the local community and sold in markets
- Educational materials and resources on sustainability shared with participants
- Reports and recommendations for improving environmental practices

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

Beneficiaries are involved through public consultations, surveys, and workshops to identify key issues and contribute to the development of sustainable practices and initiatives.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Beneficiaries participate in implementing sustainable agriculture projects, organising community events, and providing feedback on ongoing activities to ensure they meet community needs.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Beneficiaries are part of the project management teams, contributing to decision-making processes, monitoring, and evaluation through regular feedback sessions and community meetings.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Project Coordinators: oversee overall project management and coordination

Sustainability Experts: provide guidance on sustainable practices and innovation

Educators: conduct training and educational programmes

Community Leaders: facilitate community engagement and participation

Volunteers: assist in various project activities and initiatives

Disciplines involved in the project

Sustainability and Environmental Science (10 people)

Education and Training (5 people)

Community Development (5 people)

Social Innovation (5 people)

Agriculture and Eco-tourism (5 people)

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Collaborations exist with local NGOs, educational institutions, environmental groups, and international sustainability networks to enhance the effectiveness of the project.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Collaborations with different departments within Biovilla have been established including sustainability, education, and community engagement departments.



City Council Plan for Migrant Integration in Sintra Municipality

2020 - Ongoing

Sintra City Hall, local NGOs, migrant communities, academic partners

Sintra, Portugal





Community, Municipality and Regeneration
Refugees / City / Barriers / Collaborative Dialogue

Texts by Margarida Oliveira, Associação de Investigação Observatório Lusófono de Actividades Económicas

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The City Council Plan for Migrant Integration in Sintra Municipality (PCII) aims to **foster the inclusion of migrants through active policies that reduce poverty and promote social participation**. The plan includes a participatory budgeting process and various initiatives to involve citizens in public decision-making. Through collaboration with local NGOs, academic institutions, and migrant communities, the plan addresses the specific needs of migrants, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected. Educational programmes, cultural exchange events, and support services are integral parts of the plan, helping migrants to integrate smoothly into the social and economic fabric of Sintra.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Migrants and their families residing in Sintra, local communities, and stakeholders involved in integration processes.

The context

Sintra is a municipality in Portugal that prioritises social inclusion and active citizen participation. With a significant migrant population, the city faces challenges related to poverty and social inequality. The City Hall has implemented several initiatives to **include citizens in public decision-making processes, beyond just participatory budgeting, to ensure that the needs and concerns of all residents, particularly migrants, are addressed**.

Awards and Acknowledgements

Recognised by national (High Commissioner for Migrations) and international organisations for innovative migrant integration practices.

Main objectives

- Promote social inclusion of migrants
- Reduce poverty among migrant communities
- Foster active citizenship and participatory decision-making
- Promote social cohesion and cultural exchange within urban environments;
- Provide educational and support services for migrants
- Encourage cultural exchange and mutual understanding

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

Approximately 60 individuals including city council staff, NGO workers, and volunteers.

Number of people working on the project

Over 30,000 migrants and their families residing in Sintra.

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Around 50 organisations including NGOs, academic institutions, and local authorities.

Main achievements and goals obtained

- Successful implementation of participatory budgeting involving migrants
- Development of educational programmes tailored for migrants
- Establishment of support services for migrant integration
- Increased migrant participation in public decision-making

Monitoring and evaluation

A formal monitoring and evaluation system is in place involving regular assessments, feedback from community meetings, and periodic reports to track progress and impact.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Target of the project

The project targets migrants and their families who often face challenges such as language barriers, lack of access to services, and social isolation. These conditions of vulnerability can hinder their integration into the community and limit their economic opportunities. The project aims to address these issues by providing support services, educational programmes, and fostering a welcoming environment for all migrants.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

- Improved language skills through educational programmes
- Better access to social and support services
- Enhanced participation in community activities and decision-making
- Stronger networks and relationships within the local community

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project aligns with local policies on social inclusion and community engagement. It introduces innovative practices in participatory decision-making and support services for migrants, enhancing coherence with Sintra's overall strategy for social development and inclusivity.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

- Participatory budgeting sessions involving migrants
- Community meetings and forums for discussing migrant needs
- Workshops and training programmes co-designed with migrant communities

Example of output delivered by the project

- Inclusive policy documents used for guiding local governance
- Educational materials and support resources for migrants
- Reports and recommendations for improving migrant integration services

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

Beneficiaries are involved through public consultations, surveys, and workshops to identify key issues and contribute to the development of policies and programmes that address their specific needs.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Beneficiaries participate in implementing educational programmes, organising community events, and providing feedback on ongoing activities to ensure they meet the needs of the migrant population.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Beneficiaries are part of the project management teams, contributing to decision-making processes, monitoring, and evaluation through regular feedback sessions and community meetings.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Project Coordinators: Oversee overall project management and coordination

Community Leaders: Facilitate community engagement and participation

Educators: Conduct educational and training programmes

Social Workers: Provide support services and resources

Researchers: Conduct assessments and provide analytical support

Areas of expertise and disciplines involved in the project

Social Work (15 people)
Education and Training (10 people)
Community Development (10 people)
Public Policy (5 people)
Research and Analysis (5 people)

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Collaborations exist with NGOs, academic institutions, and community organisations to enhance the effectiveness of the project.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Different departments within the City Hall collaborate, including social services, education, and community development.



Emergency Room for Associations

June 2021 - December 2021

Malmö Ideella, MKB Fastighet AB

Malmö, Sweden





Useful Links

Project website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration
Peer-to-peer / Innovation

Texts by Lari Pitkäkangas, KC Kompetenscentre Idéburen sektor

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Malmö Ideella created "ER for Associations" to **support and strengthen any association as much as possible during the coronavirus crisis**. They cooperated with partner organisations and received financial support from the Malmö Municipal Social Housing Company for social efforts. (MKB)

The support for the associations in Malmö was free of charge. The associations were provided peer-to-peer and tailored advice for those organisations that wished to have it.

"ER for Associations" offered business development courses, digital skills and technology, and physical meetings at Nobelvagen 21 - Association Centre. The project co-worked with many others within the community. At the same time, the community took on new initiatives that made the associations stronger and more resilient in the long term.

The context

The coronavirus pandemic has hit Malmö, Sweden and the world with full force, with a significant impact on all functions of society. Association life is an important part of society that is often forgotten in a time of crisis measures. In 2020, the Association Act was a support activity for the associations. The project has been ongoing from May to December. The purpose of the support was to strengthen the associations so that the associations in turn can contribute to strengthening Malmö during the coronavirus crisis. In 2020, MKB decided to support Malmö Ideella (NPO) with up to one million Swedish kronor to enhance the city's associations and make it easier for the associations to contribute to essential and preventive efforts for children and young people in EIA residential areas. Ideella has been responsible for activities and conference rooms in cooperation with the Leisure Administration for the opportunity to use the resources of the Association Centre Nobelvagen 21. The non-profit Malmö Ideella is an organisation for the city's associations with 340 member associations with varying activities. One of Malmö Non-profit's partner organisations is MISO, Malmö Sports Associations' partner organisation, which has close to 130 member associations.

Main objectives

- support and sounding board in finding solutions.
- offer free courses, advice, association development, and all sorts of tips on everything that associations need.
- support you in changing, adapting, and changing your operations. Simply take the opportunity to develop when it is still not as usual.
- build new relations and networks for a sustainable support
- strengthen the general civil support for associations in socially challenged areas.
- introduce a collaborative project method by focusing on the participants' needs.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Associations, especially in socially challenged districts.

Main achievements and goals obtained

The city of Malmö acted on data and information from the project to support the associations in the crisis. Among other things, the municipal executive board decided to inject extra funds into associations and social efforts and to be generous with the assessment of the activities during the Corona crisis. The Recreational and Cultural Administration, and many other administrations are also doing a great deal of work on these issues.

Information and support on how associations could better cope with the pandemic were sent to more than 1,500 associations.

Number of people working on the project

4-5 people

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

450 organisations, and 150 organisations were involved in the project.

Number and type of organisations / institutions involved

The City of Malmö and the League of Sports Associations were involved.

Monitoring and evaluation

There were monthly steering group meetings, as well as an end report.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



The UN Agenda 2030 outlines a set of ambitious objectives, with a specific focus on goals 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). These goals are closely intertwined with the project's development, emphasising the need to address pressing global challenges. It became evident that society lacked a comprehensive and cohesive strategy to address the resulting impacts effectively. Municipal authorities and their departments' response was sluggish, particularly in providing timely and adequate assistance to vulnerable communities and associations, highlighting the urgent need for improved response and support mechanisms.

Target of the project

Many associations formed a base of support for their members and became centres for action. During the initial phase of the pandemic, activity-based operations died out. Also, the associations stopped many unnecessary activities due to misinformation and a lack of proper channels from the city.
The team saw early that if he didn't do anything, many associations and their capacity to support the prime target groups would diminish radically. Also, the project aimed at serving organisations in socially challenged areas.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

The city had the opportunity to meet new associations that had been around for many years. It was also good that the collaborative approach to tackling the pandemic challenge was used

Some organisations also got more resources thanks to learning more about funding and writing applications.

All organisations in Malmö registered within the city funding system also had reduced rent costs. They also got extra funding during the pandemic and (proposed by the project) a restart of extra funding after the pandemic.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project underscored the **profound significance of associations and their tremendous impact on shaping the fabric of society and supporting vulnerable communities**. It shed light on the innovative ways associations came together to effectively mobilise resources and support during the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic. Associations played a pivotal role in offering invaluable voluntary services during heightened societal stress. Moreover, they played a crucial role in comprehending, empathising with, and disseminating effective strategies to address a global crisis. Despite initial oversight in the involvement of associations in crisis management by the city's policy, it became evident that acknowledging the pivotal role of associations and civil society organisations was indispensable for successfully navigating a crisis.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

Premises and rent – collaborate with others.

Applications and grants - work together to find resources.

Association training - learning more about policies.

Digital meetings - Workshop based

Sponsorship, grants, and associations

The association department offers design, guidance, and support in developing your association. Experienced process managers and communicators will help design a co-creative meeting/event at the Association Centre or online.

Example of output delivered by the project

The project released a report based on a survey of the associations that became important as a decision-making policy document.

Many associations who participated in the project are now part of the Nobel21 - association centre www.nobel21.se

The collaboration between the city and the associations improved greatly after the pandemic. One part was having a collaborative spirit during times of stress.

Working more co-creative and collaborative became something that was introduced with this project.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The associations were invited to a first dialogue meeting, where an outline of the project was presented. However, the project at the start lacked a genuinely collaborative approach. It was more of a starting block for the process of managing the pandemic. However, some insightful people were brave enough to invest in the project idea from the start.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

They took part in all the activities and also benefited from the opinion created by the project to influence policymakers about the importance of civil society organisations.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Not as much as wanted, the pandemic came to last almost 1 year after the project, and there were tries to pro-long the project, but it was just meant to be an “emergency solution”

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

The work crew consisted of experienced advisors/project managers from civil society who had worked with different social organisations focused on socially challenged districts.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Specialists were staff from different city departments working in various fields of expertise. They came to workshops and seminars to participate in discussions and information.

1 urban development, 2 Safety, 4 Leisure and children, 10 social workers, 2 support departments for challenged people, city strategists, and many more undefined but working within the city.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

The Municipal Housing Company.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

The organisations that built the Centre Nobel21 - for associations

Fashion Truck

2022 - Ongoing

Caritas München und Oberbayern

Munich, Germany





Useful Links

Project website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration
Mobile / Environmental sustainability / Empowerment

Texts by Marc Somers, Caritas Europa, in collaboration with Anna Kauka, Caritas Muenchen

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The fashion truck is a **mobile clothing store for donated goods.** It collects clothes from private households, the local community or from companies. It then **distributes the clothes to people living in poverty or living with financial restraints** by stopping off at local facilities like social shelters, community centres and other social hotspots.

The context

Munich is a rich city with high economic power. Yet a full 17% of people are considered at risk of poverty or poor. Those affected hardly have enough money for everyday necessities. Some people avoid classic clothing stores for donated goods because they are ashamed of their situation and experience queuing there as stigmatising. Others aren't mobile enough to reach distribution points easily because of high age or sickness. Their radius of movement can be very restricted.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

People living in Munich and surroundings that find themselves in **financial need.**

Awards and Acknowledgements

Caritas Europa Innovation Festival laureate 2024

Main objectives

- Financial relief for clients
- Creation of a positive experience for clients
- Avoidance of clients experiencing the assistance/clothing donation as stigmatising and/or humiliating
- Extension of the clothes lifespan
- Reduction of waste
- Public awareness for sustainability matters
- Creation of volunteering opportunities

Number of people working on the project

2 project managers
3 volunteers

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Clothing donations received of approximately 500 private households. Since its launch, over 1,000 people have received clothing from the Fashion Truck.

Number and type of organisations / institutions involved

Caritas Munich

Main achievements and goals obtained

The fashion truck has become a colorful and **modern alternative to classic clothing stores for donated goods.** The fashion truck is well established and the work of caritas clearly visible to the outside world. Furthermore, sustainability is promoted. Over 1.000 people have already benefited from the offer and volunteering opportunities have been created.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monthly internal report with all distribution events.



ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY

Target of the project

The target group are children, adults and seniors who live life with financial constraints. Expenditure on clothing represents a significant burden for them. **Germany can be dangerously cold in winter** with temperatures below zero degrees. Yet **good winter clothes are expensive.** Many people are then dressed far too lightly.

Travelling around the city – for example to distribution points – can also be too high an expenditure for the clients. Furthermore, some are barely mobile due to sickness or high age.

Poverty severely affects the quality of life of our clients.

Poverty means permanent stress for the body and soul and can provoke feelings of shame and isolation.





EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Through the fashion truck team, the **clients receive appreciative fashion advice and gain knowledge about other caritas-offers that might be helpful for them in their specific situation.** They can spend the money they save through the free distribution for other necessities of life.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The **official motto of Caritas Munich** is "Nah am Nächsten" (**close to our neighbor**). This aligns with the organisation's approach of engaging directly with people on site.

The organisation also seeks to **tackle problems holistically.** With the Fashion Truck, both ecological and social aspects are considered.

With the Fashion Truck, the organisation have taken a new and innovative approach. This corresponds to the understanding of being prepared to respond to people's changing needs and realities of life with adapted services.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

- **Upcycling workshops**
- **Volunteering opportunities** (Sorting the donated clothing and preparing for use)
- **Volunteering at the distribution**

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

Feedback from beneficiaries was regularly evaluated

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Through feedback culture. They can also donate clothes that they do not need anymore (for example, if your clothes no longer fit or your children are growing up).

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Through feedback culture. Sometimes they are also actively involved in smaller tasks. They carry things, for example.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

The two project managers work simultaneously with different focal points in terms of content. The trips to the locations are usually undertaken together.

Our project innovations manager accompanies the development, is always approachable and gets involved when specific questions arise.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Project manager (1): organisation and business management.

Project manager (2): expertise in the fashion industry.

Project innovations manager: Finance and general support.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Caritas Munich works with various cooperation-**partners in the city and outskirts** (community centres, women's shelters, neighbourhood festivals and others).

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

There are various collaborations and alliances inside the organisation. Every once in a while, **volunteers** from young caritas Munich volunteer at the Fashion Truck. **The Fashion Truck also stops by Caritas-locations like community-centres for elderly people, Caritas food shelters and others.**

Gardens of the Future

2018 - Ongoing

Dr. Natasa Christou, Argyro Toumazou, Steven Stavrou, Burak Berk Doluay, Chris Tofarides, Andreas Angeli's, Paul Koronis, Panayiota Polykarpou

Nicosia, Cyprus





Useful Links

Project website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration

City / Job training / Community activation / Environmental sustainability

Texts by Elena Tornariti, SYNTHESIS Centre for Research and Education

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Gardens of the Future aims **to enable locals to become agro-entrepreneurs in the heart of Nicosia**, so that the city can become a catalyst for sustainable action and position Nicosia as a **role-model city**. Sharing experiences through a communal garden gives the chance **to include everyone despite of age, gender, religion and ethnicity background, embrace social differences and facilitate the circulation of ideas and practices of care and hospitality.** Embracing a **circular economy approach,** promoting the philosophy of building from 'waste' and practicing the loop of recycle – reuse – reduce. The design of the garden becomes an ambassador of **innovative techniques around responsible farming and creates a dynamic urban food sharing ecosystem.** The garden's aim is to be a social hub in the city and create new work opportunities for the neighbourhood and beyond. Celebrating a 'sharing economy' and support locals in how-to create their own gardens, grow their own food and open paths for economic freedom around agriculture activities.

The context

Through communal gardening, the project fosters inclusivity, embracing diversity regardless of age, gender, religion, or ethnicity. Embracing a circular economy approach, the project promotes sustainable farming practices and waste reduction.

By serving as a social hub, it creates new work opportunities and supports a sharing economy, encouraging locals to grow their own food and fostering economic freedom through agricultural activities.

Main objectives

- Establish a **communal garden** as a catalyst for sustainable action in Nicosia
- Position Nicosia as a **role-model city** for sustainable urban agriculture
- Facilitate the **exchange of ideas** and **practices of care** and hospitality within the community
- Provide **educational workshops** and resources on sustainable agriculture and gardening techniques
- **Strengthen community bonds** and social cohesion through shared gardening experiences
- Promote **food security and resilience** by increasing local food production
- Encourage **innovation and experimentation** with responsible farming methods
- **Advocate for policy changes** and urban planning that prioritize green spaces and community gardens
- **Engage diverse stakeholders**, including residents, businesses, and local authorities, in collaborative efforts towards sustainability

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Homeless people, migrants, local community, NEET youth, disadvantaged youth, trainers, cultural professionals, educators, policymakers, NGOs, private organisations.

Credits

The Gardens of the Future project in Nicosia, Cyprus, is a **collaborative effort** led by a diverse team of individuals dedicated to fostering sustainable agriculture, community empowerment, and social inclusion. **Dr. Natasa Christou** serves as the initiative coordinator and space principal architect, overseeing the project's design and implementation. **Argyro Toumazou** facilitates community engagement and cultural production, while **Steven Stavrou and Burak Berk Doluay** focus on bi-communal engagement and community sustainability through Cyprus Inno. **Chris Tofarides** brings expertise in creating food as a social connecting experience, complemented by **Andreas Angeli's** focus on clean tech and social innovation. **Paul Koronis** leads efforts in social responsibility and engagement, with support from activist and social entrepreneurship expert **Panayiota Polykarpou**. Together, this dedicated team collaborates with various stakeholders, organisations, and community members to realise the project's vision of creating a dynamic urban food sharing ecosystem and promoting Nicosia as a role-model city for sustainability and community resilience.

Awards and Acknowledgements

The initiative is now a National Champion and an International Winner through Climathon working collectively to accelerate solutions to the climate crisis.

2020 National Winner of Climathon
[global presence]

2021 Winner of Pusulas Competition
[funded by world bank group]

2022 European Winner of the New European Bauhaus Prize

Number of people working on the project

8 professionals

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

The number of primary target beneficiaries involved in the Gardens of the Future initiative overall depends on the size of the community, the capacity of the project, and its outreach efforts. The primary target beneficiaries include local residents of Nicosia, particularly those living in the neighbourhood surrounding the communal garden, as well as individuals interested in sustainable agriculture, community building, and economic empowerment through agro-entrepreneurship. This involves more than 200 people.

Number and type of organisations / institutions involved

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) focused on sustainability, community development, and agriculture.

Local government departments responsible for urban planning, environmental management, and community services.

Educational institutions such as universities, schools, and vocational training centres offering expertise in agriculture, urban planning, architecture, or environmental studies.

Community-based organisations and grassroots initiatives active in the local area.

Businesses and corporations interested in corporate social responsibility (CSR) related to sustainability or community development.

Research institutions or think tanks providing expertise in sustainable development, circular economy, and urban agriculture.

Cultural and arts organisations interested in promoting community engagement and social cohesion through creative projects.

Main achievements and goals obtained

- Establishment of a communal garden as a sustainable urban agriculture hub.
- Empowerment of local residents as agro-entrepreneurs, creating economic opportunities and fostering self-reliance.
- Promotion of inclusivity and diversity through community gardening activities that engage people of all backgrounds.
- Implementation of circular economy principles, leading to waste reduction and resource conservation.
- Creation of new work opportunities in the neighbourhood and beyond, contributing to local economic development.
- Increased local food production, enhancing food security and resilience in the community.
- Strengthening of social bonds and community cohesion through shared gardening experiences and collaborative projects.
- Advocacy for policy changes and urban planning initiatives that prioritise green spaces and sustainable development.
- Education and capacity-building in sustainable agriculture and gardening techniques, empowering individuals to grow their own food.
- Recognition of Nicosia as a role-model city for sustainable urban agriculture, inspiring other communities to follow suit.



Monitoring and evaluation

Regular data collection on key performance indicators such as **community participation rates, waste reduction metrics, and economic impact indicators.**

Periodic evaluations conducted by external experts or internal staff, using qualitative and quantitative methods to measure outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

Feedback mechanisms to gather input from stakeholders, including participants, volunteers, and community members. This includes surveys, focus groups, interviews, and suggestion boxes to solicit feedback on the project's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for enhancement.

Producing **annual reports,** progress updates, and presentations summarising achievements, challenges, and lessons learned.

Regular meetings to analyse results, identify best practices, and make informed decisions about project priorities and strategies.



ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



By empowering locals to become agro-entrepreneurs and creating new work opportunities, the project contributes to poverty alleviation efforts. It enables vulnerable individuals to generate income through sustainable agriculture activities, reducing their dependency on external support and enhancing their economic resilience.



The project promotes food security and nutrition by increasing local food production through communal gardening activities. This helps vulnerable communities access fresh, nutritious produce, reducing their vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition.



The initiative fosters inclusivity and gender equality by providing equal opportunities for participation regardless of gender. Women, who often face greater barriers to economic empowerment and access to resources, can benefit from the project's training programmes and support for agro-entrepreneurship, empowering them to play active roles in sustainable agriculture initiatives.



The project addresses inequalities by providing opportunities for social inclusion and economic empowerment to marginalised communities. It embraces diversity and welcomes individuals from various backgrounds, including age, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status, fostering a sense of belonging and community cohesion.



The initiative contributes to building sustainable cities and communities by promoting urban agriculture and green spaces. By transforming vacant lots or underutilised spaces into productive gardens, the project enhances the quality of urban life and strengthens community resilience to environmental challenges.

Target of the project

The target of the Gardens of the Future project encompasses individuals and communities in Nicosia, Cyprus, who face various socio-economic vulnerabilities.

Low-Income Individuals and Families: Many participants come from low-income households facing challenges such as unemployment, economic instability, and limited access to nutritious food. The project aims to address these needs by providing opportunities for income generation through agro-entrepreneurship and access to fresh, locally grown produce.

Marginalised Communities: The project targets marginalised communities within Nicosia, including those living in underserved neighbourhoods or facing social exclusion. These communities experience barriers to economic opportunities, social services, and community engagement. By creating inclusive spaces for communal gardening and fostering social cohesion, the project aims to address these vulnerabilities and promote a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Women and Youth: Women and youth constitute specific demographic groups within the project's target population. Women, in particular, face gender-specific challenges such as limited access to land, resources, and decision-making power in agriculture. Youth encounter difficulties transitioning into the workforce or accessing education and training opportunities. The project aims to address these needs by providing targeted support and training programmes to empower women and youth as agro-entrepreneurs and community leaders.

Elderly Individuals: The project also caters to the needs of elderly individuals who experience social isolation, limited mobility, and age-related health challenges. Participation in communal gardening activities provides opportunities for social interaction, physical activity, and mental stimulation, improving overall well-being and quality of life for older adults.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Agricultural Skills: Participants acquire knowledge and skills in sustainable agriculture practices, including planting, harvesting, soil management, and pest control. They learn techniques for maximising crop yields while minimising environmental impact, enhancing their capacity to grow their own food and engage in agro-entrepreneurship activities.

Entrepreneurial Skills: Recipients develop entrepreneurial skills such as business planning, marketing, and financial management. They learn how to develop and manage small-scale agricultural enterprises, including selling produce to local markets, restaurants, or through community-supported agriculture programmes.

Community Connections: Engaging in communal gardening activities fosters social connections and relationships within the community. Participants build friendships, networks, and support systems with fellow gardeners, neighbours, and volunteers, enhancing social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Access to Resources: Participants gain access to resources such as land, water, seeds, tools, and training materials needed for gardening and agro-entrepreneurship.

Empowerment and Confidence: Through their involvement in the project, recipients gain a sense of empowerment and confidence in their ability to effect positive change in their lives and communities. They become active agents of their own development, making decisions and taking actions to improve their livelihoods and the environment.

Environmental Stewardship: Recipients develop a deeper appreciation for the environment and the importance of sustainable practices in food production.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

Innovation: The project introduces innovative approaches to urban agriculture and community development that align with broader policy goals for sustainability and resilience. For example, by transforming vacant lots or underutilised spaces into productive gardens, the project demonstrates innovative land-use practices that contribute to greening the city and enhancing food security. Innovative technologies or techniques used in sustainable agriculture are also incorporated, showcasing cutting-edge solutions to local challenges.

Coherence: Gardens of the Future aligns closely with existing local policies and initiatives related to urban planning, environmental conservation, and social inclusion. By promoting green spaces, biodiversity, and community engagement, the project reinforces key objectives outlined in municipal plans or strategies. Collaboration with local government agencies and stakeholders ensures coherence between project activities and broader policy frameworks, maximising impact and sustainability.

Disruptiveness: The project has challenged or disrupted existing norms, regulations, or power structures within the local policy landscape. For example, if municipal regulations restrict urban agriculture or prioritise conventional land uses over community gardens, the project may face resistance or barriers to implementation. However, by advocating for policy changes and engaging stakeholders in dialogue, the project can catalyse shifts towards more supportive and enabling policy environments for sustainable urban agriculture and community development.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

Community Garden Planning Workshops: Organising workshops where community members participate in the planning and design of the communal garden space. This includes discussions on layout, plant selection, infrastructure needs, and communal areas, ensuring that the garden reflects the preferences and needs of the local community.

Gardening Workshops: Hosting hands-on workshops and training sessions on sustainable gardening and farming techniques. Participants learn about organic gardening practices, composting, water conservation, pest management, and crop rotation, gaining practical skills to grow their own food sustainably.

Harvest Festivals and Community Meals: Organising harvest festivals and communal meals where participants come together to celebrate the bounty of the garden and share freshly harvested produce. These events promote social bonding, cultural exchange, and appreciation for local food while showcasing the project's achievements.

Community Clean-up Days: Organising community clean-up days where participants work together to beautify and maintain the garden space. This involves tasks such as weeding, mulching, pruning, and general maintenance, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the communal garden.

Cooking and Nutrition Workshops: Offering cooking and nutrition workshops where participants learn how to prepare healthy, delicious meals using fresh, locally grown ingredients.

Composting Demonstrations: Conducting composting demonstrations to educate participants about the importance of organic waste recycling and soil health.

Art and Creativity Workshops: Hosting art and creativity workshops where participants can express themselves and bond with each other.

Example of output delivered by the project

Community Garden Infrastructure: Compost bins, seating areas. These structures provide the necessary infrastructure for gardening activities and community gatherings, enhancing the usability of the space.

Harvested Produce: Participants in the project harvest fresh produce from the communal garden, including fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. This output can be used for various purposes, such as community distribution (fresh produce can be distributed among project participants, volunteers, and local community members, promoting access to healthy, locally grown food) and community meals (harvested produce can be used to prepare communal meals during events, workshops, or gatherings, fostering social cohesion and culinary exchange within the community).

Educational Workshops and Events: The project organises educational workshops, events, and demonstrations on topics related to sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, and community development. These outputs provide opportunities for learning, skill-building, and knowledge exchange among participants and stakeholders, empowering them to implement sustainable practices in their own lives and communities.

Community Engagement Activities: The project facilitates various community engagement activities, such as gardening workdays, clean-up events, seed swaps, and cultural celebrations. These outputs promote social interaction, collaboration, and civic participation within the community, strengthening social ties and community resilience over time.





Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

In the Gardens of the Future project, beneficiaries are typically involved in various phases of project development, including the context analysis phase and the identification of factors that shape project implementation:

Needs Assessment and Context Analysis: Beneficiaries are often consulted during the initial phase of the project to assess community needs, preferences, and priorities related to sustainable agriculture and community development. This may involve conducting surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews to gather input from local residents, stakeholders, and potential participants. Beneficiaries contribute valuable insights into their experiences, challenges, and aspirations, shaping the project's objectives and strategies accordingly.

Co-Design and Planning Workshops: Beneficiaries participate in co-design and planning workshops where they collaborate with project organisers, experts, and other stakeholders to develop project plans and activities. During these workshops, beneficiaries have the opportunity to share their ideas, preferences, and concerns, co-creating solutions and strategies that reflect their needs and aspirations. This participatory approach ensures that project interventions are contextually relevant, culturally sensitive, and responsive to community priorities.

Identification of Factors and Constraints: Beneficiaries play a key role in identifying factors and constraints that may affect project implementation and success. Through participatory discussions and problem-solving exercises, beneficiaries identify barriers, challenges, and opportunities related to sustainable agriculture, community engagement, and social inclusion. This process helps project organisers anticipate and address potential obstacles, ensuring that interventions are tailored to local contexts and realities.

Capacity-Building and Training: Beneficiaries are provided with opportunities for capacity-building and training to enhance their skills, knowledge, and confidence in sustainable agriculture practices and community development. Training sessions cover topics such as organic gardening, composting, water conservation, entrepreneurship, and leadership development, equipping beneficiaries with the tools and resources they need to actively participate in project activities and decision-making processes.

Feedback and Evaluation: Throughout the project life cycle, beneficiaries are actively engaged in providing feedback and evaluation on project activities, outcomes, and impact. This involves regular meetings, focus groups, surveys, and participatory evaluations where beneficiaries reflect on their experiences, share lessons learned, and suggest improvements for future programming.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the implementation phase

Hands-On Participation: Beneficiaries actively participate in hands-on activities related to gardening, and maintenance of the communal garden.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Beneficiaries contribute to monitoring and evaluation efforts to assess the progress, effectiveness, and impact of project activities.

Community Engagement and Outreach: Beneficiaries play an active role in community engagement and outreach activities to promote the project and mobilise support from the broader community.

Conflict Resolution and Problem-Solving: Beneficiaries contribute to conflict resolution and problem-solving efforts to address challenges and obstacles that arise during project implementation.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Project Oversight and Coordination: Beneficiaries are involved in project oversight and coordination activities, such as serving on the project management committee. They contribute their perspectives, insights, and expertise to decision-making processes related to project planning, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring that the project remains responsive to their needs and aspirations.

Evaluation and Feedback: Beneficiaries are actively involved in the evaluation phase of the project, providing feedback on project results, impacts, and sustainability. They participate in focus group discussions, surveys, or interviews to reflect on their experiences, share lessons learned, and assess the project's effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes.

Capacity Building and Empowerment: Beneficiaries continue to engage in capacity-building activities during the project management/delivery phase, enhancing their skills, knowledge, and confidence in project management and community development.

Celebration and Recognition: Beneficiaries participate in celebrations and recognition events to acknowledge their contributions and achievements throughout the project life cycle. These events provide opportunities to celebrate successes, recognise individual and collective efforts, and express gratitude for the dedication and commitment of participants, volunteers, and stakeholders.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Based on the roles and responsibilities of the team members provided, here's how they come into play during the project:

Dr. Natasa Christou - Initiative Coordinator and Space Principal Architect: Dr. Christou serves as the Project Coordinator, overseeing the overall implementation of the initiative. As the principal architect, she is responsible for designing the communal garden space, ensuring that it meets the project's objectives and is accessible and welcoming to all participants.

Argyro Toumazou - Community Facilitator & Cultural Producer: Argyro plays a key role in facilitating community engagement and participation in the project. She organises cultural events, workshops, and activities that promote social cohesion and inclusivity within the community.

Steven Stavrou & Burak Berk Doluay - Cyprus Inno: Bi-communal, engagement with sustaining the community: Steven and Burak represent the Cyprus Inno initiative, focusing on bi-communal engagement and community sustainability. They work to foster collaboration and dialogue between different community groups, promoting unity and cooperation in achieving project goals.

Chris Tofarides - Creating food as a social connecting experience: Chris specialises in creating food-related experiences that bring people together. He organises events and activities centred around food, such as cooking workshops, communal meals, and food-sharing initiatives, fostering social connections and cultural exchange.

Andreas Angeli - Clean Tech & Social Innovation: Andreas focuses on integrating clean technology and social innovation into the project. He explores innovative solutions for sustainable agriculture, waste management, and resource efficiency, promoting environmental stewardship and resilience within the community.

Paul Koronis - Social responsibility and engagement: Paul leads efforts related to social responsibility and community engagement. He develops strategies for engaging local businesses, organisations, and individuals in supporting the project's objectives and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for community well-being.

Panayiota Polykarpou - Activist and social entrepreneurship expert: Panayiota brings expertise in activism and social entrepreneurship to the team. She advocates for social justice and empowerment, supporting initiatives that promote equity, inclusion, and economic opportunity for all members of the community.



Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Architecture and Urban Design: Dr. Natasa Christou (1 person). Architecture and urban design expertise are essential for designing the communal garden space, ensuring it is functional, aesthetically pleasing, and accessible to all participants.

Community Engagement and Facilitation: Argyro Toumazou (1 person).Community engagement and facilitation skills are crucial for building relationships, fostering participation, and promoting social cohesion within the community.

Bi-Communal Engagement: Steven Stavrou & Burak Berk Doluay (2 people). Bi-communal engagement expertise is necessary for fostering collaboration and dialogue between different community groups, promoting unity, and cooperation in achieving project goals.

Culinary Arts and Food Culture: Chris Tofarides (1 person). Culinary arts and food culture expertise are utilised to create food-related experiences that bring people together, such as cooking workshops, communal meals, and food-sharing initiatives.

Environmental Science and Technology: Andreas Angeli (1 person). Expertise in environmental science and technology is employed to integrate clean technology and social innovation into the project, exploring sustainable solutions for agriculture, waste management, and resource efficiency.

Social Responsibility and Advocacy: Paul Koronis (1 person). Social responsibility and advocacy expertise are utilised to develop strategies for engaging local businesses, organisations, and individuals in supporting the project's objectives and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for community well-being.

Social Entrepreneurship and Activism: Panayiota Polykarpou (1 person). Expertise in social entrepreneurship and activism is employed to advocate for social justice and empowerment, supporting initiatives that promote equity, inclusion, and economic opportunity for all members of the community.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Local Government Agencies: Collaboration with local government agencies, such as municipal councils and departments of urban planning and agriculture facilitate access to resources, permits, and support for the project.

Non-profit Organisations: Partnerships with non-profit organisations focused on community development, environmental conservation and food security provide additional resources and expertise to support project implementation. Non-profits offer volunteer support and outreach assistance to enhance the project's reach and effectiveness.

Community-Based Organisations: Collaboration with community-based organisations (CBOs) serving specific demographic groups or neighbourhoods can help ensure that the project is inclusive and responsive to community needs.

Academic Institutions: Partnerships with universities, research institutes, or agricultural extension services provide access to academic expertise, research capabilities, and educational resources.

Businesses and Corporations: Collaboration with businesses and corporations interested in corporate social responsibility (CSR) or sustainability initiatives provides financial support, in-kind donations, and volunteer engagement opportunities. Businesses sponsor project activities, donate supplies or equipment, or offer expertise in areas such as marketing, branding, or event management.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Administrative and Finance Departments: Collaboration between administrative and finance departments ensures efficient management of project resources, budgeting, and financial reporting. This collaboration helps maintain transparency, accountability, and compliance with organisational policies and donor requirements throughout the project life cycle.

Human Resources and Volunteer Management: Collaboration between human resources and volunteer management teams supports recruitment, training, and management of project staff and volunteers. This collaboration ensures that project personnel are adequately trained, supported, and motivated to contribute effectively to project goals.

Green on the Morii Canal

March 2018 - May 2018

Anda Gheorghe, Larisa Bucatariu,
Iunia Monica Buricescu,
Ana-Maria Cosma, Edith Heczei,
Miruna Moldovan, Alexandra Lucaci

Cluj-Napoca, Romania





Useful Links

Project website

Social channel

Community, Municipality and Regeneration
Suburbs / Community activation / Environmental sustainability

Texts by Patricia Isabela Brăileanu and Gabriel Dima, National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

"Verde pe Canalul Morii" is a community-led project focused on enhancing the Parcul Farmec-Canalul Morii area in Cluj-Napoca. Through a month-long initiative in March-May 2018, the project aimed to **reduce reliance on car travel to the city centre by improving local amenities and encouraging neighbourhood engagement.**

The project team conducted **door-to-door surveys to understand community needs and ideas for the area.** Working with UTCN architecture students, they developed temporary interventions aligned with these insights. **Key interventions included a more accessible bridge over the Canalul Morii and a recreational space with benches, tables, and flowers.** These were well-received, attracting over 700 visitors on the opening day. The project highlighted the benefits of community involvement in design, showing that when residents are engaged, interventions are more successful and sustainable.

After the one-month trial, the temporary interventions were removed, causing some confusion but also sparking community support. A report was compiled for the Cluj-Napoca City Hall, informing future redevelopment. "Verde pe Canalul Morii" demonstrated the potential of temporary interventions to improve urban spaces and stressed the importance of ongoing community engagement. With a diverse team of initiators, collaborators, and volunteers, it fostered **local ownership and collaboration** for sustainable urban development in Cluj-Napoca.

Main objectives

- Reduce reliance on car travel to the city centre for leisure activities;
- Enhance local amenities and recreational spaces in the Parcul Farmec-Canalul Morii area;
- Foster community engagement and sense of ownership over neighbourhood spaces;
- Implement temporary interventions based on community input and feedback;
- Test the feasibility and acceptance of these interventions among residents;
- Provide valuable insights for future urban development and redevelopment efforts;
- Promote sustainable and inclusive urban planning practices;
- Facilitate collaboration between residents, local authorities, and academic institutions;
- Raise awareness about the potential of temporary interventions in urban revitalisation;

Primary target users/beneficiaries

The primary target users/ beneficiaries for this project are:

1) Residents of the Parcul Farmec-Canalul Morii area - these residents will benefit from improved local amenities and increased opportunities for socialising and recreational activities within their neighbourhood.

2) Local community - the broader local community in Cluj-Napoca will benefit from the revitalisation of the Canalul Morii area, as it will become a more attractive destination for leisure activities and social gatherings.

3) Children and families - the creation of a more accessible and engaging public space, including a play area, benches, and tables, will provide children and families with a safe and enjoyable environment for outdoor activities and relaxation.

4) Cyclists, pedestrians, and users of alternative transportation - the installation of a more accessible bridge over the Canalul Morii will benefit those who prefer to walk, cycle, or use alternative modes of transportation, improving connectivity between neighbourhoods and reducing reliance on cars.

5) Students and academic community - the involvement of students from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at UTCN in the project provides them with practical experience and contributes to their understanding of community-driven urban development initiatives.

6) Local authorities and urban planners - the project's outcomes, including the report prepared for the Cluj-Napoca City Hall, will inform future urban planning and redevelopment efforts in the Canalul Morii area, ensuring that they align with the needs and preferences of the local community.

Credits

Team initiators:
Anda Gheorghe, Larisa Bucatariu, Iunia Monica Buricescu, Ana-Maria Cosma, Edith Heczei, Alexandra Lucaci, Miruna Moldovan

Neighbours:
Caroli Sebastin Ajtai, Attila Almási, Csaba Ludovic Balazs, Tibor Heltai, Andrei Kiss, Anca Moldovan, Anca Mureșan, Alexandru Varga.
Specialist collaborators:
Tiberiu Ciolacu, Dana Iacoban, Benjamin Kohl, Cristina Labo, Dorin Man, Adriana Măgeruşan, Marius Cătălin Moga, Ovidiu Rusu, Mihai Stănuș, Ioana Suceava, Alin Tănasă.

Volunteers:
Ioana Afloarei, Valentin Anghelescu, Andreea Bunea, Maria-Cristina Buiga, Daniel Cioara, Ramona Doleanu, Andreea Drăguș, Andrei Faunescu, Adrian Ganea, Dadu Ghejan, Andra Gabriela Hrenciuc, Daniela Hopîrtean, Georgiana Jiman, Spiro Koça, Ella Kinzel, Rodica Luchian, Andreea Manoilă, Paula Marcău, Marina Melenti, Marina Mironica, Juliette Le Morzadec, Cezar Moldovan, David Mutnean, Anca Laura Nistor, Joanna Olivera, Lucas Pérez Herrera, Andrei Pop, Cristina Stanciu, Radu Stoica, Ana-Maria Timiș, Robert Vasiluț, Ioana Vlad.

The context

The Parcul Farmec-Canalul Morii area in Cluj-Napoca faced challenges like excessive car travel to the city centre for leisure activities. Residents sought ways to enhance their neighbourhood and reduce reliance on cars. “Verde pe Canalul Morii” emerged as a response, aiming to revitalise the area and promote local engagement. Through surveys and collaboration with architecture students, the project identified community needs and implemented temporary interventions, such as an accessible bridge and recreational spaces. The project showcased the importance of community involvement in urban design and provided valuable insights for future development in the area.

Number of people working on the project

Overall was approximately 66
Initiators (Team): 7
Neighbours: 8
Specialist Collaborators: 10
Volunteers: 41

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

The number of people involved as primary target beneficiaries (overall) for this project was approximately 700, based on the 700 visitors on the opening day of the project’s interventions.

Number and type of organisations / institutions involved

1) **Academic Institution**: the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at UTCN collaborated in designing and implementing the project.

2) **Local Authority**: the Cluj-Napoca City Hall was involved, particularly in receiving the project’s report and potentially using it for future development plans.

Main achievements and goals obtained

Increased Community Engagement:
The project successfully engaged residents in the revitalisation of their neighbourhood, fostering a sense of ownership and pride;

Improved Local Amenities:
Temporary interventions such as the accessible bridge and recreational spaces provided immediate benefits to residents, enhancing the quality of life in the area;

Successful Implementation of Temporary Interventions:
The interventions were well-received and utilised by the community, demonstrating their feasibility and acceptance;

Valuable Insights for Future Development:
The project generated a report for the Cluj-Napoca City Hall, providing valuable insights and recommendations for future urban development in the Canalul Morii area;

Demonstration of Sustainable Urban Planning Practices:
The project showcased the importance of community involvement and temporary interventions in sustainable urban planning;

Collaboration Between Stakeholders:
Collaboration between residents, academic institutions, and local authorities was fostered, laying the groundwork for future collaborative projects;

Promotion of Alternative Transportation:
The project promoted alternative modes of transportation by making the area more pedestrian and cyclist-friendly, contributing to reduced car dependency;

Creation of a Vibrant Community Space:
The project created a vibrant community space where residents could socialise, relax, and enjoy recreational activities, contributing to community cohesion.





Monitoring and evaluation

Data Collection - throughout the project, data is collected on various aspects, including community engagement, usage of interventions, feedback from residents, and any challenges encountered;

Regular Assessments - there are regular assessments conducted to evaluate the progress of the project. These assessments include monitoring the implementation of interventions, tracking community participation, and assessing the impact of the project on the neighbourhood.

Feedback mechanisms are established to gather input from residents, stakeholders, and volunteers. This feedback helps in understanding the effectiveness of the interventions and identifying areas for improvement;

Documentation - all activities, outcomes, and feedback are documented systematically. This documentation includes written reports, photographs, videos, and any other relevant materials;

Analysis - data collected is analysed to assess the project's performance against its objectives. This analysis helps in identifying successful strategies, challenges faced, and lessons learned;

Reporting - regular reports are prepared to summarize the project's progress, achievements, and challenges. These reports are shared with stakeholders, including the Cluj-Napoca City Hall, to keep them informed about the project's status and outcomes;

Adaptation - based on the monitoring and evaluation results, adjustments are made to the project as needed. This may involve modifying interventions, improving communication strategies, or addressing any issues raised by the community.





ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



The "Verde pe Canalul Morii" project addresses several challenges of inequalities outlined in the UN Agenda 2030, particularly related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Inequality in Access to Public Spaces - the project aims to create inclusive and accessible public spaces for all residents, regardless of age, gender, or socioeconomic status. By providing amenities like benches, tables, and recreational areas, the project addresses inequalities in access to public spaces, ensuring that everyone can benefit from a vibrant and welcoming environment;

Inequality in Mobility - the installation of an accessible bridge over the Canalul Morii promotes alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling, thereby addressing inequalities in mobility. This benefits residents who may not have access to private vehicles and rely on walking or cycling as their primary means of transportation;

Inequality in Participation - "Verde pe Canalul Morii" actively engages residents in the decision-making process and implementation of the project. By involving local communities, including marginalised groups, in the planning and execution of interventions, the project empowers residents and ensures that their voices are heard, thereby addressing inequalities in participation.

Promotion of Social Inclusion:

The project creates opportunities for social interaction and community engagement, which are essential for fostering social inclusion. By providing spaces for residents to gather, socialise, and participate in activities together, "Verde pe Canalul Morii" helps to strengthen community bonds and reduce social isolation, thus promoting social inclusion;

Environmental Sustainability:

The project promotes environmental sustainability by encouraging sustainable transportation methods, such as walking and cycling, and by creating green spaces within the neighbourhood. By improving access to green areas and promoting environmentally-friendly modes of transportation, the project contributes to a healthier and more sustainable environment for all residents.

Addressing Vulnerability:

The project specifically targets vulnerable groups within the community, such as children, elderly individuals, and those with disabilities, by providing amenities and interventions that cater to their needs. For example, the accessible bridge and recreational spaces make it easier for individuals with mobility impairments to access the area and participate in recreational activities.

Target of the project

Specific Socio-Demographic Parameters

The target population includes residents of all ages, from children to seniors;

Socio-economic status varies within the community, with some households facing financial constraints;

Diversity in cultural backgrounds and identities is present, reflecting the multicultural nature of the neighbourhood;

The project aims to engage residents actively in its development and implementation, regardless of socio-demographic characteristics, ensuring that the interventions meet the diverse needs of the community.

Residents' Needs

Accessible and inclusive public spaces for socialising, recreation, and relaxation;

Safe and convenient transportation options, especially for pedestrians and cyclists;

Opportunities for community engagement and participation in local initiatives;

Environmental improvements to enhance the overall quality of life in the neighbourhood.

Impact of Vulnerability

Elderly residents may face challenges related to mobility and social isolation. Access to safe and accessible public spaces is crucial for maintaining social connections and physical well-being;

Families with children require safe and stimulating environments for play and recreation. Lack of such spaces can limit children's opportunities for outdoor activities and social interaction;

Individuals with disabilities may encounter barriers to accessing public spaces and amenities. Addressing these barriers is essential for ensuring equal participation and inclusion within the community;

Low-income residents may have limited access to recreational facilities and transportation options. Creating free or low-cost amenities can help alleviate financial barriers to participation;

Marginalised groups, such as migrants or ethnic minorities, may face social exclusion and discrimination. Providing inclusive spaces and promoting diversity can help foster a sense of belonging and acceptance within the community.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

1) Increased Community Cohesion
Residents have forged new connections with neighbours, volunteers, and project organisers, fostering a sense of community and belonging;

Social Capital: By participating in community activities and events, residents have built social networks and gained access to valuable social support systems.

2) Improved Access to Public Spaces
Residents now have access to improved recreational spaces, including benches, tables, and green areas, providing opportunities for relaxation and leisure activities;

The installation of an accessible bridge over Canalul Morii has improved residents' ability to move around the neighbourhood, particularly for those with mobility challenges.

3) Engagement in Decision-Making
Through participation in project planning and implementation, residents have gained a sense of empowerment and ownership over their community;

Residents involved in project activities have developed skills in advocacy, community organising, and project management.

4) Environmental Awareness and Sustainability
Residents have gained awareness of environmental issues and sustainable practices through participation in green initiatives and events;

The creation of green spaces has provided residents with opportunities to connect with nature and appreciate the benefits of a greener environment.

5) Strengthened Social Inclusion
The project has created inclusive spaces that accommodate the needs of diverse community members, including children, elderly individuals, and persons with disabilities;

By promoting inclusivity and diversity, the project has fostered a sense of acceptance and celebration of different cultural backgrounds and identities.

6) Community Capacity Building
Residents have developed collaborative skills through teamwork and cooperation with project partners and volunteers;

The project has enabled residents to mobilise resources and support from local institutions, businesses, and government agencies.

7) Access to Information and Resources
The project has facilitated the exchange of information and resources among residents, enabling them to access valuable services and opportunities;

Residents have gained access to networking opportunities through engagement with local organisations and stakeholders involved in the project.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project introduces disruptive practices by challenging traditional approaches to urban planning and development. **Instead of top-down decision-making, it adopts a bottom-up approach, involving residents in the design and implementation of interventions.** The project's use of temporary interventions, such as the installation of a temporary bridge and recreational spaces, is innovative. These interventions allow for quick testing of ideas and provide valuable insights for future permanent development;

The project aligns with local sustainability goals, as outlined in municipal development plans. By promoting alternative transportation, creating green spaces, and fostering community engagement, the project supports the city's efforts to create a more sustainable and livable environment. It reflects the principles of **participatory governance**, which are emphasised in local policies. By involving residents in decision-making processes, the project strengthens local democracy and governance structures.

Additionally, the project contributes to social inclusion, which is a key focus of local policies. By creating **inclusive public spaces** and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, the project helps to reduce social inequalities and promote social cohesion; **the collaboration with the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at UTCN demonstrates an innovative partnership between academia and the community.** This partnership brings academic expertise and resources to the project while also providing students with practical experience in real-world urban development projects. Furthermore, **the project engages with local businesses and organisations to mobilise resources and support.** These partnerships enhance the project's impact and sustainability by leveraging additional resources and expertise. **One challenge is ensuring coherence between temporary interventions tested by the project and future permanent developments**. There may be resistance or bureaucratic barriers to adopting innovative ideas into long-term planning and policies. Additionally, while the project demonstrates innovative practices at the neighbourhood level, scaling up and replicating these practices across the city may face challenges. Ensuring coherence with broader urban development strategies is crucial for widespread impact.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

- **Door-to-Door Surveys** - project organisers conducted surveys among residents to gather input on their needs and ideas for improving the neighbourhood;
- **Community Workshops** - workshops were organised to engage residents in brainstorming sessions, where they could share their visions for the neighbourhood and provide feedback on proposed interventions;
- **Design Charrettes** - residents participated in design charrettes, collaborative sessions where they worked with architects and urban planners to develop ideas for temporary interventions and urban improvements.
- **Site Visits and Walkabouts** - residents, along with project organisers and specialists, conducted site visits and walkabouts to assess the neighbourhood's current condition and identify areas for improvement;
- **Open Houses** - open houses were held to showcase proposed interventions and gather feedback from residents. Residents had the opportunity to ask questions, express concerns, and provide suggestions for refinement;
- **Interactive Exhibits** - interactive exhibits were set up in public spaces to educate residents about the project and gather their input through visual displays, maps, and interactive activities;
- **Community Meetings** - regular community meetings were held to update residents on the project's progress, discuss upcoming activities, and solicit input on key decisions; Volunteer Opportunities - residents were invited to volunteer for various project activities, such as installing temporary interventions, maintaining green spaces, and organising community events;
- **Online Platforms** - online platforms, such as websites and social media channels, were used to engage residents who couldn't attend in-person activities. Residents could provide feedback, ask questions, and stay informed about project updates;
- **Feedback Sessions** - feedback sessions were organised to review the success of implemented interventions and gather suggestions for future improvements.





Example of output delivered by the project

Temporary Interventions
A temporary bridge was installed to improve access across Canalul Morii. Following its installation, the bridge provided residents with safer and more convenient pedestrian and cyclist access to Parcul Farmec. Temporary recreational spaces, including benches, tables, and green areas, were created for residents to enjoy. Following installation, these spaces continued to be used by residents for relaxation, socialising, and recreational activities.

Community Reports and Documentation
Reports documenting the results of door-to-door surveys, community assessments, and feedback sessions were compiled. These reports provided valuable insights into residents' needs and preferences, informing future development plans and initiatives. Documentation of design proposals and charrette outcomes was provided. These documents served as references for future urban development projects and provided inspiration for permanent interventions.

Educational Materials
Brochures containing information about the project's goals, interventions, and sustainability initiatives were distributed to residents. These materials helped raise awareness about sustainable urban development practices and encouraged community involvement. Educational materials used during community workshops, such as presentations and handouts, were made available. These materials could be accessed by residents for further reference and shared with other communities interested in similar projects.

Online Platforms and Communication Channels
An online platform, such as a project website or social media channels, was created to share updates, event announcements, and resources. After release, these platforms continued to serve as a hub for community engagement, providing residents with a means to stay informed and involved in ongoing initiatives.

Online feedback forms were made available for residents to provide input and suggestions. These forms remained accessible after the project's release, allowing residents to continue sharing their thoughts on neighbourhood improvements.

Collaborative Partnerships
Formal agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with partner organisations, such as academic institutions or local businesses, were established. These partnerships continued beyond the project's release, facilitating ongoing collaboration on future initiatives and sustainability efforts.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

Context Analysis Phase
Beneficiaries are engaged through door-to-door surveys conducted by project organisers. These surveys collect valuable information about residents' perceptions, needs, and challenges related to the neighbourhood;

Workshops are organised where beneficiaries participate in discussions and brainstorming sessions. Here, they share insights based on their experiences living in the neighbourhood and provide input on challenges and opportunities for improvement;

Beneficiaries join project organisers and specialists on site visits and walkabouts to assess the current condition of the neighbourhood. This direct involvement allows beneficiaries to identify areas for improvement and suggest potential interventions.

Identification of Factors
Beneficiaries participate in design charrettes, collaborative sessions where they work alongside architects and urban planners to develop ideas for interventions. They contribute ideas, provide feedback on proposed designs, and help prioritize interventions based on community needs.

Throughout the project development phase, beneficiaries are engaged in feedback sessions where they review proposed plans and interventions. They have the opportunity to express their opinions, ask questions, and suggest modifications to ensure that plans align with their preferences and priorities.

Planning and Decision-Making
Regular community meetings are held where beneficiaries are updated on project progress and upcoming activities. They actively participate in decision-making processes, such as selecting interventions to be implemented or deciding on event programming.

Online platforms, such as project websites and social media channels, provide beneficiaries with opportunities to participate remotely. They can access project updates, provide feedback, and engage in discussions, ensuring that their voices are heard even if they cannot attend in-person meetings.

Implementation Support
Beneficiaries have the chance to volunteer for various project activities, such as installing interventions or organising community events. By actively participating in implementation, they contribute to the project's success and take ownership of the changes happening in their neighbourhood.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Volunteer Participation
Beneficiaries volunteer to assist with the installation of temporary interventions, such as the accessible bridge and recreational spaces. They help with tasks like assembling structures, planting greenery, and setting up seating areas;

Beneficiaries take responsibility for the maintenance of installed interventions. They participate in activities such as watering plants, picking up litter, and performing minor repairs to ensure the continued functionality and attractiveness of the spaces.

Event Organisation and Participation
Beneficiaries actively participate in organising and attending community events held in the newly created spaces. These events, such as picnics, movie screenings, and cultural performances, provide opportunities for residents to socialise, celebrate, and enjoy the revitalised areas together;

Beneficiaries contribute ideas and participate in workshops and activities organised as part of the project. These may include gardening workshops, art installations, or educational sessions on environmental sustainability.

Feedback and Evaluation
Beneficiaries provide feedback on the implemented interventions and community events. They share their thoughts on what is working well, what could be improved, and any additional ideas for enhancing the spaces;

Beneficiaries may be involved in formal evaluations of the project's impact. This could include surveys, interviews, or focus group discussions to assess changes in the neighbourhood and residents' perceptions of the interventions.

Promotion and Advocacy
Beneficiaries act as ambassadors for the project, spreading awareness among their neighbours and encouraging participation in project activities. They share information about upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and the benefits of the project for the community.

Beneficiaries may advocate for the continuation or expansion of successful interventions beyond the project's initial phase. They communicate with local authorities and stakeholders to express the importance of maintaining and further developing the revitalised spaces.

Continued Engagement
Beneficiaries remain engaged in decision-making processes related to the project's future. They attend community meetings and provide input on potential permanent interventions or ongoing maintenance strategies.

Most importantly, beneficiaries continue to use and enjoy the revitalised spaces, ensuring their continued relevance and significance in the community.

Les Petites Cantines

June 2016 - Ongoing

Diane Dupré, Etienne Thouvenot

France





Useful Links

Project website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration

City / Community activation / Environmental sustainability / Barriers

Texts by Cristian Campagnaro, Sara Ceraolo, Marco D'Urzo, Politecnico di Torino

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Restaurants with 3 characteristics: **participative**, **with free offer and engaged food**. They are based not on performance but on the assumption of vulnerability and the building of relationships of trust. They are developed through 3 axes: daily life, the economic model, the development model attached to local specificities (learning community).

The context

The founders decided to change their lifestyle and start this project to focus on a different way to live: **having more relationships of reciprocity and resonance with people** (concept inspired by theories of Harmut Rosa).

Primary target users/beneficiaries

People fighting against isolation.

Credits

Diane Dupré, Etienne Thouvenot

Main objectives

- **100,000 guests, 50 restaurants** (tipping point)
- **Need for 500 participatory restaurants in France** (for cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants)
- **Encourage the emergence of other participatory restaurant networks in France**
- If Europe is criss-crossed with participatory restaurants, this will help to **create a European public opinion based on a sense of belonging to the local area** and welcoming differences.

Awards and Acknowledgements

2020 Fellow - Ashoka
2020 Lauréat - La France S'Engage
2020 Irénée d'Or - Fondation St Irénée
2019 Prix des Héros de Notre Temps - Groupe Bayard
2019 Prix autonomie et solidarité - Fondation AG2R La Mondiale
2018 Prix sociétal - 25 ans de RDI
2017 Prix Impact Innovation - Le Mouves - Inco - BNP Paribas
2017 Grand Prix de la Finance Solidaire - Le Monde - Finansol
2016 2ème Prix - Lyon Start-U

Number of people working on the project:
35 employees, 300 volunteer administrators (learning community)

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved
17000 members

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved
200 partners (national and local), restaurants are organised in individual associations

Main achievements and goals obtained

2019: creation of network

2023: accompaniment project of social eating of other associations

Monitoring and evaluation

Impact evaluation every 2 years for every restaurant opened since more than 6 months. 20 people during 3 months with 3 survey: quantitative, qualitative and analysis of digital data.





ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY





Target of the project

People affected by isolation and related issues: smoking, fear of others, low empathy and not being used to cooperate, low trust in others, low ability to act for transition towards a better condition.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

- More trust, strengthening trust in others
- Relational competences
- Change of mindset
- Change of eating habits
- Ability to find a job more easily
- Less eco-anxiety in young people

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project is widely recognised for its food-related initiatives and for providing support to people experiencing economic hardship. However, the organisation's innovative approach to raising awareness of social isolation has not yet gained the same level of recognition. This is partly because its message and advocacy in this area have only been clearly articulated over the past year, and meaningful social change takes time to achieve and be acknowledged.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

Preparing the restaurant
Cooking
Dishwashing
Various workshops (Sewing, Jam, Theatre, Emotion Management, Films ...)
Governance

Example of output delivered by the project

50,000 meals in 2023
People coming together
Power to act

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The ideas of the project evolved with a gathering of ideas taken from citizens (a table in the street, out of the metro..)

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

With some ephemeral restaurant in the neighbourhood with the volunteers, to start and consolidate the project, aside from the stable restaurant.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Beneficiaries are not involved in the management activities, which are performed by an academic board composed by 5 researchers in sociology, philosophy, urban planning, taste and transition sciences.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

1. **Canteen managers:** canteen employees (run the local community)

2. **Volunteer local administrators:** local management - general coordinator (takes care of those who take care)

3. **The national support team:** salaried employees who take care of those who take care.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Cooking
Communication
Economy and management
Training and education
Coaching
Research and impact evaluation
Hosting

Collaborations and alliances with external community

NGOs, local associations, enterprises...

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Yes, it allows to propose more projects

Our Creek at La Terenuri

October 2017 - June 2018

Pârâul Nostru

Cluj-Napoca, Romania





Useful Links

Project website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration
Suburbs / Empowerment / Collaborative dialogue

Texts by Patricia Isabela Brăileanu and Gabriel Dima, National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The project "Our Creek at La Terenuri" aimed to revitalise the Calvaria Brook - La Terenuri area in the Mănăștur neighbourhood of Cluj. **Initiated by a group of residents, it sought to reduce car trips to the city centre for leisure activities and improve local community engagement**. Through a series of initiatives, including door-to-door surveys and temporary interventions, the project identified residents' needs and preferences. **These interventions, such as a wooden bridge over the brook and communal seating areas, were designed to encourage social interaction and outdoor recreation**.

The project engaged various stakeholders, including residents, students, and local authorities. The outcomes, based on feedback from over 1200 residents, emphasised the importance of enhancing existing infrastructure and green spaces. While challenges like illegal parking and vandalism were faced, **the project highlighted the community's desire for more accessible and inviting public spaces. The project also aimed to foster a stronger sense of community and improve the quality of life for residents in the Mănăștur neighbourhood**.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

1) Residents of the Mănăștur neighbourhood:
Those who currently make short car trips to the city centre for leisure activities;

Individuals interested in spending more time in their neighbourhood if suitable facilities and activities are available.

2) Community members living in the Calvaria Brook - La Terenuri area:
Residents who participated in the initiative by providing insights, ideas, and feedback;

Those who will benefit from the improved infrastructure and communal spaces in their neighbourhood.

3) Children and families:
Users of the playgrounds and recreational areas.

Families looking for safe and welcoming outdoor spaces to spend time together;

Students of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at UTCN;

4) Participants in the workshop who gained practical experience by contributing to the design and implementation of interventions in the public space.

Local authorities and policymakers involved in urban planning and development;

Decision-makers who will use the project outcomes for future initiatives and interventions in the neighbourhood.

5) Initiative group members
("La Terenuri - communal space in Mănăștur"):
Individuals who have been actively engaged in community initiatives for the development of the area;

Those who contributed to the project's planning, execution, and evaluation.

The context

The Mănăștur neighbourhood in Cluj faces challenges common to urban areas, including traffic congestion and a lack of communal spaces. Many residents make short car trips to the city centre for leisure, leading to increased pollution and a disconnect from their local community. The Calvaria Brook - La Terenuri area, once a vibrant part of the neighbourhood, has become neglected. Recognising these issues, a group of residents initiated the project "Our Creek at La Terenuri" in 2017. Their goal was to transform the area into a hub of community activity, reducing car dependency and enhancing local engagement. Through door-to-door surveys and temporary interventions, the project identified residents' desires for more accessible green spaces and social gathering spots. Despite challenges like illegal parking and vandalism, the project emphasised the community's need for well-designed public areas. This initiative demonstrates the neighbourhood's resilience and its commitment to building a more sustainable and connected community.

Main objectives

- Reduce car trips to the city centre for leisure activities;
- Improve local community engagement and social interaction;
- Revitalise the Calvaria Brook - La Terenuri area;
- Identify residents' needs and preferences for public spaces;
- Create accessible and inviting communal areas;
- Enhance existing infrastructure and green spaces;
- Foster a stronger sense of community in the Mănăștur neighbourhood.

Number of people working on the project:
The number of people working on the project, overall, is 14 (9 people as initiators; 3 neighbours; 2 collaborators).

Primary target beneficiaries involved
The number of people involved as primary target beneficiaries in the project is approximately 1200, as indicated by the number of responses received from residents of the Mănăștur neighbourhood in the sociological survey conducted by the project team.

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved
The project involved two types of organisations/ institutions:
Community-based organisations:
- "La Terenuri - communal space in Mănăștur" (Initiative group).

Educational institution:
- Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (UTCN).

Credits

Initiators: Maria Fleșer, Gabi Rus, Gabi Barbu, Marcela Armanca, Mihai Armanca, Păunița Boancă, Sonia Borș Oprica, Silviu Medeșan, Lala Panait.

Neighbours: Sebastian Boancă, Grig Vulpe, and Bernadeta Pătrașcu, Anna Șargov.

Collaborators: Anca Chis and Marina Mironica.

Main achievements and goals obtained

Increased **Community Engagement** (engaged over 1200 residents in the Mănăștur neighbourhood through surveys and participatory activities; fostering a stronger sense of community and social interaction).
Infrastructure Improvements (implemented temporary interventions, such as a wooden bridge and communal seating areas, to enhance public spaces; addressed residents' needs for accessible green spaces and social gathering spots).
Stakeholder Collaboration (collaborated with the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at UTCN to involve students in the design and implementation of interventions; worked with local authorities to incorporate project outcomes into future urban planning initiatives).
Identification of Community Needs (identified residents' preferences for recreational activities and public amenities; validated the importance of enhancing existing infrastructure and green spaces in the neighbourhood).
Public Awareness and Participation (raised awareness about sustainable transportation alternatives and the importance of community involvement in neighbourhood development; encouraged residents to actively participate in the improvement of their local environment).
Validation of Community Initiatives (validated the effectiveness of community initiatives, such as "La Terenuri - communal space in Mănăștur," in addressing local needs and aspirations; demonstrated the potential for scaling up successful projects within the community).

Monitoring and evaluation

There is a formal system for monitoring and evaluation in place for this project: Data Collection: the project team conducts various activities to collect data and feedback from the community. This includes door-to-door surveys, participatory



workshops, and field observations. Sociological Survey: a sociological survey was conducted among residents to gather information about their preferences, needs, and opinions regarding the project interventions and their impact on the neighbourhood.

Workshops and Collaborations: the project collaborates with the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at UTCN to involve students in the design and implementation process. Feedback from these workshops is also collected.

Monitoring of Interventions: the temporary interventions implemented as part of the project are monitored throughout their duration to assess their effectiveness and usage by the community.

Feedback Mechanisms: the project team establishes feedback mechanisms, allowing residents to provide input and report any issues or concerns regarding the interventions.

Evaluation of Outcomes: the outcomes of the project are evaluated based on predefined criteria, such as community engagement levels, usage of public spaces, and satisfaction levels among residents.

Consultations with Stakeholders: the project team regularly consults with stakeholders, including residents, local authorities, and partner organisations, to review progress and gather insights for improvement.

Reporting and Documentation: the findings from the monitoring and evaluation activities are documented and reported periodically. This includes reports on the impact of interventions, lessons learned, and recommendations for future actions.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



The project addresses several challenges of inequalities outlined in the UN Agenda 2030, particularly those related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

1) Access to Public Spaces
Challenge: inequalities in access to public spaces, especially for marginalised or vulnerable populations, can lead to social exclusion and limited opportunities for community interaction.
Project Response: by revitalising the Calvaria Brook - La Terenuri area and creating accessible communal spaces, the project aims to provide equitable access to public spaces for all residents, regardless of socio-economic status. This helps tackle vulnerability by fostering social inclusion and providing opportunities for community engagement.

2) Transportation and Mobility
Challenge: inequalities in transportation infrastructure and accessibility can isolate communities and limit access to essential services and opportunities.
Project Response: the project aims to reduce car dependency by providing alternative transportation options and improving pedestrian infrastructure. This helps address vulnerability by ensuring that residents, including those without access to private vehicles, can easily navigate the neighbourhood and access amenities, thus reducing disparities in mobility.

3) Community Participation
Challenge: inequalities in decision-making processes and limited community participation can result in policies and projects that do not adequately address the needs of all residents.
Project Response: the project actively engages residents in the planning, design, and implementation of interventions through surveys, workshops, and consultations. This ensures that the voices of all community members, including marginalised groups, are heard and considered in the decision-making process, thus promoting greater equity and social cohesion.

4) Quality of Urban Environment
Challenge: inequalities in access to a clean and sustainable urban environment disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, leading to health disparities and environmental injustices.
Project Response: by improving the quality of public spaces and promoting sustainable practices, such as green infrastructure and waste management, the project contributes to creating a healthier and more equitable urban environment for all residents. This helps reduce vulnerability by mitigating environmental risks and promoting well-being among community members.

5) Inclusive Urbanisation
Challenge: inequalities in urban development can lead to the marginalisation of certain communities and exacerbate social and economic disparities.
Project Response: the project advocates for inclusive urbanisation by focusing on the revitalisation of a neglected area within the neighbourhood, ensuring that the benefits of development are accessible to all residents. By creating inclusive public spaces and opportunities for community engagement, the project aims to promote more equitable urban development and address vulnerability among marginalised populations.

Target of the project

The target of the project includes residents of the Mănăștur neighbourhood in Cluj, particularly those living in the vicinity of the Calvaria Brook - La Terenuri area. Their needs, affected by conditions of vulnerability, are as follows:

1) Community Engagement and Social Interaction
Many residents seek opportunities for social interaction and community engagement within their neighbourhood;

Vulnerability is exacerbated by a lack of accessible communal spaces, limiting opportunities for socialisation and connection with neighbours.

2) Access to Green Spaces and Recreation
Residents express a desire for accessible green spaces and recreational areas where they can relax and enjoy outdoor activities;

Vulnerability is heightened by limited access to quality recreational spaces, which affects physical and mental well-being, particularly for families and children.

3) Mobility and Transportation
Residents face challenges related to transportation, including traffic congestion and limited pedestrian infrastructure;

Vulnerability is exacerbated for those without access to private vehicles or reliable public transportation, hindering mobility and access to essential services.

4) Inclusive Urban Development
Residents seek inclusive urban development that considers the diverse needs and preferences of the community;
Vulnerability is heightened by disparities in urban infrastructure and planning, leading to social exclusion and unequal access to resources.

The target population comprises a diverse socio-demographic mix, including families, young professionals, and elderly individuals. Specific or recurring socio-demographic parameters in the target population may include:

- Families with children seeking safe and welcoming outdoor spaces for recreation;
- Elderly individuals looking for accessible seating areas and opportunities for socialisation;
- Low-income households reliant on public spaces for leisure and community activities;
- Students interested in participatory urban planning and sustainable development initiatives;
- Residents from diverse cultural backgrounds seeking inclusive community spaces.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Recipients of the project, including residents of the Mănăștur neighbourhood and stakeholders involved, have gained new capabilities, relationships, and resources, which have empowered them to actively participate in community development and enhance their quality of life.

Community Empowerment: residents have developed a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for their neighbourhood. They have gained confidence in their ability to initiate and participate in community projects.

Participatory Decision-Making: residents have learned how to engage in participatory decision-making processes. They have gained skills in voicing their opinions, negotiating with stakeholders, and advocating for community needs.

Networking and Collaboration: residents have formed new relationships with neighbours, local organisations, and authorities. They have built networks for collaboration, sharing resources, and supporting community initiatives.

Urban Planning Skills: residents and students have acquired knowledge and skills in urban planning and design. They have learned how to analyse community needs, design interventions, and implement sustainable solutions.

Leadership and Organisational Skills: project leaders and volunteers have developed leadership and organisational skills. They have gained experience in project management, coordination, and mobilising community resources.

Access to Resources: residents have gained access to new resources, including funding, materials, and expertise. They have learned how to leverage resources from local authorities, businesses, and philanthropic organisations.

Increased Social Capital: residents have built social capital by fostering trust, reciprocity, and cooperation within the community. They have strengthened social ties and social networks, which contribute to community resilience.

Improved Quality of Life: residents have experienced an improved quality of life through enhanced public spaces and community amenities. They have access to safe, attractive, and inclusive spaces for recreation, socialisation, and relaxation.

Sense of Belonging and Identity: residents have developed a stronger sense of belonging and identity with their neighbourhood. They take pride in contributing to the improvement and revitalisation of their community.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

1) Innovation
The project introduces innovative approaches to community engagement and urban development, which may not have been previously explored in local policies.
Through participatory workshops and temporary interventions, the project promotes creative solutions to address community needs and enhance public spaces.
It introduces new ideas for inclusive urban development, such as negotiating with residents to temporarily relocate parked cars for community events, which may not have been considered in traditional urban planning approaches.

2) Coherence
The project aligns with the broader goals and objectives outlined in local policies related to sustainable urban development and community engagement.
By focusing on revitalising neglected public spaces and promoting community participation, the project supports the objectives of existing urban development plans and strategies.
The project's emphasis on inclusivity and collaboration reflects the values and principles outlined in local policies, such as promoting social cohesion and citizen involvement in decision-making processes.

3) Disruptiveness
The project challenges traditional approaches to urban planning by prioritising community-led initiatives and temporary interventions over top-down planning methods.
It disrupts the status quo by empowering residents to actively participate in shaping the development of their neighbourhood, rather than relying solely on local authorities.
Some of the project's interventions, such as negotiating with car owners to temporarily move their vehicles, may disrupt established norms and regulations regarding parking and public space usage.

While the project demonstrates coherence with the broader goals of local policies, it also introduces innovative and disruptive elements that challenge traditional approaches to urban development. By promoting community empowerment, inclusivity, and creativity, the project contributes to a more dynamic and responsive approach to urban planning that is better aligned with the needs and aspirations of local residents.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

Participatory activities carried out within the project include door-to-door surveys, community workshops, public consultations, interactive design sessions, temporary installations, mapping exercises, storytelling and visioning workshops, social media campaigns, collaborative decision-making, and feedback mechanisms. These activities facilitated meaningful engagement with the community, empowering residents to play an active role in shaping the development of their neighbourhood and ensuring that the project's interventions were responsive to their needs and aspirations.

Example of output delivered by the project

Temporary Interventions (installation of temporary structures like seating areas, pedestrian crossings, or green spaces; use after release: These interventions serve as prototypes or pilot projects to test ideas and gather feedback from the community. The data collected helps in refining permanent design plans for the area);

Community Engagement Reports (reports summarising the findings from surveys, workshops, and consultations; use after release; these reports serve as valuable reference materials for urban planners, local authorities, and community organisations in understanding residents' needs and preferences, guiding future decision-making and development projects);

Design Proposals (architectural and urban design proposals for public space improvements. These proposals provide a vision for future development, serving as blueprints for implementing permanent changes in the area; they inform urban planning decisions and guide funding allocation for infrastructure projects);

Documentation of Activities (photos, videos, and written documentation of project activities and events; use after release: this documentation serves as a record of the project's process and outcomes - it can be used for public relations, advocacy, and educational purposes, showcasing the project's impact and lessons learned);

Community Action Plans (plans outlining short-term and long-term actions identified through community engagement; use after release: These action plans provide a roadmap for ongoing community involvement and project implementation - they guide stakeholders in prioritising and executing initiatives to address community needs and aspirations);

Educational Materials (workshops materials, presentations, and guides on urban planning and community engagement; use after release: these materials can be used by local schools, universities, and community organisations for educational purposes - they promote awareness and understanding of urban development concepts and encourage future generations to actively participate in shaping their communities);

Policy Recommendations (recommendations for policy changes or improvements based on project findings; use after release: these recommendations advocate for more inclusive and sustainable urban policies - they provide evidence-based insights to policymakers, influencing decisions on zoning, transportation, and public space management).

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The beneficiaries are actively involved in various phases of the project development, including the context analysis phase and the identification of factors:

1) Context Analysis Phase:

Door-to-Door Surveys: project members conduct surveys among residents to gather insights into their living conditions, needs, and aspirations. This direct engagement allows beneficiaries to provide firsthand information about their experiences and challenges;

Mapping Exercises: beneficiaries participate in mapping exercises to identify key locations, issues, and opportunities within the neighbourhood. Through these activities, they contribute valuable local knowledge, helping to inform the project's understanding of the community context;

Community Workshops: workshops are organised where beneficiaries share their perspectives, experiences, and visions for the neighbourhood. These discussions provide crucial input for the project's context analysis, helping to identify priorities and areas for intervention.

2) Identification of Factors

Participatory Workshops: beneficiaries participate in workshops focused on identifying factors affecting their quality of life and community well-being. Through group discussions and brainstorming sessions, they contribute ideas and insights into various factors, such as access to public spaces, transportation, and social interaction;

Visioning Sessions: beneficiaries engage in visioning sessions where they envision the future of their neighbourhood. They identify factors they believe are important for a thriving community and discuss how these factors can be improved or addressed;

Community Surveys and Consultations: surveys and consultations are conducted to gather feedback from beneficiaries on key factors affecting their lives, such as safety, accessibility, and amenities. Their input helps prioritize project objectives and interventions.

Beneficiaries are integral to the project development phase, actively participating in context analysis and the identification of factors. Their involvement ensures that the project's goals and interventions are informed by the needs, experiences, and aspirations of the community, leading to more relevant and impactful outcomes.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

1) Co-design and Planning:

- beneficiaries participate in workshops where they co-design project interventions and contribute ideas to improve public spaces. They work alongside architects, urban planners, and other stakeholders to develop plans that reflect their needs and preferences;
- beneficiaries attend planning meetings where they provide input on the implementation strategy, timelines, and priorities. Their involvement ensures that the project aligns with their expectations and addresses their concerns.

2) Resource Mobilisation

beneficiaries actively participate in fundraising efforts, organising events, and campaigns to raise funds for project implementation. They contribute financially to the project, demonstrating their commitment and ownership;

- beneficiaries provide in-kind contributions such as materials, labour, or equipment for implementing project interventions. This collaborative effort reduces project costs and strengthens community ownership.

3) Volunteerism and Participation
- beneficiaries participate in volunteer workdays where they contribute to the physical implementation of project interventions, such as planting trees, installing benches, or painting murals. Their direct involvement fosters a sense of ownership and pride in the project;
- beneficiaries attend and participate in community events organised as part of the project implementation. These events serve as opportunities for social interaction, celebration, and community bonding.

4) Monitoring and Feedback
- beneficiaries conduct site visits to assess the progress of project implementation and provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of interventions;
- beneficiaries have access to feedback mechanisms such as suggestion boxes, online surveys, or community meetings to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions throughout the implementation phase.

5) Celebration and Recognition
- beneficiaries participate in celebrations to mark project milestones and achievements. These events recognise their contributions and reinforce a sense of community pride and achievement.



Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

In the project management/delivery and evaluation phases, beneficiaries play active roles, ensuring their ongoing participation and input. They participate in steering committees or advisory groups overseeing project implementation, contributing to decision-making on priorities, resource allocation, and strategy. Regular meetings with project managers and stakeholders involve beneficiaries in progress review, challenge discussion, and decision-making to ensure alignment with community needs. Beneficiaries are also involved in budget planning and oversight, prioritising resources based on community needs and reviewing financial reports for transparency. They participate in quality assurance teams, monitoring intervention quality through site visits and assessments, and provide feedback for improvements.

In monitoring, beneficiaries track project progress, contribute to progress reports, and participate in evaluation workshops to reflect on achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. They engage in feedback loops for continuous improvement and provide insights into intervention impact on their lives and communities.

The beneficiaries celebrate milestones and achievements, recognising contributions and reflecting on the project's community impact. Through these roles, beneficiaries ensure project success, accountability, and sustainability, fostering ownership, transparency, and community impact.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Project Manager: the project manager oversees the overall implementation of the project, ensuring that activities are carried out according to plan and within budget; they coordinate the efforts of team members, stakeholders, and volunteers, ensuring effective communication and collaboration; the project manager's role is continuous throughout the project, providing leadership and direction from initiation to completion;

Community Liaison Officer: the community liaison officer serves as the primary point of contact between the project team and the local community; they engage with community members, stakeholders, and local authorities to gather feedback, address concerns, and build partnerships; this role is ongoing, requiring regular interaction with the community to ensure their needs and interests are considered throughout the project;

Technical Expert (Urban Planner/Architect): the technical expert provides expertise in urban planning and design, contributing to the development of project interventions and solutions; they assess the feasibility of proposed designs, provide technical guidance, and ensure compliance with urban planning regulations; this role is essential during the design and implementation phases, guiding the development of interventions and addressing technical challenges;

Financial Controller: the financial controller manages project finances, including budgeting, expenditure tracking, and financial reporting; they ensure that funds are allocated appropriately, monitor project expenses, and prepare financial reports for stakeholders; this role is ongoing, with regular monitoring of financial activities to ensure financial sustainability and accountability;

Volunteer Coordinator: the volunteer coordinator recruits, trains, and manages volunteers involved in project activities; they coordinate volunteer schedules, assign tasks, and provide support and supervision to volunteers; this role is particularly active during implementation phases, ensuring that volunteers are effectively utilised and engaged;

Communications Officer: the communications officer manages project communication strategies, including public relations, marketing, and media relations; they develop communication materials, manage social media channels, and coordinate outreach efforts to promote the project and engage the community; this role is ongoing, maintaining regular communication with stakeholders and the public to raise awareness and support for the project.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Expertises/Disciplines/ Professional Areas

Urban Planning/ Architecture: these professionals are involved in designing and planning interventions for public spaces; they ensure that the project's interventions are aesthetically pleasing, functional, and comply with urban planning regulations;

Community Engagement: community engagement specialists facilitate communication between the project team and the local community; they ensure that the community's needs and preferences are considered throughout the project;

Financial Management: financial managers oversee budgeting, expenditure tracking, and financial reporting; they ensure that project funds are used efficiently and transparently;

Volunteer Management: volunteer coordinators recruit, train, and manage volunteers involved in project activities; they ensure that volunteers are effectively utilised and engaged in project implementation;

Communications Marketing: communications officers manage project communication strategies, including public relations, marketing, and media relations; they promote the project, engage the community, and raise awareness about project activities.

Sectors/Organisations

Local Government: local government officials provide support, guidance, and necessary permits for project implementation; they may also allocate resources and coordinate with other government departments;

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs): NGOs may provide expertise, resources, or funding for project activities; they often have networks and experience in community development and engagement;

Academic Institutions: academic institutions may be involved in research, data analysis, or providing technical expertise; they contribute knowledge and expertise in areas such as urban planning, sociology, or environmental studies;

Community Groups/ Organisations: local community groups or organisations represent the interests of residents and advocate for community needs; they play a crucial role in mobilising community support, providing input, and ensuring project relevance and sustainability;

Private Sector: private sector partners may provide funding, resources, or expertise in areas such as construction, landscaping, or design; they contribute to the physical implementation of project interventions and may also benefit from enhanced community infrastructure.

Each of these areas of expertise/disciplines/ professional areas and sectors plays a vital role in the project, contributing to its success by providing expertise, resources, and support in various aspects of project planning, implementation, and management.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Collaborations and alliances with external community bodies and organisations are vital components of the project. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) contribute expertise, resources, and funding, mobilising volunteers and offering technical assistance. Local community groups and associations represent residents' interests, ensuring project alignment with community needs. Academic institutions provide research, technical expertise, and educational programmes, while local businesses offer funding, resources, and in-kind support. Government agencies assist with permits, approvals, and regulatory

compliance. International organisations and donors enhance the project's impact and sustainability through funding and technical assistance. Other community stakeholders, such as religious or cultural groups, bring diverse perspectives and resources. These collaborations enrich the project, fostering community engagement and ensuring its success and sustainability.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Collaborations and alliances between several services within the same organisation or institution are common and highly beneficial for achieving shared goals and optimising resources. Different departments often collaborate to leverage their respective expertise and resources, enhancing problem-solving, innovation, and efficiency.

Cross-functional teams, comprising members from various departments, ensure diverse perspectives and skills are utilised effectively for specific projects or initiatives. Knowledge sharing and training sessions foster collaboration and skill development among departments, promoting a culture of continuous learning.

Resource sharing, such as equipment, facilities, or personnel, helps optimise efficiency and reduce costs. Departments also collaborate during strategic planning and decision-making processes to align organisational objectives and priorities.

Quality improvement initiatives involve collaboration between departments to enhance organisational performance and customer satisfaction. Collaboration fosters innovation and product development, as departments work together to develop new features or address customer needs based on



Salus Space

2021 - Ongoing

Municipality of Bologna

Bologna, Italy





Useful Links

Project website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration
Suburbs / Community activation / Collaborative dialogue

Texts by Vittoria Lombardi, Tiziana Ciampolini and Antonio Fantasia, Associazione S-NODI GROUP E.T.S.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Salus Space is the outcome of a European project coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and implemented by 16 partners.
It involves an urban area where the private clinic Villa Salus was formerly located, **a structure that was abandoned and that the project has recovered and regenerated.** Today Salus Space is a **multi-functional space** offering flats, artistic and craft laboratories, a theatre, a research institute, a store, a weekly farmers' market, vegetable gardens, and, most of all, a **community**.

Salus Space was inaugurated in January 2021 and it is managed by an Association created by five Third Sector's actors: Eta Beta social cooperative, Aquaponic Design, Cantieri Meticci, Cefal Emilia-Romagna, IRS Institute for Social Research. Every actor shares its own knowledge within an approach aimed at the **co-management** that has at its core an idea of cooperation.

Main activities:
Co-housing: Salus Space accommodates almost 40 people, divided in 20 apartments. All inhabitants have to accept and agree to and sign the Rules of Collaborative Co-habitation. They are furthermore involved in regular meetings and in the activities of the space.

Hostel and restaurant: managed by the community of inhabitants, these two activities aim at **environmental sustainability**.

Creative workshops for adults and children, open to everyone.

Research: Salus space hosts a research institute aimed at investigating processes of social innovation and intercultural welfare.

Main objectives

- To test a sustainable space of **cohabitation and collaborative management** where the social inclusion of migrants and asylum seekers is combined with a vision of intercultural welfare and active citizenship able to overcome the logic of simple assistance.
- To favour the **social inclusion** and, specifically, the labour inclusion of its inhabitants, especially the ones with more vulnerabilities and a **migratory background.**

Primary target users/beneficiaries

The main beneficiaries are the inhabitants of the co-housing structure: **53 individuals with different backgrounds – university students, migrants, young couples, single women, etc. -** that live the space within a collaborative model aimed at engaging them in the daily activities of the centre (restaurant, shop, workshop, etc.) to achieve a new idea of social enterprise. **Four of the 20 apartments of the social housing are reserved for asylum seekers.**

Awards and Acknowledgements

First award of the programme Urban Innovative Actions

Number of people working on the project

8 People

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

53 People

Number of organisations/ institutions involved

16 Partners: social cooperatives, research institutes, artistic organisations, training centres, local institutions, social enterprises.

The context

Salus Space is a community space located at the outskirts of Bologna within a structure retrieved by a project of urban regeneration. It hosts a broad series of activities aimed at experimenting new models of co-housing, social enterprise and co-creation. The people inhabiting and living the space come from different social and cultural backgrounds and have different ages.

The whole structure has been regenerated following the principles of environmental sustainability. In addition, all the activities that are carried out within the space are aimed at engaging the inhabitants in activities of economic sustainability and artistic co-creation. To realise these activities, there are different actors intervening. For instance, the University of Bologna collaborates for the development of innovative gardening techniques. In addition, local artists take part in the activities of artistic workshops.

Main achievements and goals obtained

The main achievement is the fact that currently there are 53 people living in the structure with very **different cultural and social backgrounds** and they live well together. It is a **space where it is pleasant to live in and spend time.**
The second achievement is the fact that Salus space has become a **point of reference for the territory**, where people come because they know that there are events, workshops etc.

Monitoring and evaluation

The project aimed at the renovation of the structure and the opening of Salus Space has been monitored through a system of **participatory evaluation.** This means that a number of citizens have been trained to monitor and evaluate the works.
In regards to the social impact of the activities currently carried out within Salus Space, they still did not develop an evaluation system. Some steps have been taken through a research study conducted by an inhabitant through accademic research

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Salus space aims at experimenting new forms of intercultural welfare and economic sustainability through community engagement practices and social economy.



Environmental and economic sustainability are two goals of Salus Space, to be achieved by engaging the community.



Salus space experiments and promotes new forms of production and consumption through its economic activities to achieve environmental sustainability.

Target of the project

The project aims to bring together a mix of **individuals with different ages, cultural and social backgrounds.** The main target is **people of families with a migratory background.** The main issue that the project addresses is their social inclusion, with the provision of adequate **accommodation**, the provision of **language classes** and their **labour inclusion,** through training and the engagement in the project's activities. The main challenges that they encounter, indeed, are related to the labour inclusion and the search for affordable accommodation in Bologna.

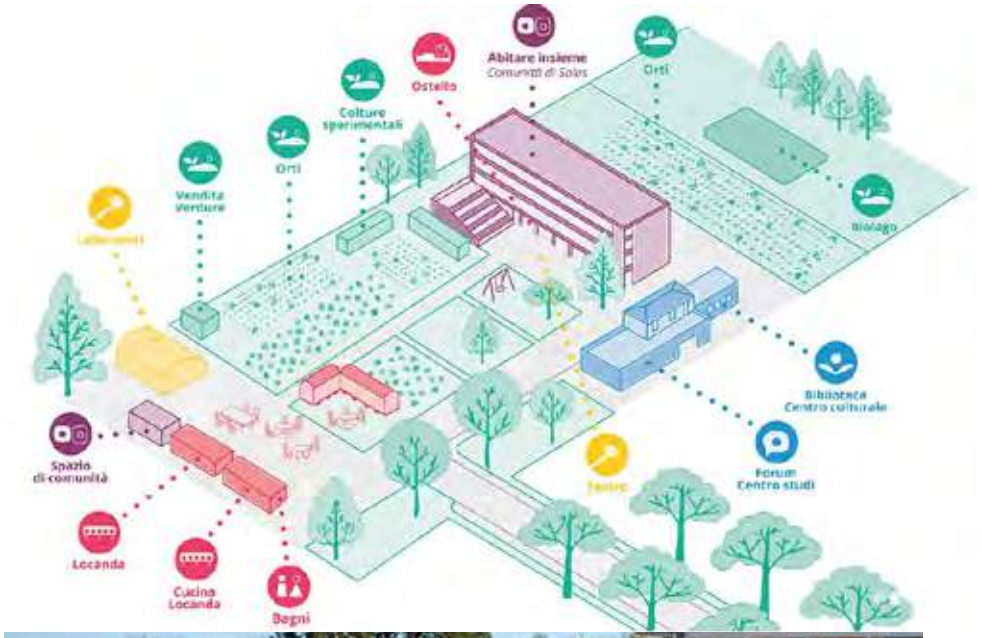
EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Salus Space has among its objectives the **labour inclusion**, therefore **job training** is an essential component: they receive training in the restaurant sector, urban gardening, hospitality sector etc. In addition through the activities carried out within the space, the inhabitants could gain other skills, for instance a Syrian teenager participated in theatre **workshops** and she is now working as an actress. Finally, they have free **language classes**.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project is the product of a **collaboration between the municipality of Bologna and a network of social organisations. I**t is sustained by a system of governance that includes a steering committee composed of two people from the implementing organisations and two representatives of the municipality. This steering committee provides the main directions and guidelines for the future activities and goals, according to the results achieved and the difficulties encountered. In addition, Salus Space has become a point of reference for the territory as it is known for its production of events and free cultural gatherings.





EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

The inhabitants can propose and implement different activities. The social workers simply support them in the management and realisation. Examples:

- They launched an event to clean the surrounding of Salus Space involving not only the inhabitants but the whole neighbourhood.
- Community clean-up activities and management of the common spaces.
- Co-design of the garden space
- An international volunteer camp of informal education

Example of output delivered by the project

The project has delivered several outputs. Here the main ones:

- A structure providing adequate and affordable accommodation to 53 people;
- A hostel and restaurant where inhabitants can have opportunities for economic sustainability;
- A urban garden where inhabitants can gain new skills and new system of environmental sustainable gardening are tested;
- A space where cultural events and workshops can be organised for free;

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The **design** of the project "Salus Space" has **involved 16 partners.** Within this phase, the project has launched a **participatory platform through which the citizens could monitor the development of the project and renovation of the building. This was supported through a series of public assemblies every 6 months.** The aim was to be transparent and include the project within the neighbourhood from the beginning. In addition, the project has been monitored and evaluated by a commission of citizens, who have been engaged in a process of participatory evaluation.

The inhabitants have arrived in a second phase, through a public call or referral from social services, so they did not take part in the first phase. However, **from the beginning, they started organising meetings and assemblies to engage the community of inhabitants and for them to nominate two representatives.** They have then been involved in training and workshops. Currently, the inhabitants can freely participate in the activities of the space and propose new activities. To engage them they have used different methods of community engagement.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

The first objective was the engagement of the inhabitants for the peaceful cohabitation, this means the management of the **laundry and in cleaning the common spaces** and being autonomous in gatherings and inhabitants' meetings. They are furthermore invited to take part in the economic activities of the space – hostel, restaurant, etc. – receiving a discount on the rent for each working hour. They are then invited to participate in all other activities of the space, other than proposing new ones, such as **gardening, theatre, cultural workshops,** etc. For some of them these activities became working opportunities.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

The delivery of the activities carried out within the space is managed by the inhabitants themselves or in cooperation with them. In some cases, these activities are projects proposed and implemented by the inhabitants themselves. In other cases, the activities are part of the **economic system of Salus Space (restaurant, garden, hostel).** To favour labour inclusion, the employees of these activities are inhabitants of the space.



MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

The main roles of the managing team are: a community manager and responsible for communication; a coordinator and legal expert; administration and catering management; organiser of events and project design.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

The people involved in the project had to activate transversal skills as the list of competencies needed is long:

- community manager;
- communication expert;
- legal expert for the relations between inhabitants and the definition of the co-habitation pacts;
- public relations between local authorities and social organisations;
- financial and economic administration;
- skills in the restoration sector;
- organisation of events etc.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

There are artists and other social organisations organising workshops within the spaces. They furthermore cooperate with the university of Bologna for the gardening activities.





Spirit of Malmö

2017 - 2024

Local municipal government, City of Malmö and Malmö CSO

Malmö, Sweden





Useful Links

Project website

Social channel

Social channel

Community, Municipality and Regeneration
City / Community activation / Collaborative dialogue

Texts by Lari Pitkäkangas, KC Kompetenscentre Idéburen sektor

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Malmöandan (meaning "The Malmö spirit") was born out of a cooperation plan drafted between the local municipal government, the City of Malmö and Malmö's civil society organisations. The aim was to promote the ethical values on which Malmö desires its community to be built.

Malmöandan is a **platform for partnership, inspiration, and dialogue, organising events, conferences, and meetings that promote knowledge-sharing and increase civic participation,** and where local politicians, civil servants, and civil society stakeholders can discuss solutions to key local challenges.

The focus is on **realising the vision** of a more inclusive, sustainable, equal, and democratic Malmö.

Currently, Malmö Ideella leads and coordinates the non-profit sector's contribution to Malmöandan. **If the cooperation plan didn't work, change the plan but never the goal.** Malmöandan's work is part of local efforts to create a socially sustainable city in line with the Commission for a Socially Sustainable Malmö's proposals for action and to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals or Agenda 2030.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Citizens and civil organisations and City of Malmö staff and departments.

Main objectives

The agreement supports:

- **deeper collaboration** between the city of Malmö and the civil society and idea-based sector in Malmö.
- **strengthen democracy** and **increase participation and inclusion** in Malmö.
- the commitment exists in Malmö to **meet and find solutions to social challenges** in the city.

  The non-profit sector in Malmö and the City of Malmö have agreed to create an action plan and this plan shall include:

- Priority societal challenges to **collaborate**
- **Collaboration on associations**, idea-based sector and the municipality's conditions, conditions and opportunities to cooperate
- **Development and support of learning**, knowledge and innovation required for collaboration
- Description of organisation, timetable, communication and resources for the **implementation of activities** included in the action plan.

The context

In 2014, at the initiative of Malmö's umbrella organisation for civil society stakeholders, Malmö Ideella, the city's Municipal Executive Board assented to support an **agreement between the City and local civil society** organisations concerning social issues.

In 2016, the **City of Malmö further resolved to finance a cooperative arrangement, which culminated in a cooperation plan** signed in June 2018. As of 2019, **Malmöandan has appointed one coordinator each from the city government and civil society to work together** to realise this cooperation plan. In 2021, the City and local civil society organisations agreed on **a new cooperation plan for the period 2022–2026**, which aims to create additional opportunities for effective partnership between them. **In 2024 the City of Malmö announced it will no longer directly finance this democratic platform.**

The Malmö spirit aligns with the Commission's two overarching directives: establish a social investment policy that can equalise differences in living conditions, make social systems more equal, and transform processes by creating knowledge alliances and democratised governance.

Number of people working on the project:

A steering group consisted of 9 stakeholders from different organisations. Then 2 coordinators, 1 from the city and 1 from the civil society.

Primary target beneficiaries involved

Primary target beneficiaries (excluding citizens) were about 600 organisations and 11 departments. The town has about 350.000 inhabitants.

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

The city consists of 11 departments and all of them signed up on the agreement through the City Council. The number of organisations actively involved was about 100, but on the receiving side were also 600 organisations in the city.

Main achievements and goals obtained

The Malmö spirit is part of the city's strategy for implementing the 2030 agenda to build knowledge alliances and increase capacity for sustainable development.

In recent years, the idea-based sector and the city, through the Malmö spirit, have initiated, contributed to and strengthened innovative partnerships for increased collaboration in implementing the global goals for sustainable development.

The Malmö spirit provides officials, politicians, active associations, and other social actors who want to contribute to an **equal city** with opportunities to meet and conduct dialogue on equal terms.

The coordinators disseminate knowledge and provide concrete tools for working with issues relating to equality, democracy and participation in the city.

Several projects within the city are connected to the work done within Malmöandan. For instance: www.nobel21.se (a npo-centre).

But also projects like www.malmotillsammans.se, different social integration projects, and several other agreements between the city and civil society.

Monitoring and evaluation

There are annual reports made for the City Council, and there are also reports made on every major event. A steering group supervises the project. Several assessments have been made. There is a plan that is followed up annually. There are surveys made on each major event.



ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



The Malmö spirit is part of the city's strategy for implementing the 2030 agenda to build knowledge alliances and increase capacity for sustainable development. It clearly focuses on the UN goals 3, 10, 11. Focusing on different aspects of the challenges within the city, it was early realised that health issues, segregation and unemployment were the main focus areas.

Target of the project

The primary objective was to establish a collaborative approach to engaging with citizens, utilising combined efforts and dialogue. **The mission focused on enhancing the capabilities and outreach of the municipal authority, while also emphasising the significance of social organisations in influencing citizen perspectives.**

As to specific vulnerabilities, there are high unemployment rates, low participation in the elections, high amount of segregation as well as health issues based on socioeconomic background, and segregation. These are the targets for the city. For the associations, civil society, it is to involve, engage and empower specific groups or individuals.



EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

The Malmö Spirit provides officials, politicians, active associations and other social actors who want to contribute to an equal city, opportunities to meet and conduct dialogue on equal terms.

Knowledge alliances and concrete tools and networks for working with issues relating to equality, democracy and participation in the city.

Connections and visibility towards politicians and other stakeholders within the city is one part of joining events, workshops and seminars.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The Malmö spirit is still in a development phase and there is much that can be improved and changed. One constructive and responsible way of leading would reinforce the Malmö spirit as a **collaborative platform.** In order to counter segregation and inequality, the project needs to **reinforce collaboration and learning across sectors.** There is certainly a clear desire to cooperate, but it requires above all genuine commitment, time and knowledge to overcome differences and find common ways of working.

The main problem is that when you create dialogue, collaborative platforms and networks, it becomes something perceived as a threat towards some politicians.

This has been the case with the Malmö Spirit. It is difficult to describe but it is clear that the City of Malmö suddenly decided not to work on the platform anymore. They had changed perspective by introducing new staff in the city council office, where they wanted to have a more direct lead on the work from the city.

The disproportional power between the different stakeholders can be a negative and disruptive force, reducing the power of the citizens.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

Forum events with several hundred participants/ Learning Workshops with a focus on new knowledge/ The Early Malmö Hour - focusing on new initiatives from the city and association/ Study visits from other cities to different parts of the city/ Several projects focused on youth and labour markets/ Inviting associations from a diverse background.

The **Nobel 21 Association Centre is a platform for new ideas, collaboration, development and competence, and the result of a collaboration between Malmö Idella and the Department for Sports and Leisure Administration** (Malmö City). As stated in the cooperation plan, the centre is an important part of the Malmö spirit. The association centre is a vibrant place for meetings, work and various types of events. The platform aims to facilitate communication and relations between organisations and between the idea-based sector, the city of Malmö and other societal actors. The Nobel 21 Association Centre was inaugurated in 2020 but established in 2018. During 2023, the activities in the form of seminars, training and workshops have been arranged by companies, associations and administrations. There has been a positive development of the site, with conference rooms and office premises that also provide space for spontaneous meetings. Around 35 associations and social entrepreneurs have operations at Nobel 21.

Example of output delivered by the project

Reports on different topics have been released continuously, as well as documentaries that have been disseminated to stakeholders. The centre of Nobel21 has a variety of diverse associations that are active in several projects. The agreement is still in place and has helped several organisations to get financial and operational agreements with the city.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

There was an extensive period of 3 years of preparation among the associations and the different departments of the city to actually reach an agreement. There were several large conferences, several workshops and project groups working in the different phases. More than 200 organisations took part in this.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Since the city staff and associations are all invited to all activities, they are also early in any innovation initiatives that occur. **One of the main objectives has been to create relations between city staff and associations.** This has helped to create relations that can be used when action is needed.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

All the beneficiaries have been able to participate in the creation of the agreement and the different activities in the management/ delivery phase. Since many of the organisations actually partake in creating the activities it is also their doing. The evaluation has been of traditional form with surveys and dialogue conferences.



MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

The initial working group consisted of **9 staff** members from the city and members from the major umbrella organisations for the associations in the town. There were also **2 coordinators**, one from the city and one from the organisations. These met once a month, sometimes more often.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

City officials and staff from different departments focused on collaborations within their fields. These were the contacts in the city departments and informed others within the city. They came from the Sports/Leisure Department, The Social Support Department, The Labour Market Department, The City Council office, and The Culture Department. There were 5 organisations represented. 1 for the sports associations, 1 for culture, 1 for the open university, and 2 for disabled people. 1 from the major umbrella organisation for the associations in the city.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

There has been collaboration and alliances between both regional, and national stakeholders. For instance the National Agencies, and the Regional Departments of Democracy and Culture.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

There has been collaboration, this was the idea behind the project that in identifying challenges, different stakeholders had to collaborate.



Urban Gardening in Malmö

2008 - Ongoing

Hidde Iyo Dhaqan

Malmö, Sweden





Useful Links

Project website

Community, Municipality and Regeneration

Young people / Older people / City / Community activation / Collaborative dialogue

Texts by Lari Pitkäkangas, KC Kompetenscentre Idéburen sektor

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Barn i stan (Children in Town) is a project that was carried out over three years starting on April 1, 2008 with the support of the Swedish inheritance fund (Allmänna Arvsfonden). The project was run by Hidde Iyo Dhaqan and aimed to develop and use new models for meetings, collaboration, dialogue, and community development in socially disadvantaged areas.

The main focus was the **relationship between children and young people with an immigrant background and older people in Malmö.** The project has contributed to countering mutual prejudice, suspicion, and xenophobia. **The goal was to create long-term relationships and dialogue between people from different backgrounds and of different ages and also to serve as a model for work in other neighbourhoods and municipalities with similar conditions.**

In 2009, Barn i stan, together with children and residents of Seved, set up an allotment for cultivation at the square on Sevedsgatan 12. The aim was partly to build a concrete model for urban farming in neighbourhood areas and partly to create relationships and trust.

In concrete terms, a flourishing, flamboyant colony was created in the middle of the city, which caused a neighbourhood to change its appearance and character spatially and socially. During 2010, the cultivation close to the property continued along Sevedsgatan. Together with the children, the cultivation network created a new allotment. The project led to removing the lawn, adding new organic vegetable soil, and digging different deep beds. Sweet potatoes, corn, beets, carrots, beans, onions, asparagus, hops, berry bushes, old Swedish varieties of bread grain, mushroom cucumber, insect-attracting flowers, sweet peas, etc., were grown.

"Grow in Town" works to spread and develop urban farming in a long-term and sustainable way with residents, associations, property owners, and municipal operations. The organisation has grown up since 2009 with headquarters at Seved in Malmö, but also in other residential areas such as Rosengard. They also work with educational cultivation in schools. By being at the forefront and creating new ways to bring cultivation into the urban landscape, Grow in Stan is a strong player that contributes to a more sustainable development locally. Some of the latest developments are edible plant walls and beekeeping on Malmö's rooftops.

The context

The history of the Cultivation Network Seved begins in the now discontinued project "Children in Town" in the area Seved in the central district of Southern Sofielund in Malmö. The three-year project aimed to create a cross-border dialogue between different cultures and ages and used cultivation for meetings.
By practically breaking up the asphalt and digging away the unused lawn, in 2009 instead a lush cultivation of potatoes, corn, flower beans, cucumber and sunflowers, etc., could be built in the middle of town. Suddenly, rooms were created for activities where everyone could participate on common grounds. Everyone has a relationship with cultivation and food, everyone can contribute with knowledge and experience and put the shovel in the ground and enjoy a sun-ripened tomato directly from the plant. **During the project, the idea of a cultivation network emerged. The network also has a neighbourhood garden and a unique edible outdoor wall.** Together, they make up about 800 m² cultivated area in the middle of town!

Main objectives

- Odla i Stan works to spread and develop urban gardening together with residents, associations, property owners and municipal operations in a long-term and sustainable way.
- Create new ways of bringing cultivation into the urban landscape, Odla i Stan is a strong player that contributes to more sustainable development locally.
- Organic neighbourhood and urban cultivation only work with organic methods and try to stick to local resources.
- To use cultivation as a method to find meetings and community. Urban farming no longer has to be in colonial areas but can also exist where people live.
- To create long-term relationships and dialogue between people from different backgrounds and ages and to act as a role model for the work in other districts and municipalities with similar conditions.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Citizens in Seved, Sofielund, Malmö

Awards and Acknowledgements

Part of BBC Nordic Cookery Tareq Taylor, 2013.

Number of people working on the project:

From the start, 2-5 people were involved in the local projects, and 3-4 city staff worked in general urban gardening. 3-4 people from housing companies.

Primary target beneficiaries involved

About 2000 people (there could be more if you also involve indirect beneficiaries.) In the long run there are more than 10.000 people involved.

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

Initially, only a few NGOs and 2 people from the City.

There are 20+ NGOs, 10+ Housing companies, 3-4 universities, 30+ supplier companies, Several Municipalities, the City of Malmö, Schools, Several Departments, urban gardening fairs, and lots more.

Main achievements and goals obtained

- The number of communities and urban garden projects within the city increased from 1 to more than 15, and it is still increasing.
- Increased awareness of the benefits of urban gardening and empowerment of communities and spread the idea among the citizens.
- Created a network and collaboration between gardeners and the city to deal with possible friction or obstacles.
- Installed a modern regulation of urban gardening, dealing with urban planning and maintenance aspects.
- Contributed to creating a safe environment.

Monitoring and evaluation

The networks hold yearly meetings. Several studies have been conducted on different aspects of urban gardening (See the list below). SLU—Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences has also collaborated with several projects.



ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Urban gardening enhances local food production, significantly reducing hunger and ensuring access to nutritious and fresh food. This direct link between production and consumption promotes healthier eating habits and enhances food security, essential for good health and well-being.



The project serves as a living classroom for individuals of all ages, providing hands-on experiences in biology, ecology, and nutrition. Educational programmes related to urban gardening can empower communities with the knowledge to grow their food and understand the importance of responsible consumption.



Urban gardening projects can stimulate local economies by creating gardening, food processing, and distribution jobs. They also encourage entrepreneurship opportunities, especially for women and youth, by empowering them to start micro-enterprises related to urban agriculture.



By increasing green spaces, urban gardens help reduce the urban heat island effect, improve air quality, and manage rainwater more effectively. These gardens can transform underutilised urban areas into productive and sustainable spaces, contributing to the development of sustainable cities and communities.



Urban gardening exemplifies the principle of reducing waste and promoting circular economies. Composting organic waste to nourish the gardens minimizes landfill usage, and local food production reduces emissions associated with food transportation.



Urban gardens can sequester carbon and contribute to biodiversity, playing a vital role in combatting climate change. These green spaces act as urban lungs, absorbing CO2 and producing oxygen, which helps mitigate the impacts of climate change.



Although primarily focused on terrestrial ecosystems, urban gardening can indirectly benefit aquatic ecosystems by reducing polluted runoff. Moreover, these gardens become habitats for urban wildlife, promoting plant diversity and contributing to the conservation of various species.

Target of the project

The project's target is to create more activities, greening, and empowerment through community building. These areas are most often concrete jungles, they could be more attractive and have very few people outside during the daytime. The social characteristics are lower, with high unemployment, poor socio-economic status, and severe crime rates. Most often, the police describe these as no-go zones. In these areas, urban gardening has allowed people of all ages to retake their open space, be active, collaborate, and create social empowerment within the community. These things tend to be crucial to start a change.



EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

It is essential to have the opportunity to gain income, produce, get introduced to new people, and make new friends. Learning how to grow things has also created a more open mind among the citizens. It has opened up new possibilities. It has made the area safer. It has also focused on certain districts, mainly on the dark side and only mentioned when bad things happened. It also impacted the city staff, to see what kind of needs the citizens had in the area.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

From the beginning, urban gardening was treated with suspicion and even disliked by the city and housing companies. There was a sense that gardening disrupted the order of things and made them messy. Regulations within the city did not consider urban gardening because it was restricted to specific Colony Areas.
However, Agenda 2030 and other policy documents, environmental policies, and other policies on urban greening proposed more greening in the districts. This made it easier to proceed. The community aspect of urban gardening was also important. Some of the methods were innovative, like bee-keeping on roofs. Nobody knew what regulated it, though. So, different groups learned a lot at the beginning of 2010.

Politically, this had momentum from the socialist and green movement, but it was also supported by the farmers since there were interconnections between the city and rural areas. However, there is political consensus on the importance of greening the cities.

At this time, local community building and empowerment were very much focused.

Urban Gardening proved to be disruptive, strengthening the movement from consumption to production as a citizen in a green city.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

The gardening planning, the collective aspects of gardening, network and co-creation meetings, meetings between planners and practitioners within the city and the areas, several festivities were jointly planned, and annual harvest festivities and activities were organised.

Example of output delivered by the project

The output was largely the harvested produce, and of course, the different communities, as well as several research studies that describe what happened.

The output is an ongoing greening movement within the city, as well as a sustainable and well-known method, network, policy, and stakeholders to keep this going and expanding.

Other things are different social companies created from these projects. At least some companies have grown to be relatively sustainable in their approach since they deliver a lot of produce to local restaurants.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

Most of the local initiatives were initiated by citizens in the area; they invited different stakeholders and fellow citizens to initiate the projects. They also created associations to gather more members and interested gardeners. This has also led to a more expanded network in the city.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Most of the activities were done collectively. By introducing a learning scope into the projects, people were also more included in all aspects of urban gardening. Both young and elderly people were involved, and sometimes whole families, as they would start gardening on balconies and small areas outside apartments.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Many of the citizens involved were also evaluating their involvement through meetings on what to do next year. An important part of gardening is harvesting festivities and joyful feasts in the different communities.

Many of the involved citizens also created their gardens and communities.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

An association often leads the planning of annual activities with members or networks. In these communities, gardeners were more or less professional, with knowledge from schools or universities.
The city staff (1-5) were most often planners, educated urban planners, and at times landscape planners.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Malmö city

Associations

Universities, colleges and
other higher education institutions

Region Scania

Property owner

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

As earlier mentioned, one driving force in all these projects was Stadsodlingsnätverket, the Urban Gardening Network, which is partially run by the city and the different associations in the city and region.





TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

This is the section associated with all projects involving the development of user competences, the grounding of hard and soft skills education or training courses for users.

Index

ACTIVE - Accessible Communication Toward Inclusion of Vulnerable and Excluded persons on Western Balkans

2022 - 2023

Caritas

Balkan region





Useful Links

Caritas Serbia Website

Caritas Kosova

Training and skills development
People with disabilities / Barriers

Texts by Marc Somers, Caritas Europa, in collaboration with Tamara Gacevic and Jelena Ankic, Caritas Serbia

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The Project aims at developing a concept on inclusive and accessible communication of disadvantaged people in Western Balkans countries. Project partners belong to the Caritas network and share common values, joint mission and strategies. Accessible communication and information in simple language **enable a large target group to access information and thus to participate and advocate for themselves.** Accessible communication means that information is provided clearly and understandably for all people of all ages. Consequently, the project specifically aims to increase participation of disadvantaged people.

The context

Approximately **15% of any population consists of People With Disabilities** (PWD) **with a higher incidence in post-conflict countries.** The prevalence of disability is **expected to rise** in the coming years due to **global population aging and an increase in chronic health conditions**. Due to stigma, discrimination, and inaccessibility, PWDs are less likely to be able to access essential services related to education, employment, and health care and more likely to experience poverty. **The lack of access to vital services and programmes contributes to their marginalisation and exclusion, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.** Unfortunately, PWDs continue to face societal barriers that inhibit their ability to participate fully in all life spheres. PWDs in the Western Balkans have experienced many common challenges. The legal framework guarantees equal rights and non-discrimination, but the implementation remains limited. Despite the progress made, PWDs still face barriers and have a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Main objectives

- 10.000 disadvantaged and excluded people have barrier-free access to relevant information and are able to use it to meet their needs (legal information, health issues, information about access to social services and others)
- Capacity of DPOs (Disabled People's organisation), local organisations and state-run service providers to support the participation and independent decision making of excluded people is increased

Primary target users/beneficiaries

- People from disadvantaged groups and excluded from society (people with disabilities, people with dementia, people with learning difficulties, people with reading and writing difficulties, people with mental illnesses, people from minorities, people with a different mother tongue, people with difficulties in concentration, elderly people) and family members and caregivers.
- CSOs in the field of disability and other disadvantaged groups
- Public institutions and service providers in 5 IPA countries
- Employees in health, educational and social institutions
- Civil society in countries of Western Balkans





Number of people working on the project

1 project manager
5 country coordinators
10 experts
5 advocacy and communication officers
5 country accountants
Total: 26 people

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Around **2500 people** with or without disabilities took part in consultations and information events on barrier-free communication.

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

100 CSOs in the field of disability and other disadvantaged groups with at least **300 CSOs** members

Main achievements and goals obtained

- **30 multipliers on accessible communication trained** according to the ToT concept by Austrian, German and local experts.
- **2500 disadvantaged people with or without disabilities involved in different informative events on barrier-free communication.**
- More than **50 disadvantaged people trained** as proofreaders for easy-to-read texts.
- Each country has developed an **action plan for implementation of barrier-free communication** in everyday life at local level and in cooperation with local authorities.
- **More than 400 people received additional information, counselling or coaching** on accessible communication from the beginning of the project.



Monitoring and evaluation

External mid-term evaluation of the project done by Sergei Gotin, Ulad Vialichka, Nenad Durakovic - IMACON Consulting Group. Evaluation experts of IMACON Consulting Group provided the mid-term external evaluation of the project. The main purpose of this evaluation was learning, based on the assessment of the past performance, aiming at understanding future needs and gaps better. The Evaluation Team held evaluation activities, which included: desk research of project documentation and related information sources, field visit with series of online and in-person interviews and focus groups in all targeted countries (November 2023), data processing and analysis resulted in this Evaluation Report (December 2023 – January 2024).

On a regular level, the project manager collects data through a data collection matrix and monitoring is done each trimester through reporting and interviews.



ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY

Target of the project

To tackle stigma and discrimination of PWDs: **they are less likely to be able to access essential services related to education, employment, and health care and more likely to experience poverty.** The lack of access to vital services and programmes contributes to their marginalisation and exclusion, perpetuating a cycle of poverty. **Accessibility is recognised as a vital precondition for people with disabilities to participate fully and equally in society**. However, accessibility is still mostly understood in terms of physical access to services. With regard to communication, it usually refers to individual technical aspects, such as the programming of websites or translation into sign language. **Disadvantaged people remain excluded from society in many areas because their right to understandable and accessible information is not fulfilled.**

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Principles of accessible communication, communication with vulnerable groups and rules for the creation of easy-to-read materials were shared through different informative events, workshops, and training sessions with more than 300 people. Apart from that, guidelines for web accessibility were shared with all interested actors (institutions, CSOs, DPOs…). All developed materials were shared in printed and online format for free. **Disadvantaged groups involved in the text review, gained skills needed for proofreading easy-to-read texts, importance of informational accessibility and self-advocacy.**

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

In the targeted countries there was some progress on fundamental rights, with greater understanding of the importance of these rights and freedoms being guaranteed. Efforts are being made to strengthen the mechanisms to enforce the rights of people with disabilities, but a much higher level of investment is needed to ensure full compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified by all countries), notably as regards transition to community-based care, independent living, accessibility and inclusion. **In the Legal Framework accessibility is present but either the regulations are not implemented or the accessible communication** (or informative accessibility) **is not included as part of accessibility standards.** Moreover, **there is no umbrella strategy on accessibility adopted. The project aims to contribute to the implementation of new policies and to strengthen existing** such as National strategy for rights of people with disabilities 2013-2023 in Kosovo, The National Action Plan for People with Disabilities (NAPPWD) 2021-2025 in Albania, Strategy for advancement of rights and status of people with disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016-2021) and Republika Srpska Social Inclusion Strategy (2021-2027) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Accelerating Disability Inclusion for Children and Adults with Disabilities 2021-2023 in Montenegro and National Strategy of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2020-2024 in Serbia.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Participatory activities carried out within the project

- Training of 30 multipliers on accessible communication (5 modules)
- Development of rules and recommendations based on Inclusion Europe standards for easy-to-read
- Development and production of handbook on accessible communication including accessible events
- Development of usability and accessibility guidelines for designing an accessible website and social media profile
- Development and printing of brochures
- Implementation of workshops, training and consulting on accessible communication
- Training of disadvantaged people with and without disabilities as text editors and proofreaders
- Organisation of local and national round tables
- Strengthening organisations and awareness-rising and sensitisation of decision makers and local authorities
- Organisation of study visits
- Organisation and implementation of informative campaigns.

Example of output delivered by the project

- **Handbook on rules and recommendations for accessible communication**, including accessible events, web accessibility and social media accessibility developed.
- More than **25 topics developed in easy-to-read and plain language with relevant information** on essential services related to education, employment, health care and daily life for disadvantaged people with or without disabilities.
- **15 local round tables and 5 national conferences organised.**
- **100 workshops** on accessible communication conducted.
- More than **30 concrete guidelines on accessible website development**, provided to CSOs and public institutions

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The target group was engaged in selection of topics and materials to be developed during the implementation phase. Namely, the materials in ETR (easy-to-read) were developed and translated in consultation with target groups. The main topic selected by the beneficiaries were related to realisation of their social and economic rights.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Disadvantaged groups were **involved** in the production of materials as **consultants in topics** selection and as **proofreaders of materials** in easy-to-read a plain language who participated in the training for proofreaders. Also, they were **involved in other informative events on barrier-free communication, such as round tables.** Decision makers and representatives of CSOs, employees in health, education and social services were involved in informative events, advocacy activities, workshops on accessible communication and dissemination of produced materials.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

The representative of the organisation of people with disabilities is a member of the project advisory board together with representatives of donors and the main applicant.



MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

The Steering Group meets regularly during the project implementation with all members participating in meetings.

An Advisory Board has been established. It is composed of the project manager, the executive director of Caritas Serbia, 2 donors' representatives (Caritas Austria Renovabis).

Representative of DPO (Disabled Persons Organisation) was proposed at the very beginning of the project. In this case it is Serbian alliance for accessibility that is included in a large part of the activities and gives recommendations on project implementation

Areas of expertise and disciplines involved in the project

The main professional areas involved in the project are social work and philology. The experts in accessible communication are also from psychology and pedagogy.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with **Belgrade's municipality Vračar** with the aim of collaboration and joint efforts in improvement of people with disabilities position and implementation of accessible communication. Moreover, the **collaboration with the universities** was established **in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.**



Avventura di Latta - Officina Sociale

2013 - Ongoing

Samb e Diop

Naples, Italy





Useful Links

Project website

Training and skills development
Refugees / Young people / Job training

Texts by Cristian Campagnaro, Sara Ceraolo, Marco D'Urzo, Politecnico di Torino

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Avventura di Latta is a **permanent workshop of artistic craftsmanship** with base metals which, through craftsmanship, **offers paths of social and work inclusion to foreign young people** residing in the area of action of the association. Born as an educational project, over the years it has changed shape and from a creative recreational activity it is on its way to becoming a business in which some of the trained young people work as artisans and educators.

The context

The project was born within the Samb and Diop APS association, a voluntary association that deals with assistance and training of foreigners in Naples. **The urban context of reference is the urban outskirts of the historic centre of Naples, in particular the one better known as the Forcella district, one of the most discriminated against and known for the high rate of crime and educational poverty in the urban centre.**

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Foreigners residing in Naples

Awards and Acknowledgements

Prize "La Settimana Del Design Campano" (2015)

Call "Forum Universale delle Culture 2013-2014"

Project Culture in Volo

Competition merchandising for museums "Go Sud"

Main objectives

- Allow young people in training to be able to transform their training activity into a professional activity.
- Foster a culture of integration and social inclusion.
- Raise awareness of the importance of craftsmanship as a creative, artistic and educational process.

Main achievements and goals obtained

The **main achievement** is to have managed the **transformation of a training project into a professional activity** for some of the young people who participated in the activities, including two young people who currently work full-time in the workshop as professional craftsmen.

Monitoring and evaluation

There is no formal monitoring system because it is not a funded project and therefore there is no need to formalise the evaluation and its impact. This happens spontaneously by evaluating the appreciation of the products by the public that financially supports the activity.

Number of people working on the project

5 people

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

The project originally involved 16 young people



Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

The project is an independent art workshop. They work independently and through self-financing.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Target of the project

The project wants to tackle the difficult access to work and promote social integration of people with migrant background often affected by lack of documents, difficulties in language and communication.



EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Starting from a migrant background and without any training, some of the participants currently define themselves as artisans and artists, have been accompanied to the second level school diploma, manage the project and the workshop in their assigned roles, and have an established social position.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project works in synergy with other realities, but the working group is fixed. At its inception, the project was innovative, now there are more similar laboratories. A peculiarity is that the laboratory works with metal, while generally other similar labs work with wood. The institutions have never really supported the project, not even in its spin-offs on urban regeneration.







EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Participatory activities carried out within the project

- Prototyping
- Problem-solving
- Prototype completion
- Training

Example of output delivered by the project

- Jewellery

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

- Relationships with customers of products already in the catalogue
- Tutoring and co-working management
- Jewellery workshops

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

- Prototyping,
- Problem-solving,
- Prototype completion,
- Shop set-up and external shops.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

- Warehouse management
- Supplier contacts
- Store management
- Shop events

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

The working group is mainly composed of 5 operators: 3 artisans, 1 social media manager, 1 artisan designer. The figures work in synergy.

Disciplines involved in the project

Design: 1 person (training in architecture) It deals with the design and testing of products and production techniques. Interact with customers. Plan activities and investments. It coordinates production, training and educational activities.

Production: 3 people They deal with the production of craftsmanship and the management of work and materials

Communication: 1 person It is responsible for documenting the workshop's activities and advertising its products and services

Collaborations and alliances with external community

The project relies on a range of collaborations in the delivery of its products, services and craft-based training activities. These activities are provided on a professional basis, and as the project is self-funded, partnerships play a vital role in ensuring its financial sustainability. As a result, the project actively engages in numerous collaborations that support its long-term viability and impact.

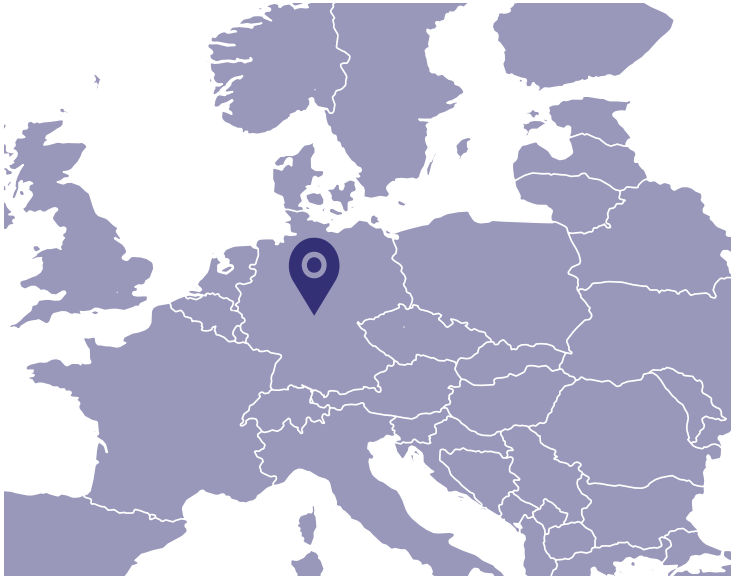


Be able

2014 - Ongoing

Be able

Germany





Useful Links

Project website

Training and skills development
Informal education / Barriers / Empowerment

Texts by Cristian Campagnaro, Sara Ceraolo, Marco D'Urzo, Politecnico di Torino

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

be able is a creative collective for inclusion and integration of socially disadvantaged people through design and operates as a non-profit organisation. Its vision is a society that is shaped by all. In doing so, it **develops and guides participatory design processes** in collaboration with its partners to:

- create safe spaces for experiments and discussions;
- make people visible and capable of action in processes;
- empower people, especially those on the margins, to shape society;
- offer structures that enable collective creativity;
- build bridges to break down borders;
- build prototypes of utopias;

Main objectives

Co-creating a world that is for everyone, **enabling participation** of people from **marginalised groups** through **shared design processes.**

Primary users/beneficiaries:

disadvantaged minorities & vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, people with migrational background, prisoners, etc.)

The context

Since 2010 be able works on different projects within Germany but also abroad. It partners up to develop and implement projects and workshops, together with social, sometimes governmental or economic institutions and stakeholders. Every project has one in common: empowerment through the process of design.

Number of people working on the project

Constantly changing.
At the moment, 3 People on the Board and 20 members.

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Constantly changing. Annual reports are published at Zum Tätigkeitsbericht 2022

Awards

2018	Google Impact Challenge Winner Leuchtturmprojekt
2015/16	German Design Award nominee
2014	UNIC Design Award für unsere Projektteilnehmer Katy Katzmann und Michael Poggemann
2014	SAP Engaging for Local Impact
2012	Social Impact Stipendium
2012	Elsa Neumann Stipendium
2011	Mart Stam Preis





ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY

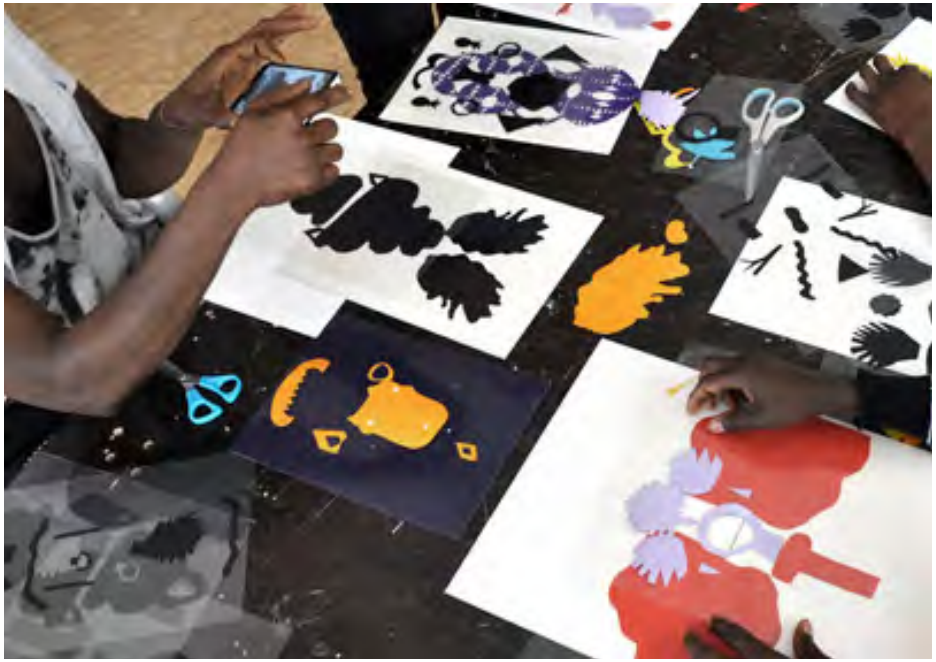






Target of the project

The project wants to tackle different kinds of barriers (cognitive, physical, cultural) for marginalised groups: disconnection and segregation within society and difficulties in embracing change.





EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

- Empowering people overcoming different kinds of barriers (physical, cognitive, cultural...)
- Enabling people to change mindset through design, foster their power to change and transform

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The organisation has "activist approaches" to projects, trying to create awareness. They try to work within the system, allying with local authorities, empathising and bringing them over barriers and difficulties, helping to overcome them. Often, they act as an external factor that creates bridges between stakeholders. The action is innovative compared to the average local policies: local institutions have difficulties thinking out of the box.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Participatory activities carried out within the project

Co-designing experiences of different kind:

- hacking health devices, buildings
- intercultural cooking events
- sensorial explorations through different physical barriers through different activities (cooking...)
- creation of safe spaces for marginalised people
- participatory idea generation activities (brainstorming, focus groups...)

Example of output delivered by the project

- Shared meals;
- Shared experiences of different kinds;
- Podcast;
- Exhibitions;
- Prototypes.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The organisation tries to involve the beneficiaries inside the organisation itself, but most of the time it is hard to involve them deeply in the initial research and development phases of projects. This is more developed by the board. The organisations try to avoid differentiating between the board and the beneficiaries, even if this separation emerges in practice (due to limitations that can emerge, depending on cognitive or physical barriers).

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

The beneficiaries are always involved in this phase, realising the projects.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

The beneficiaries are always involved in this phase, also in the evaluation of projects. Beneficiaries do not design the evaluation but participate in it.





MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Roles (at least 1 main person for each one, but usually 2/3 persons for each one so responsibility can be shared and resilience of organisation increases):

- Strategic management
- Organisational development
- Project design
- Communication (3 people, at least one from each active project)
- Finance
- Project management

Roles rotate regularly.

Disciplines involved in the project

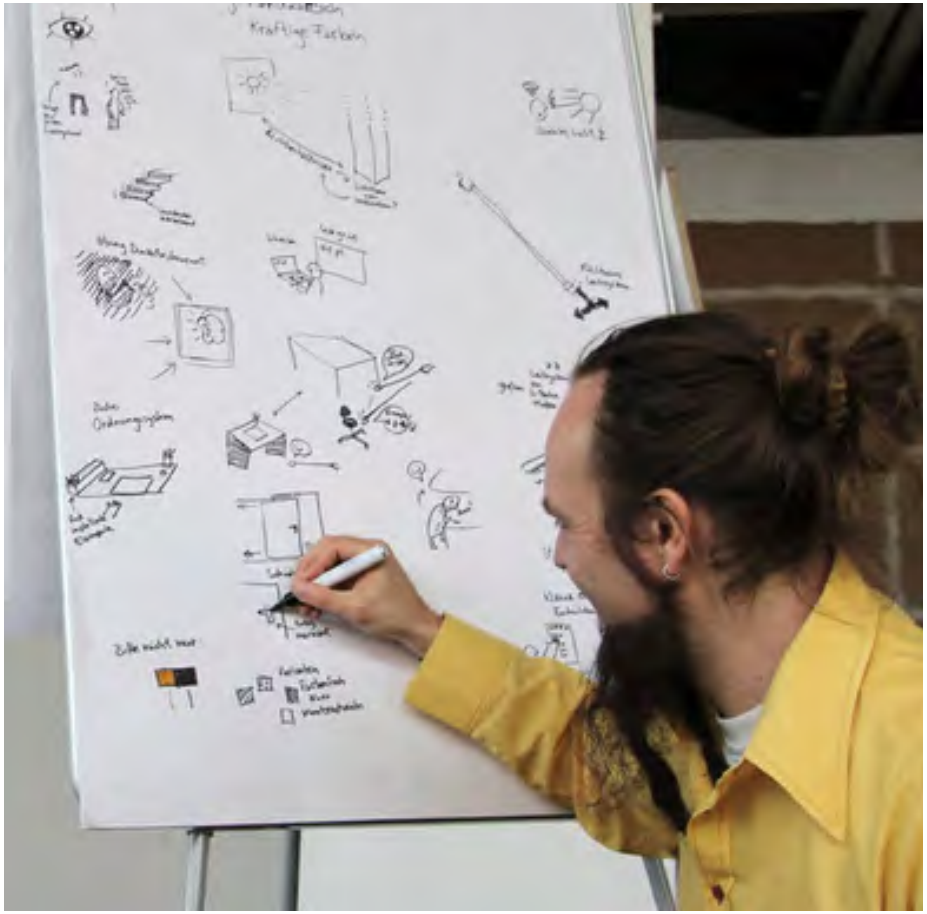
- Different design areas (graphic design, social design, architecture, education for design)
- Project management
- Fundraising
- Anthropology
- Social moderation and mediation

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Collaboration is fundamental for the organisation. (examples: European projects, local institutions, local associations...)

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Some of the projects came into contact with each other because sometimes the people involved are the same.



BLOSSOM

2022 - 2024

Valencia Innohub (writer of the proposal)

Valencia (Spain), Timisoara (Romania), Nicosia (Cyprus), Veria (Greece), Rzeszów (Poland)





Useful Links

Project website

Training and skills development
Women / Digital training / Empowerment

Texts by Maria Koimisoglou and Theodoros Tsanakas, AKADIMOS KDVM EPE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The BLOSSOM project, funded by the European Erasmus+ programme, brought together partners from Cyprus, Poland, Romania, and Greece, coordinated by a Spanish entity. **This initiative was designed to boost the professional prospects of low-skilled adult women by focusing on enhancing their business literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. Through comprehensive, interactive training programmes and a cutting-edge self-assessment tool, BLOSSOM aimed to widen these women's opportunities in the labour market and beyond.**

The assessment tool provided essential feedback on their needs and the skills and competencies they had developed. Addressing the critical issue of widespread unemployment, the project empowered this demographic to become more entrepreneurial and better prepared to find suitable employment or start their own businesses. During the implementation period of the BLOSSOM project, several key priorities in adult education were addressed. The project focused on enhancing the availability of high-quality learning opportunities for adults, ensuring that more individuals could access educational resources.

It also tackled the challenges of digital transformation by fostering digital readiness, resilience, and capacity among participants. **The project played a crucial role in establishing upskilling pathways, which improved the accessibility of adult education and increased its uptake. These efforts contributed to the development of a more educated and skilled adult population.**

The context

The primary objective of the BLOSSOM project was to enhance the digital, numeracy, literacy, and business skills of low-skilled European women, particularly those from marginalised groups. This initiative stemmed from literature reviews conducted by consortium partners that highlighted the social and economic challenges faced by these women in their respective countries. The project aimed to provide a comprehensive platform to support their upskilling and promote their inclusion in the workforce.

The BLOSSOM project, spanning two years, included extensive online meetings, validation stages, and other activities aimed at upskilling low-skilled women. Through materials developed by its consortium, the project provided a stepping stone to entrepreneurship. This initiative was crafted to facilitate their social and professional integration, equipping them with essential skills to enhance their economic opportunities and participation in the workforce.

Main objectives

- Improving the availability of high-quality learning opportunities for adults and especially low-skilled women
- Addressing digital transformation through development of digital readiness, resilience, and capacity
- Creating upskilling pathways, improving accessibility, and increasing take-up of adult education for women from marginalised backgrounds.
- Improving the entrepreneurial opportunities of low-skilled women and their integration into the business world.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Low-skilled adult women of Europe.

Main achievements and goals obtained

Development of a **Conceptual Framework** model with skills that are needed for the entrepreneurial and digital development of low-skilled women (Based on best practices).

Development of a **Training Programme** that can provide specialised training for the upskilling of the low-skilled females of Europe, especially from marginalised groups, without fees.

Development of an **online platform** that will provide a unique and innovative environment. This platform will serve as an online space for low-skilled adult women, aiming to promote lifelong learning and enhance their competencies in business literacy, numeracy, and digital skills.

Development of a **Self-Assessment Tool** which aims to equip the target group with a reliable method to assess their skills.

A satisfying number of the target group has participated in the activities of the project (validation stages, interviews, focus groups, Multiplier Events).

The development of the project was a clear demonstration of its fundamental dedication to engaging a wide and diverse audience. This commitment was highlighted by the purposeful involvement of women from a variety of ethnicities in countries such as Spain, Romania, Greece, Cyprus, and Poland

Monitoring and evaluation

The BLOSSOM project's quality monitoring did not involve an external evaluation by a designated, specialised agency. Instead, a partner organisation conducted the monitoring, assessing both quantitative and qualitative indicators, including the quality of materials produced and metrics such as user testing outcomes and registration rates on the project's platform. Additionally, all results were co-designed, incorporating feedback and opinions from the target group through interviews, focus groups, and validation stages. This approach ensured that the outcomes were tailored to meet the specific needs of the target audience.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



To help people grow personally and succeed professionally in the new economy, it created specialised training programmes in digital skills, business literacy, and numeracy. Its goal in doing this was to close the education gap for women who, in their early years, had fewer opportunities to acquire skills.



To achieve gender parity, women must be empowered for them to become financially independent, actively engage in the economy, and make wise decisions about their personal and professional life. Because women from disadvantaged groups experience compounding disadvantages, the project's focus on these groups also addressed the intersectional aspect of injustice.



The BLOSSOM project specifically aimed at reducing inequalities by making high-quality adult education more accessible to women from diverse backgrounds. This accessibility is key to levelling the playing field and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status or ethnic background, could improve their life conditions through education.

Target of the project

The target group of the BLOSSOM project is composed of low-skilled adult women, with a purpose of providing them a platform and the means to upskill themselves, for them to enter the entrepreneurial realm. Specific focus is given on women from marginalised communities in various European nations, especially in the participating countries, including Cyprus (such as the Turkish Cypriots that live in Northern Cyprus), Poland (such as the Karaites, the Lemkos, the Roma and Tatars) Romania (such as the Roma population), Greece (such as the Roma population in Greece) and Spain (such as the Gipsy population).
These women often face significant socio-demographic challenges that highlight their vulnerability. Many suffer from educational disadvantages, having limited access to quality education and training, which hampers their personal development and career progression. Economically, their low skill levels frequently confine them to low-wage jobs, impacting their quality of life and limiting access to essential resources and opportunities for advancement. Additionally, these women experience marginalisation, facing layers of discrimination based on ethnicity, race, or socio-economic status, which compounds their exclusion from educational and economic opportunities. In today's digital era, their lack of digital skills also presents a major barrier, hindering their access to essential digital platforms needed for both personal and professional purposes, further emphasising the digital divide.

Number of people working on the project

The project's duration was 2 years.
1 project manager x participating organisation (5 organisations) = 5 project managers.

1 researcher x participating organisation (5 organisations) = 5 researchers

2 technicians for the platform development.

2 people responsible for the quality assurance of the BLOSSOM project.

Total number of people working on the project = 14

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

Coordinating organisation (1)
Association Valencia Inno Hub

Partners organisations (4)
Centrul pentru promovarea invatarii permanente timisoara asociatia (CPIP)
K.D Growth consultants
Stowarzyszenie "centrum wspierania edukacji i przedsiębiorczości (CWEP)
Akadimos KDVM – Lifelong Learning Centre

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

During the 2 years of the implementation of the BLOSSOM project, the following number of beneficiaries were involved in the tasks and activities of the project
5 successful women entrepreneurs per participating organisation = 25 in total

10 training experts in total from Greece and Romania for the validation of skills included in.

25 beneficiaries per organisation (adult women, women students, entrepreneurs, unemployed women, training experts) for the focus group of the development of the Training Programme

25 beneficiaries per organisation (adult women, women students, entrepreneurs, unemployed women, training experts) for the validation stage of the Training Programme.

15 beneficiaries per organisation (adult women, women students, entrepreneurs, unemployed women, training experts) for the validation stage of BLOSSOM platform.

20 beneficiaries per organisation (adult women, women students, entrepreneurs, unemployed women, training experts) for the validation stage of the Self-assessment tool of BLOSSOM.

30 beneficiaries per organisation (Adult women, women students, entrepreneurs, unemployed women, training experts) for the Multiplier Events of the BLOSSOM project.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Capabilities
The recipients of the BLOSSOM project gained valuable new capabilities, relationships, and resources that significantly enhanced their professional and personal development. They acquired essential digital skills and business literacy as well as numeracy and entrepreneurial skills, crucial for navigating today's technology-driven and business-oriented environments and to start their own business ventures.

Relationships
The project facilitated the formation of peer networks and professional organisations in the five partner organisations' countries, providing opportunities for collaboration and mentorship. This network is available on the BLOSSOM online platform.

Participants accessed a rich array of educational materials, benefited from an innovative online platform for continuous learning, and received structured guidance and support, all aimed at providing lasting benefits and empowering them to achieve greater digital, numerical, and financial independence and social and professional mobility.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

Innovation: By concentrating on the demographic group of low-skilled adult women, with a specific focus on those from marginalised communities of Greece, Spain, Romania, Cyprus, and Poland — and customising training programmes to improve their digital, entrepreneurial, and numeracy abilities, the BLOSSOM initiative provided novel ideas. Creating an online learning platform and utilising self-assessment tools are two examples of creative ways to provide instruction and training in a way that is accessible, adaptable, and in step with current technology developments.

Alignment with Local Policies: The project's methods align with regional policies of Spain, Greece, Poland, Romania, and Cyprus that prioritize gender parity, digital accessibility, lifelong learning, and economic empowerment. By focusing on women's empowerment and adult education, BLOSSOM is in line with national policies that encourage social inclusion and lower unemployment, as well as policy frameworks like the European Pillar of Social Rights, which promotes equal opportunities and labour market access.

Disruptiveness: By providing customised, flexible learning solutions that specifically suit the needs of its target group, the BLOSSOM project disrupts conventional educational and employment training methods. This can be viewed as disruptive in a positive way. In addition to offering skill development, it incorporates self-evaluation and ongoing feedback mechanisms to adjust and respond to the individual requirements of the participants, upending traditional approaches to adult education.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Participatory activities carried out within the project

- In-person interviews were conducted with 25 successful female entrepreneurs from Spain, Greece, Romania, Poland, and Cyprus. These discussions aimed to identify the key skills, based on DigComp and EntreComp competencies, to be incorporated into PR.1, the Conceptual Model Framework of the BLOSSOM project.

- For the PR.2 Training Programme of the BLOSSOM project, which focuses on digital, entrepreneurial, and numerical literacy, 25 beneficiaries from each organisation, totalling 125 participants (including adult women, women students, entrepreneurs, unemployed women, and training experts), were involved in focus groups. These sessions were conducted to select and validate the skills to be included in the Training Programme.

- For the validation stage of the Training Programme (PR.2), 25 beneficiaries from each organisation, making a total of 125 individuals (comprising adult women, women students, entrepreneurs, unemployed women, and training experts), participated. Their role was to provide feedback on what elements should be added to or removed from the programme.

Example of output delivered by the project

Training Programme (PR.2):
Content: The project developed specialised training programmes focusing on digital, entrepreneurial, and numerical literacy.
Use: The training programme will continue to provide **valuable educational resources for women**, helping them to improve their employment prospects, start their own businesses, or simply gain confidence in their daily interactions with technology and finance.

Online Learning Platform (PR.3)
Content: An innovative online platform was created to facilitate access to the training materials and provide a space for ongoing learning.
Use: The platform will serve as a resource for participants to revisit and learn new skills at their convenience for the next 5 years at least. It will also help in building a community among learners who can share experiences and support each other.

Self-Assessment Tool (PR.4)
Content: The BLOSSOM Self-Assessment tool allows participants to evaluate their skills and track their progress.
Use: The tool will continue to be used by participants to self-monitor their development and identify areas needing improvement, enabling a personalised learning experience, and fostering continuous personal growth.

Educational Materials
Content: Comprehensive educational materials were crafted, covering business literacy, numeracy, and digital skills
Use: Post-project, these materials will remain accessible to a broader audience, extending the project's reach and impact beyond the initial group of participants. They can be used by other educational programmes and institutions to support similar training efforts.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

To develop Project Result 1, the BLOSSOM **Conceptual Model Framework**, interviews were conducted with 25 local and successful female entrepreneurs from Spain, Romania, Poland, Greece, and Cyprus. A questionnaire grounded in DigComp and EntreComp frameworks was used to identify the necessary entrepreneurial and digital skills to be incorporated into the Framework.

To create Project Result 2, the BLOSSOM Training Programme, which features specific chapters aimed at enhancing digital, entrepreneurial, and numerical skills of low- skilled adult women of Europe, a focus group involving project stakeholders was convened. **This group selected the necessary skills for inclusion and provided guidance on the programme's design and structure**. Additionally, after a preliminary version of the Training Programme was developed, the same stakeholders reviewed and validated it, finalising its form and content.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

In creating Project Result 2, the BLOSSOM Training Programme, a focus group consisting of project stakeholders was formed. **This group included low-skilled and unemployed women, training specialists, and female entrepreneurs.** They chose skills and contributed feedback on designing and structuring the programme to meet the specific needs of the beneficiaries.

For Project Result 1, the BLOSSOM Conceptual Model Framework, interviews were carried out with successful female entrepreneurs from Spain, Poland, Cyprus, Greece, and Romania using a questionnaire that combined the DigComp and EntreComp frameworks. While these entrepreneurs are not the primary recipients, their knowledge and experience in digital and entrepreneurial areas help pinpoint and incorporate essential skills into the framework. This ensures that the framework is thorough and pertinent, ultimately benefiting the intended audience.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Project Delivery Phase:
Focus Groups and Validation Stages: Beneficiaries participated in focus groups and validation stages for different parts of the project, such as the development of the training programme (PR.2) and the self-assessment tool (PR.4). This involvement ensured that the training materials and tools are not only relevant but also user-friendly and effective for the target audience. Their direct input helps tailor the programme to better meet their needs and expectations.

Evaluation Phase:
Feedback Mechanisms: Throughout the project, feedback from beneficiaries was crucial. For example, during the validation stages of the training programmes and tools, beneficiaries assessed and proposed adjustments, which played a direct role in the iterative improvement of the project's outputs.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Asociación Valencia Inno Hub (Valencia, Spain)

The Project Coordinator oversaw various tasks and activities related to the management of the BLOSSOM project, and actively participated in the development of all intellectual outputs.

CENTRUL PENTRU PROMOVAREA INVATARII PERMANENTE TIMISOARA ASOCIATIA – CPIP
(Timisoara, Romania)
This partner of the BLOSSOM consortium participated in all project activities, while also leading the development of PR.2, the development of the Training Programme.

K.D GROWTH CONSULTANTS (Nicosia, Cyprus).
This member of the BLOSSOM consortium was involved in all project activities and took the lead on developing PR.4, the online Self-assessment tool. Additionally, they were responsible for overseeing the quality leadership of the project.

STOWARZYSZENIE "CENTRUM WSPIERANIA EDUKACJI I PRZEDSIĘBIORCZOŚCI (Rzeszow, Poland)
This partner in the BLOSSOM project was engaged in all the project's activities and tasks and was also in charge of developing PR.3, the project's online platform. Additionally, they held the role of dissemination leader for the project.

Akadimos KDVM (Veria, Greece)
This partner in the BLOSSOM project actively participated and contributed to all project activities and tasks, and additionally led the development of PR.1, the BLOSSOM Conceptual Model Framework.

Areas of expertise and disciplines involved in the project

People from the following professional areas worked during the implementation period of the BLOSSOM project:

Financial Consultant: A financial consultant was instrumental in providing the necessary financial literacy knowledge crucial for the business and entrepreneurial components of the training programme. Their expertise helped ensure that the curriculum was relevant and practical for empowering participants with the skills needed to manage and grow a business.

Lawyer: Legal expertise was vital for ensuring compliance with national and European regulations, safeguarding intellectual property rights, and managing contractual obligations. This role was crucial in navigating the legal landscape, ensuring that project deliverables were developed and distributed without infringing any laws.

Political Scientist: A political scientist provided insights on policy impacts and strategic planning, aligning the project with governmental and EU policies. Their understanding of the socio-political environment helped in advocating for stakeholder support and enhancing the project's policy coherence.

Marketing Specialist: Marketing specialist focused on the dissemination of project results, raising awareness of the project activities, and engaging stakeholders and potential participants. The strategic marketing efforts were pivotal in reaching a broader audience and ensuring the project's visibility and impact.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Collaboration processes have been performed during the implementation of the BLOSSOM, especially with external stakeholders, who were the project's direct target audience.

- Local successful entrepreneurs from Spain, Romania, Cyprus, Poland, and Greece
- Training experts from the public and private sector
- Unemployed women
- External adult Trainers
- Public bodies, that the project results were disseminated regularly.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

This condition does not apply to the other organisations participating in the BLOSSOM project. Specifically, for Akadimos, there was considerable collaboration with its team of adult trainers who were not part of the project implementation team. Despite this, they still participated in several of the project's activities.

Brindisi Smart Guide

2021 - Ongoing

Italian Association Persons with Down Syndrome of Brindisi

Brindisi, Italy





Useful Links

Project website

Training and skills development
People with disabilities / City / Awareness / Barriers

Texts by Vittoria Lombardi, Tiziana Ciampolini and Antonio Fantasia, Associazione S-NODI GROUP E.T.S.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The project Brindisi Smart guide - Essential **tourist guide** - is an initiative of the Italian Association **People with Down syndrome** of Brindisi. The project has been funded by the municipality of Brindisi and designed within the Smart Lab of Palazzo Guerrieri. The goal is to use the **tourism potential of the territory** of Brindisi - its beauty, gastronomy and history – to create value in the social sector and **offer opportunities for people with disability, both tourists and locals.**

The products and services realised within this initiative (a paper tourism guide, a digital application, and a tourism tour service) **have been designed to be accessible to everyone** and therefore translated following the guidelines produced through the various experiences of augmentative communication, easy-to-read. **People with Down syndrome have been involved in all the phases of the project to create products that meet their needs** and create working and social opportunities for them.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

People with disability
(in particular with down syndrom)

Awards and Acknowledgements

In 2021 Brindisi Smart Guide won the second edition of Urban Innovation Lab, promoted by Palazzo Guerrieri

Main objectives

- **A free app easy-to-read** to visit the territory of Brindisi;
- **A Smart guide designed and developed for people with cognitive disabilities,** following the long experience regarding the development of easy-to-read content. The guide is characterised by its simplicity, the high comprehensibility of the information, the use of images for clarity. The smart guides can be provided to the participants of the guided experiences, or purchased within the main tourist offices of the city or through the partner organisations.
- **The experience tour: a paid service led by boys and girls with Down syndrome,** that have been prepared and supported by the social workers of the project and the tourist guides part of the team.

The context

The Italian Association People with Down syndrome was created to respond to the needs of parents of people with Down syndrome to network and ensure more autonomy and opportunities for social interaction. The section of Brindisi has 42 years. Within this framework, Christian Muraglia, under the request of Fabio, a boy that is part of the association, decides to produce a paper touristic guide accessible to people with disability, realised through their direct contribution. People with Down syndrome encounter a series of difficulties to read specific documents and often there is a lack of adequate instruments for them to autonomously move within the city. The idea of Brindisi Smart guide starts from here: to realise a touristic guide, including a digital app, to facilitate the tourist accessibility of the territory. Moreover, this project supports the boys and girls part of the association in their working inclusion because it allows to create a network with the touristic actors of the territory: restaurants, hotels, cruises industry, etc.

Main achievements and goals obtained

The main achievement is **the security and self-confidence acquired by the boys and girls with down syndrome that have taken part in the project.** The initiative departs from their request, because they are mostly living in other towns of the territory and when they were coming to Brindisi they were struggling to understand where to go or where to eat, because there was no guide with easy-to-read information. Since they were taking part to the activities of a daily centre that supports them in the organisation of the free time, they were asking the social workers how to move and orientate themselves in the city. This activity led to the **creation of a guide that is accessible and understandable not only to people with Down syndrome, but also to persons with other disabilities, or old people.** In order to achieve this result, the preparation of the guide, the participants have been engaged in different activities, such as taking pictures to the monuments, read and re-write monuments' information, engage in conversation with local people regarding the history and traditions of the territory: these activities have opened a new world to the participants and have engaged them in new activities, developing new skills. In addition, their engagement in the experience tours have achieved other results, such as overcoming shyness, because you are asked to deliver a professional service and therefore to act professionally: I am an expert, I am a professional.

Number of people working on the project
16 People

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved
10 People

Number of organisations/ institutions involved
10 Organisations

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



The project contributes to reduce inequalities as it supports individuals with disability in the development of job skills and in their inclusion in the labour market, contributing to their autonomy and well-being



The project contributes to promote a more accessible city by offering touristic material that can be accessed also by people with cognitive delay.

Target of the project

The primary target of the project were the boys and girls with down syndrome taking part in the activities of a daily centre managed by the Association People with Down syndrome. **All boys and girls are aged between 18 and 30 years old and need support in the organisation and management of their free time, because of the lack of autonomy due to the disability.** This cognitive disability affects especially the capacity to understand complex information and interact with other individuals, because of the lack of social and cognitive filters that allow them to understand personal interactions. For this reason, they need additional support because of the difficulties to enter the job market and to find full autonomy.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

The skills gained by the recipients can be summarised as follows:

Social skills:
to interact with different services and actors in order to get information; to understand individuals' roles and act professionally, respecting others' personal sphere.

Professional skills:
skills useful in the touristic sector, such as presenting the offer of the territory or providing basic information also in English language.

Knowledge of the territory:
to know how public services and transportation work, where to find information, how to move in the city.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

This project, also thanks to the fact that they were **hosted and supported by Palazzo Guerrieri, managed to create a network with tourism organisations and organisations that have contributed to the project.** There has been a bit of resistance but in general the impact has been positive and most of the businesses and organisations contacted have demonstrated an interest. Also at the level of the general citizenship, the project has raised interest and curiosity.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Participatory activities carried out within the project

The beneficiaries have taken part in all activities aimed at the preparation of the guide and tour:

- Taking pictures of the monuments;
- Reading and describing monuments;
- Collect information and testimonies from the local people of Brindisi regarding the history and culture of the city;
- Follow the graphic designer in the creation of the guide and of the website

Example of output delivered by the project

The main output is the touristic guide developed by the project that can be used not only by people with disabilities but also by children or old people and in general by people that need informative material easier to understand compared to other guides.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The idea of developing an accessible guide of Brindisi came directly from the boys and girls followed by the association. Furthermore, the whole guide has been produced by them with the support of external professionals in order to organise it and present it in a way that is understandable to all.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

The boys and girls involved in the project have been engaged in the activities by meeting once a week within Palazzo Guerrieri, which is located in the city centre of Brindisi, and according to their personal interests and predispositions. Since the preparatory activities for the guide were many, they have been divided into groups: those who wanted to do research, others where writing, others were taking pictures, others were going to talk to local people to gather information, etc. Altogether, then, the beneficiaries would visit the different locations included in the guide to familiarise with them.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

The boys and girls of the association have then been involved as tour guides in the guided tours organised in the framework of Brindisi Smart Guide. With the support of the social workers of the association, the beneficiaries would present to the visitors the main tourist attractions of Brindisi and its cultural and artistic heritage.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Educators and psychologist: supporting the beneficiaries in the activities towards autonomy throughout the whole project;

Web developer: for the development of the web application and website

Social worker who is also a touristic guide: this helped the development of the guide.

Areas of expertise and disciplines involved in the project

- Social and psychological support to accompany people with cognitive disabilities towards a path of autonomy.
- Web developer and graphic skills
- Tourism-related competences

Collaborations and alliances with external community

- Restaurants,
- Hotels
- Other tourist businesses

Costruiamo Saperi

2015 - 2017

Diocesi di Ragusa, Uniti Senza Frontiere, Architetti Senza Frontiere Italia, Confcooperative Sicilia

Ragusa, Italy





Useful Links

Project Website

Training and skills development
Refugees / Women / Suburbs / Job training / Empowerment

Texts by Vittoria Lombardi, Tiziana Ciampolini and Antonio Fantasia, Associazione S-NODI GROUP E.T.S.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Costruiamo Saperi is a social and territorial regeneration project, dealing with the complexity of a local territory interested by strong migration flows. It aims to combine the valorisation of local territory and heritage (the development of territorial strategic visions, the renovation of historical buildings, the re-activation of agricultural fields and local crafts) with the promotion of equitable working conditions and professional training for immigrants; this also involves young professionals.

The project goal was to train and accompany a group of immigrants to the creation of 2 cooperatives, by re-activating buildings and fields of Contrada Magnì, an abandoned historical farm owned by the Diocese of Ragusa. This process was carried on through **3 years of learning-by-doing training and work experiences in 3 fields:**

- A training construction site, with a local building contractor employing and training 7 apprentices, with the coordination and supervision of Architects without borders Italia;
- A carpentry training workshops, active in the restoration and production of the farmhouse fixtures and of craft products.
- The cultivation of the 10 hectares of Contrada Magnì fields.

By the end of the project, several participants started working in regular professional contexts linked to what they learned. Some others have turned into entrepreneurs, as they co-founded two working specialised cooperatives in Contrada Magnì: an agriculture cooperative and a carpentry cooperative.

Main objectives

- Work inclusion of immigrants, through professional training and the creation of cooperatives for equitable job opportunities;
- The re-activation of the Farm Magnì as a pole of civil economy, work and social integration;
- Urban regeneration of the historic centre, through participative processes of work inclusion;

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Unemployed foreign workers living in Ragusa

Awards and Acknowledgements

ROMA, CNR, Focus integrazione EMN, 2016

Credits

Project of Diocesi di Ragusa (lead partner) with Architetti Senza Frontiere Italia, Confcooperative Sicilia, Uniti Senza Frontiere

Founded by Fondazione con il Sud



The context

Ragusa is a small town in the countryside of the south end of **Sicily**. On a hilly territory, it includes two historical centres: the monumental core called Ibla that stands on a hill to the east of the city, and Ragusa Vecchia (the old town) on the west; they were both rebuilt after 1693' earthquake on the ruins of the ancient town. Even though Ragusa has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List for its baroque architecture, **most of the historical buildings in Ragusa Vecchia were lying abandoned and empty, as native inhabitants had moved to the south modern part of the city. The high vacancy translated into affordable (and often degraded) housing for immigrant families,** with in reverse a much harder job inclusion: high rates of unemployment and exploitation in the job marker. The fertile land and mild climate determined a local economy mostly based on agriculture and breeding, with the main job offer being unspecialised, exploited, underpaid and often illegal jobs in these fields.

Main achievements and goals obtained

The professional training of 15 immigrants (men and women)

The job placement of most of the people involved, either in local enterprises or in the 2 cooperatives created with the project

The renovation and reactivation of Contrada Magnì, to become a social, cultural, training and production centre

The promotion of collaborations at the regional and national levels with interesting institutions or enterprises working in the fields relevant to the project, such as:
1) Organisation of a residential workshop with a local design school;
2) Organisation of specialised sustainable construction workshops;
3) Promotion of cultural and educational events.

Number of people working on the project

ASF Italia (5)
Caritas Ragusa (4)
Confcooperative (1)
Uniti Senza Frontiere (1)

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

50 in the 1st phase / 15-20 in the 2nd phase

Number and type of organisations / institutions involved

1) Caritas Ragusa (lead partner): local charity organisation;
2) Architetti Senza Frontiere Italia, project strategy and training-construction site
3) Confcooperative Ragusa: responsible for the creation and development of the cooperatives
4) Uniti Senza Frontiere: immigrant led advocacy group and cultural mediator



ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Contrast poverty specifically for the target population, being immigrants living in the territory of Ragusa, Sicily.



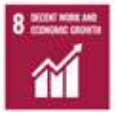
Promoting sustainable agriculture, by farming Magnì lands using natural techniques and planting ancient local seeds



Offering lifelong learning opportunities through learning-by-doing training programmes;



Offering women training in fields usually reserved to men, such as carpentry



Promote decent work and inclusive and sustainable businesses



Reduce inequalities, by providing equal opportunities of job inclusion for immigrants

Target of the project

The area of Ragusa counts a relatively **high presence of immigrant population** for a combination of different phenomena.

First there is a geographical reason, being situated in the **proximity** of one of the **main ports of arrival in the migratory flows.** Second there is an historical and economic component: **the department is one of the richest in the region, mainly for the fertile land and the consequent strong agricultural sector** (the largest in Italy). For these reasons the area has historically attracted immigrants working in agriculture and construction. **The crisis of 2008 combined with new arrivals from new EU countries have worsened working conditions, creating the setting for more illegal and unjust jobs.**

At the same time the city provides for many affordable housing and low costs of life, making it easier for immigrants to be self-sufficient. It is **much harder to get more qualified and equitable job opportunities.**

The group was composed of immigrants, **both men and women**, of different ages and backgrounds, **living in the territory for the last few years, and with a medium-long plan in the area.** This was because **the project aimed at building long-term working opportunities (and social inclusion) for the persons involved.**



EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Capabilities:

Professional training: the **participants** were **trained in different sectors** such as **agriculture and food transformation, construction and carpentry.**

The project also aimed at promoting self-entrepreneurship, agency, autonomy in the group

Relationships:

The participants were involved in daily activities for around 2 years with local professionals and workers, thus fostering new and strong professional and personal relationships with them and within the group. In fact very often **mutual ties** were created, where **more experienced or older persons were helping and supporting younger or more recent immigrants with various issues.**

Overall the participants gained a number of new relationships in the territory, thus accessing a number of new useful resources.

New and rich relationships were also created between the different organisations working on the project, which promoted new directions of development.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

1st phase

- Capacity building workshop in the first phase of the project, useful also for the selection of participants and the subdivision into the 3 subgroups (agriculture, construction, crafts) for the second phase;

- Self-construction of furniture for the setting of a small showcase point for the project in the city centre, functional also to the promotion of public meetings with the citizenry

2nd phase

- Participation in the building renovation of the training construction site, with everyday activities as apprentices and training carpentry workshop

- Promotion of self-entrepreneurship:
Meetings to plan and manage the two cooperatives created, involvement in the management and development of the activities

Example of output delivered by the project

1 public call for the selection of 50 participants to phase 1, the capability workshops

4 capability workshops, tot. 8 days, with all project partners and the 50 participants selected.

Intensive 5 months work experiences for the 25 participants-apprentices selected in the capability workshops. Participants were assigned at 3 different training programmes in 3 fields: agriculture, building, carpentry.
The creation of 2 cooperative, an agriculture and a carpentry one

The drafting of a handbook describing project strategy, programme and criticalities. Focusing on the training construction site.

3 public events in the city showcase, to rise awareness and educate on specific topics such as nutrition, agriculture, local crafts, multiculturality

1 intensive specialised training workshop for professional in construction and the project apprentices

1 contest for the logo design of Costruiamo Saperi.

A crowdfunding campaign to support activities at the carpentry workshop "Sedersi a Magnì."

A week-long residency at Masseria di Contrada Magnì organised by the **Siracusa School of Design and Art** Made Programme in collaboration with the cooperative Rinart and ASF Italia

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The beneficiaries were not directly involved in the project development phase, since the group of participants hadn't been selected yet.
Despite this, the **partnership includes "Uniti Senza Frontiere", a local immigrant-led organisation with first-hand knowledge of immigrant situations in the territory and direct contacts with people, and Caritas Ragusa, with broad direct knowledge of immigrants.**
At the same time the project foresaw a first phase aimed at selecting - through a public call, based on conditions deemed necessary for the project's continuation (gender, age, employment status, housing, etc.) - a first group of 50 migrants to participate in a series of capability workshops. These were designed to introduce to the group the project ideas, goals and programme, to promote mutual knowledge of the group and to assess personal conditions, motivations and skills for the subsequent selection of 25 participants to be included in the second phase of the project.
The workshops were very useful to redefine specific project activities according to the skills and personal motivation of the participants.
Therefore the project adapted during the project implementation to different needs and unexpected factors emerging.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the implementation phase

The project was aimed at the direct involvement of the group during the different project phases and activities and with different modalities.
The first phase was designed with the purpose of identifying skills and motivations: 25 recipients would continue the path towards entrepreneurship through work-experience, with some creating the cooperatives and others being employed by them or local companies. The remaining 25 would be guided, through the allocation of agricultural and urban social gardens to the partner association Uniti Senza Frontiere, towards agricultural self-production, refining acquired skills, and engaging with the project's commercial activities.
The selected group of 25 was then involved in the second phase of the project. This included training activities and an intensive 5 months work-experience in 3 different fields.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

One of the project goals was the start-up of two working cooperatives, which were constituted by the end of the project.
The cooperatives (Seminamondo, dedicated to agricultural production, and Rinart, a carpentry workshop) **included some of the participants from the two work experiences proposed during the project, and some young local professionals were involved in the training period** (two architects in Rinart, an agronomist, a social worker and a mediator from Uniti Senza Frontiere in Seminamondo).
Therefore both in **the constitution and in the running of the two cooperatives, participants were personally involved in the management.**

For the evaluation phase, the formal activity was mainly focused on the objective and measurable results observed.

Nevertheless, continuously during the project development, an informal assessment with the participants about existing criticalities, issues and elements to be better addressed was carried on. The inputs emerged were taken into account to better define or redefine when needed the following project activities.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Diocese di Ragusa: lead partner and owner of the land and the farm called Contrada Magni, granted on free loan for 5 years
Includes Caritas Ragusa, a local charity working with disadvantaged communities, vulnerable and excluded people; often migrants

ASF Italia Onlus: non-profit organisation based in Milan and working since 1998 in the field of socially responsive design, supporting underprivileged populations through the production and transformation of the built environment. Based on inclusion, participation, involvement and empowerment of local communities.

Confcooperative Ragusa: organisation providing support and services for the creation and management of cooperatives

Uniti Senza Frontiere: immigrants' advocacy group, acting as linguistic and cultural mediator.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Main disciplinary areas:

- Strategic design, territorial development
- Architecture, design, construction
- Social studies

Collaborations and alliances with external community

- Collaboration with networks of ethical purchasing groups (G.A.S.) at the local and the national territory for the selling of agricultural products;
- Collaboration with a local design school in intensive design workshops
- Involvement of sustainable building components producers for specialised training in building techniques



Design Thinking for Social Inclusion

2022 - 2024

VNB, ECO – LOGIC, CESIE, SYNTHESIS, FO-Aarhus, Compass,Grunnet&Petersen

Project partners' countries





Useful Links

Project Website

Training and skills development
Adults / Digital training / Empowerment

Texts by Elena Tornariti, SYNTHESIS Centre for Research and Education

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The promotion of social inclusion is one of the core topics of the European Union. The aim of Design Thinking is to discover and understand existing needs in order to eventually be able to develop innovative solutions. The process includes methods that enable empathy with people. In the individual steps of the process, a balance is sought between analytical and creative thinking.

In the Design Thinking for Social Inclusion project the organisation implemented Design Thinking for teachers and learners in three exemplary areas that are of immense importance for social inclusion: Social Entrepreneurship, Community Work and Sustainability Management. These three key topics have been chosen because of their importance in fostering social inclusion:

Social entrepreneurship works as an antidote to curb the practices of social exclusion.

Community work is combining social work with active participation of beneficiary groups i.e. in schools, neighbourhoods or communities.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations are focusing on ending poverty, protecting the planet and improving the lives and prospects of everyone; thus a successful and inclusive local sustainability management works directly for the benefit of socially marginalised groups.

A central outcome of the Design Thinking for Social Inclusion project is this i**nteractive learning platform that can be used by teachers and trainers to develop face-to-face or blended learning workshops based on the design thinking process.** The platform enables self-directed on spot e-learning. Training modules on the platform specified for the three focus areas (social entrepreneurship, sustainability management, community work) cover the entire Design Thinking process, suggest methods to go through the 6 different iterative steps of the process, and give examples from the practical implementation in the work of the project partners. The training platform includes short video tutorials to illustrate the process and individual training activities.

With the help of the platform and its content, institutions and individuals across Europe are enabled to apply Design Thinking for themselves and for their target groups in a well-structured and human-centred way.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Teachers and trainers: The project is designed to help educators develop and deliver workshops using the design thinking process.

Learners: Particularly those involved in the areas of social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management.

Institutions and individuals across Europe: The project aims to enable these groups to apply design thinking in a structured and human-centred manner for social inclusion purposes.

Socially marginalised groups: Indirectly, as the project's focus areas (social entrepreneurship, community work, sustainability management) aim to benefit these groups by fostering social inclusion.

Main objectives

- Promote social inclusion across Europe by addressing key societal needs.
- Empower teachers and trainers with the tools to develop and deliver workshops using the design thinking process.
- Enable learners to understand and apply design thinking in social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management.
- Provide an interactive learning platform that facilitates self-directed e-learning and blended learning workshops.
- Offer comprehensive training modules covering the entire design thinking process.
- Illustrate the practical implementation of design thinking through examples and video tutorials.
- Foster innovative and human-centred solutions to social challenges.
- Enhance the capacity of institutions and individuals to apply design thinking for the benefit of socially marginalised groups.

Credits

VNB – Germany

ECO – LOGIC - North Macedonia

CESIE – Italy

SYNTHESIS – Cyprus

FO-Aarhus – Denmark

Compass – Austria

Grunnet&Petersen – Denmark

The context

The Design Thinking for Social Inclusion project addresses the European Union's core focus on promoting social inclusion. By leveraging the design thinking methodology, the project aims to identify and understand existing needs to develop innovative solutions. It emphasises empathy and a balance between analytical and creative thinking. The project targets teachers and learners, applying design thinking in social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management—three key areas critical for fostering social inclusion. An interactive learning platform provides training modules, video tutorials, and practical examples to help educators and institutions implement design thinking in a structured, human-centred way. This initiative ultimately seeks to benefit socially marginalised groups across Europe by enhancing social entrepreneurship, community participation, and local sustainability efforts.

Main achievements and goals obtained

Development of an Interactive Learning Platform: successfully created a platform that provides comprehensive training on the design thinking process. The platform includes modules, video tutorials, and practical examples specific to social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management.

Empowerment of Educators: enabled teachers and trainers to develop and deliver workshops focused on social inclusion using design thinking methodologies. Provided resources that facilitate both face-to-face and blended learning workshops.

Capacity Building for Learners: equipped learners with the skills to apply design thinking in addressing social challenges. Focused training on key areas such as social entrepreneurship, community engagement, and sustainability.

Promotion of Social Inclusion: addressed and raised awareness about the importance of social inclusion in various communities across Europe. Developed human-centred solutions that directly benefit socially marginalised groups.

Practical Implementation Examples: shared real-world examples and best practices from project partners to illustrate the successful application of design thinking. Enhanced the practical understanding of design thinking through illustrative video tutorials and activities.

Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): supported efforts to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve lives through sustainable local initiatives. Fostered inclusive sustainability management practices that benefit marginalised communities.

Creation of a Collaborative Network: involved various organisations and institutions in a collaborative effort to promote and implement design thinking for social inclusion.

Monitoring and evaluation

Regular Reporting: Project partners submit regular progress reports detailing activities, achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement.

Number of people working on the project:
7 EU partners

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved
Local, regional and national stakeholders are involved in some capacity in the project, although they are not part of the management bodies of D-thinking.

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

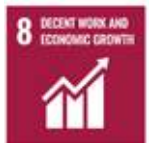
Educational Institutions - Schools - Universities - Training centres - Social Enterprises - Organisations focused on social entrepreneurship - Community Organisations - Groups involved in community work and social initiatives - Sustainability Organisations - Institutions dedicated to sustainability management and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Project Partners - Various partner organisations that contribute practical examples and support the implementation of the design thinking process.



ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



The project provides an interactive learning platform that enhances educational opportunities for both teachers and learners. By fostering skills in Design Thinking, it promotes creative problem-solving and critical thinking, essential for personal and professional development.



Through the emphasis on social entrepreneurship, the project encourages the creation of social enterprises that not only address social issues but also generate employment opportunities. This can help reduce economic disparities and promote inclusive economic growth.



By focusing on social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management, the project aims to empower marginalised groups and promote social inclusion. Social entrepreneurship helps create opportunities and supports the economic integration of disadvantaged communities.



Community work, as promoted by the project, encourages active participation and social cohesion within neighbourhoods and communities. This can lead to more resilient and sustainable local communities.

Targets of the project

The project targets individuals and groups who are socially and economically marginalised, aiming to address their specific needs and challenges. The project focuses on enhancing their capabilities and opportunities through education, social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management.

Target Population

Teachers and Learners in Marginalised Communities need to access to innovative educational tools, skills development and empowerment through education.

They have limited access to quality education and resources, affecting their ability to achieve personal and professional growth.

Target population often includes those from low-income backgrounds, under-resourced schools, and regions with higher dropout rates.

Social Entrepreneurs

They need support to develop and scale social enterprises, to have access to funding and networking opportunities.

Lack of resources and support structures to start and sustain social enterprises, limiting their potential to create social impact.

Individuals from marginalised communities or those seeking to address social issues within such communities.

Community Workers and Local

They need training on community engagement techniques and get access to best practices, and tools for effective project implementation.

They have limited capacity to mobilise and organise community resources, reducing their effectiveness in fostering community development.

Socio-Demographic Parameters: Often includes residents of underserved neighbourhoods, community leaders from minority groups, and local activists.

Members of Marginalised and Vulnerable Groups

They need inclusion in social, economic,and environmental initiatives, also opportunities for participation in community decision-making and access to sustainable resources. They vulnerability are: social exclusion, economic disenfranchisement and lack of representation in policy-making processes.

How Vulnerability Affects Their Lives

Marginalised groups have limited access to employment opportunities and financial resources, leading to a cycle of poverty and economic instability.

They often face discrimination and exclusion from mainstream social, cultural, and political activities, impacting their sense of belonging and community engagement.

They also have inadequate educational resources and support result in lower educational attainment, which in turn limits career opportunities and personal development.

These groups are often more exposed to environmental hazards and have less capacity to adapt to environmental changes, exacerbating their vulnerability.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Design Thinking Skills

Empathy: Ability to understand and empathise with the needs and challenges of socially marginalised groups.

Problem-Solving: Enhanced skills in identifying, defining, and solving social problems through creative and analytical thinking.

Innovation: Increased capability to develop innovative solutions that address social inclusion.

Training and Educational Skills

Workshop Development: Teachers and trainers gain skills to create and conduct workshops based on the design thinking process.

Facilitation: Improved ability to facilitate engaging and impactful learning experiences for diverse groups.

Practical Application

Real-World Implementation: Learners and educators can apply design thinking principles in practical scenarios related to social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management.

Relationships

Inter-Institutional Collaboration: Strengthened relationships between educational institutions, social enterprises, community organisations, and sustainability groups.

Peer Connections: Enhanced connections and networking opportunities among teachers, trainers, and learners across Europe.

Community Engagement

Active Participation: Increased engagement and collaboration with local communities and marginalised groups.

Stakeholder Involvement: Improved relationships with stakeholders involved in social inclusion efforts, including local governments, NGOs, and private sector partners.

Resources

Training Modules: Access to comprehensive training modules covering the entire design thinking process tailored to social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management.

Video Tutorials: Short video tutorials that illustrate design thinking concepts and practical implementation strategies.

Best Practices: Access to practical examples and case studies from project partners, providing real-world insights and successful applications of design thinking.

Guides and Toolkits: Availability of guides and toolkits that assist in the structured application of design thinking in various contexts.

Self-Directed Learning Resources: Materials that support self-directed learning, allowing users to engage with the content at their own pace.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

Coherence with Social Inclusion Policies:

The Design Thinking for Social Inclusion project aligns with many local and national policies focused on promoting social inclusion and reducing social exclusion.

By emphasising social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management, the project supports policies aimed at improving social equity and inclusion.

Support for Educational Innovation:

The project encourages innovative teaching methodologies, which aligns with educational policies that promote modern, student-centred learning approaches.

By providing teachers and trainers with new tools and resources, it enhances the quality of education and supports policy goals related to improving educational outcomes.

Advancing Sustainability Goals:

The project's focus on sustainability management aligns with local and national commitments to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By integrating sustainability into educational and community initiatives, it supports policy efforts to promote environmental stewardship and sustainable development.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

Design Thinking Workshops

Interactive Workshops: Teachers and trainers facilitated hands-on workshops where participants engaged in the complete design thinking process, from empathising with target users to prototyping and testing solutions.

Group Brainstorming Sessions: Participants collaborated to generate and refine ideas, fostering a sense of ownership and collective problem-solving.

Community Engagement Activities

Community Surveys and Interviews: Engaging local community members to understand their needs, challenges, and aspirations through structured surveys and interviews.

Focus Groups: Organising focus groups with diverse community stakeholders to gather in-depth insights and feedback on proposed solutions.

Co-creation Sessions

Collaborative Design Sessions: Bringing together teachers, learners, community members, and other stakeholders to co-create solutions addressing social inclusion issues.

Prototyping Workshops: Participants worked together to build and test prototypes, incorporating real-time feedback and iterating on designs.

Peer Learning and Exchange

Peer Mentoring: Establishing peer mentoring systems where experienced participants guide and support newcomers in applying design thinking methodologies.

Knowledge Sharing Sessions: Facilitating sessions where participants share their experiences, challenges, and success stories, promoting mutual learning.

Example of output delivered by the project

Interactive Learning Platform: a comprehensive online platform offering training modules on design thinking tailored for social entrepreneurship, community work, and sustainability management. Utilised by teachers and trainers to develop and deliver workshops. The platform enables learners to engage in self-paced learning, enhancing their understanding and application of design thinking.

Training Modules and Toolkits: detailed modules and toolkits covering the six iterative steps of the design thinking process, including empathy, define, ideate, prototype, test, and implement. Applied by community workers and social entrepreneurs in real-world projects to address local social inclusion challenges. Used by educators to guide students through structured design thinking exercises.

Video Tutorials: short, illustrative videos that demonstrate key concepts and methods within the design thinking process. Serve as visual aids for both teachers and learners in workshops and training sessions to provide clear, practical examples of each design thinking step.

Practical Implementation Examples: case studies and examples from the work of project partners, showcasing successful applications of design thinking in social inclusion. Serve as benchmarks for new projects, helping users understand how to effectively implement design thinking. Provide real-world inspiration for educators and learners to develop their own initiatives.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

Context Analysis Phase: conducted surveys and interviews with community members to gather data on their needs, challenges, and perspectives on social inclusion. Direct participation of beneficiaries in sharing their experiences, providing valuable insights into the specific issues they face, and helping to shape the understanding of the local context.

Focus Groups: organised focus groups with representatives from target beneficiary groups. Engaged in discussions to identify key areas of concern, contributing to a deeper contextual analysis of social inclusion barriers and opportunities.

Participatory Workshops: held workshops where beneficiaries worked alongside project team members to identify and prioritize factors affecting social inclusion. Beneficiaris actively involved in brainstorming sessions and decision-making processes to pinpoint critical issues and root causes of exclusion in their communities.

Empathy Mapping: use design thinking tools such as empathy maps to capture emotions, thoughts, and behaviours of beneficiaries to understand of their needs.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

1. Pilot Testing and Prototyping
2. Workshops and Training Sessions
3. Community-Based Projects
4. Feedback and Iteration

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

In the delivery phase, beneficiaries co-facilitated workshops and managed resources, ensuring activities were relevant and effective. Their input was crucial in participatory evaluation processes, where they helped design criteria, conduct surveys, and analyse data, providing comprehensive feedback that informed continuous improvement



MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Project Coordinator

Educational Specialist

Training Coordinator

Logistics Manager

Financial Officer

Communication Specialist

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Education Sector: implementing programmes, training teachers.

Community Organisations: providing support services, facilitating community activities.

Research Institutions: conducting research and evaluations.

Cultural Institutions: promoting cultural exchange, organising events.

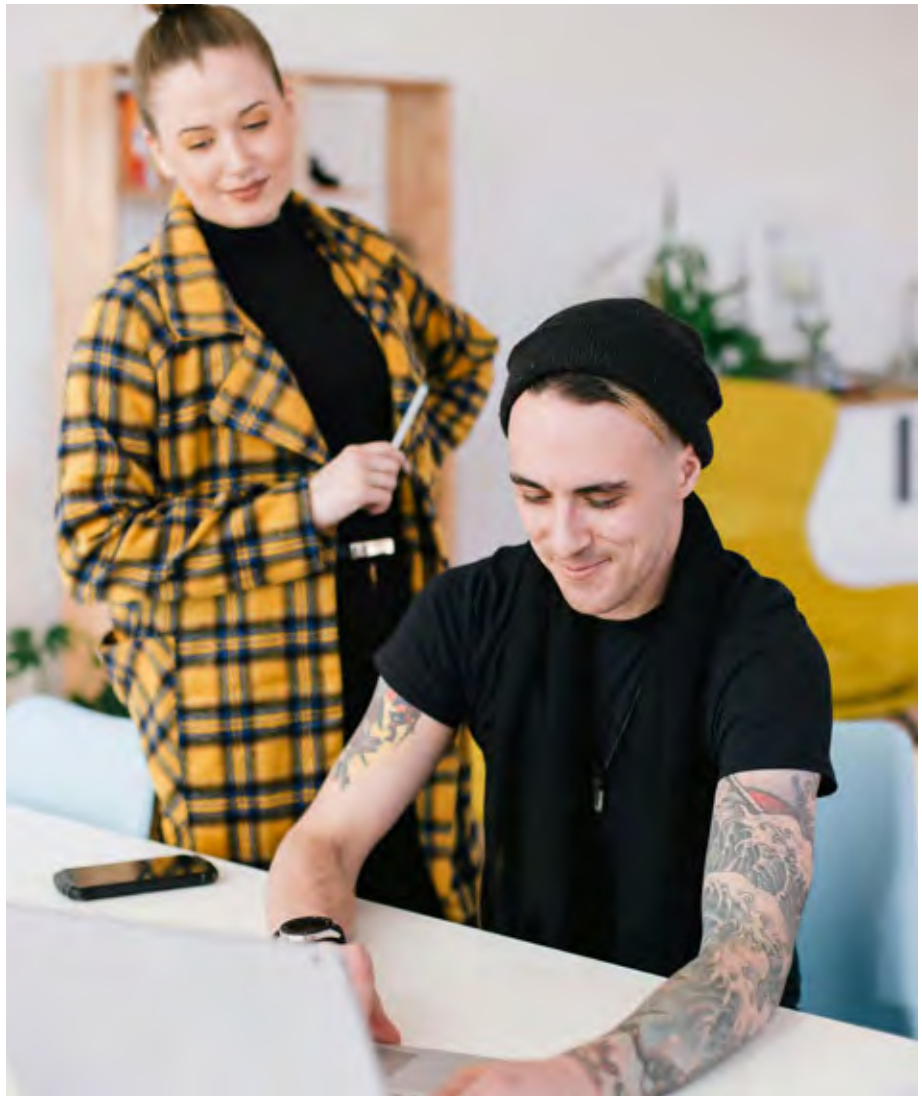
Non-Profit Sector: engaging with communities, facilitating project activities.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

The "Design Thinking for Social Inclusion" project collaborates extensively with various external community bodies and organisations. These include educational institutions, NGOs, local government bodies, social enterprises, community organisations, corporate partners, and international organisations. These partnerships enhance the project's reach and effectiveness by providing resources, expertise, and support for implementing innovative educational and social initiatives. Collaborations ensure that the project addresses the needs of marginalised communities, promotes sustainable development, and aligns with global standards such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Educational institutions might involve various departments such as education, social sciences, and sustainability studies to integrate Design Thinking methodologies across different curricula and research initiatives. Similarly, NGOs may coordinate efforts between their community outreach, training, and development programmes to ensure a holistic approach to social inclusion.



Digital Skills for Social Inclusion

2022 - 2023

Better Social - Akadimos KDVM

Pistoia, Italy - Veria, Greece





Useful Links

Project Website

Training and skills development
People with disabilities / Digital training / Access to technology

Texts by Maria Koimisoglou and Theodoros Tsanakas, AKADIMOS KDVM EPE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

"Digital Skills for Social Inclusion" is an Erasmus initiative co-funded by the European Union to **enhance social inclusion through digital tools, with a focus on individuals with disabilities**. Collaborating between Italy and Greece, the project aims to improve digital literacy and provide practical solutions to everyday challenges faced by disabled individuals. Key goals include **enhancing digital proficiency among adult education personnel and promoting the inclusion of disabled adults in educational settings**. The project's structured implementation involved identical lesson plans in both countries, delivered through a combination of **online and in-person formats, along with a mini-workshop for knowledge exchange**. It targeted three main areas: understanding digital accessibility challenges, integrating digital tools into education for disabled individuals, and fostering their social inclusion by enhancing their digital skills.

The context

This project addresses the need to enhance digital accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities, a demographic often overlooked in digital advancement discussions. It stems from the **recognition that digital skills are crucial for both social and employment inclusion**. By focusing on training staff from partner organisations and directly involving people with disabilities, the initiative aims to create more inclusive digital environments. The project developed common methodologies, co-design accessible digital tools, and experiment with inclusive practices. This approach aligns with broader European goals of equal access to technology and integration of people with disabilities into all aspects of societal life. Through training, direct engagement, and community sensitisation, the project seeks to foster a supportive network enhancing digital inclusion across local and European contexts.

Main objectives

- Increase knowledge and skills among staff to improve accessibility for people with disabilities
- Directly involve people with disabilities in learning digital skills
- Raise community awareness about disability inclusion

Credits

Better Social: an inclusive digital agency, non-profit focused on innovation, job inclusion and digital skills.

Akadimos KDVM: Lifelong Education and Training Centre, specialised in Adult Education and digital technologies

Primary target users/beneficiaries

People with disabilities

Main achievements and goals obtained

The project has successfully enhanced the accessibility of digital skills for people with disabilities in Italy and Greece. Through targeted initiatives, **the organisations deepened the understanding of accessibility barriers and have effectively addressed them, enabling greater access to digital education for disabled individuals**. The efforts to increase and share knowledge among the staff of partner organisations and their networks have cultivated a rich, inclusive learning environment. By actively involving people with disabilities in all phases of the project, their direct input and perspectives have shaped our strategies and outcomes. Furthermore, **the initiatives to promote and distribute knowledge about digital skills for people with disabilities within local communities have significantly contributed to the social and labour inclusion of excluded persons**. The evaluation and dissemination of the project results have not only demonstrated the success of the approaches but have also inspired similar actions within local communities across Italy and Greece.

Number of people working on the project:

Per year, on average: 2 Project Managers
2 Project Team members 1 policymaker

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Per year, on average:
15 students (university students from related professions)
10 individuals(educators, people with disabilities, caretakers)

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

Leading:
Better Social Agency Partners:
Akadimos KDVM

Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure the validity of the project's outcomes and to establish a robust foundation for collaboration between Italy and Greece, a consistent approach was implemented. Both countries adhered to identical lesson plans, conducting a series of lessons through online and in-person formats. In addition, a mini-workshop was convened to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



The initiative supports inclusive and equitable quality education by providing tailored digital training programmes for people with disabilities. This not only improves their educational outcomes but also increases their opportunities for lifelong learning and employment.



By enhancing digital accessibility for people with disabilities, the project tackles one of the fundamental inequalities—access to information and communication technology. It works to ensure that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to engage with digital resources, thereby addressing disparities in access to technologies that can empower and uplift.

Targets of the project

Focuses on individuals with disabilities who are often excluded from the digital economy and wider social interactions due to lack of accessible tools and training.





EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Capabilities:

Recipients, particularly people with disabilities, gained essential **digital skills that enhance their ability to navigate online platforms**, use digital tools for communication, and access information and services independently. This improvement in **digital literacy** is crucial for their social and employment inclusion. Additionally, staff and collaborators of partner organisations developed their **capacity to create and implement inclusive digital environments,** ensuring that digital accessibility is a priority in their programming.

Relationships:

The project fostered **new relationships between people with disabilities and the organisations involved**. By directly engaging with these organisations through training and co-design sessions, participants built connections that can support their future endeavours. Furthermore, the collaboration among partners from the two different regions enhanced inter-organisational networks, providing a foundation for ongoing cooperation and knowledge exchange on inclusivity practices.

Resources:

The initiative resulted in the development of **new resources such as training modules, portfolio of digital tools(open/free)** designed for accessibility, and a comprehensive model for intervention.

These resources are not only beneficial for the direct participants but also serve as valuable assets for the broader community. They facilitate the replication of successful practices and contribute to the sustainability of the project's impact by providing tools that other organisations can adapt for their own use in promoting digital inclusion.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project supports and complements local and European policies aimed at increasing digital inclusion and reducing barriers for people with disabilities.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

- Staff training on inclusive methodologies
- Co-design sessions for accessible digital tools
- Inclusion activities through digital platforms

Example of output delivered by the project

- Training materials and guidelines for digital inclusion
- Accessible digital tools and platforms
- Awareness-raising materials distributed to local communities

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The development phase of the "Digital Skills for Social Inclusion" project demonstrates a beneficiary-focused approach, rooted in a well-researched understanding of the needs and the environment of the individuals with disabilities it aims to serve. This indirect involvement ensures that the tools and strategies implemented are closely aligned with the actual requirements and daily challenges of the beneficiaries, thereby enhancing the potential impact and efficacy of the project.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

During the implementation phase, the project actively involved beneficiaries by offering digital tools and educational courses designed to enhance their digital literacy and social inclusion.

Beneficiaries participated in courses that were organised into specific modules addressing different types of disabilities. These courses were delivered through accessible formats, including online platforms like Google Meet, ensuring participation from various geographic locations. The structure of the courses, based on active learning principles, involved beneficiaries by adjusting content according to their feedback and desired learning outcomes, collected through initial surveys and ongoing assessments

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Beneficiaries were involved in the management, delivery, and evaluation phases through continuous feedback mechanisms. After each lesson, participants were asked to complete questionnaires regarding their satisfaction and any areas for improvement. This feedback was crucial for adjusting the courses and ensuring they met the needs of the participants effectively. Furthermore, the project utilised digital platforms for ongoing communication with beneficiaries, such as WhatsApp and Telegram groups, allowing for real-time engagement and support.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

- Project Coordinators
- IT specialists
- Adult trainers
- Accessibility consultants
- Professionals from special education work collaboratively to develop, implement, and refine project activities.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Education and Training:

- Focus on adult education for individuals with disabilities.
- Specialists in digital tool integration for educational purposes.

Digital Technology:

- Development and implementation of digital tools to enhance inclusivity.
- Specialists in software like Google Live Transcribe, Jaws, Assistive Touch, etc.

Social Sciences:

- Research and understanding of social inclusion dynamics.

Project management and policy advocacy

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Local community organisations, disability advocacy groups, and technology partners to maximise impact.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

The project facilitates inter-departmental cooperation within partner organisations to leverage diverse expertise in implementing the inclusive practices.

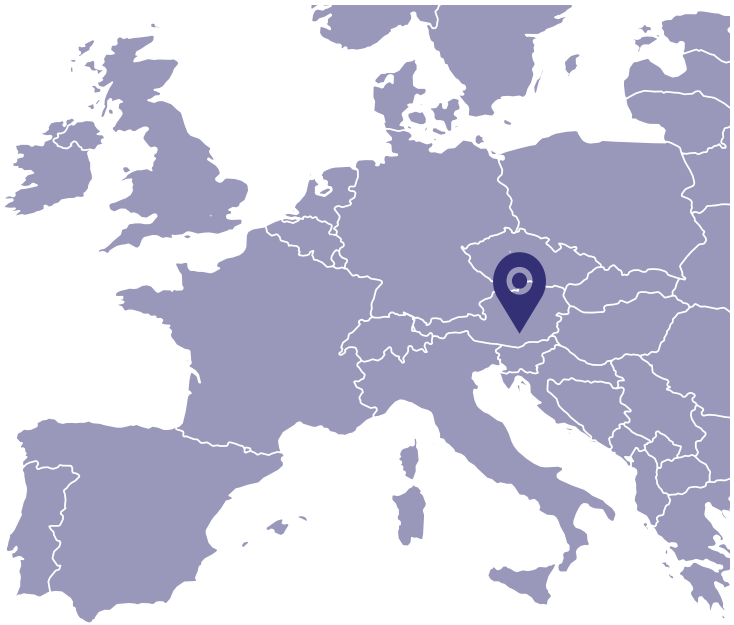


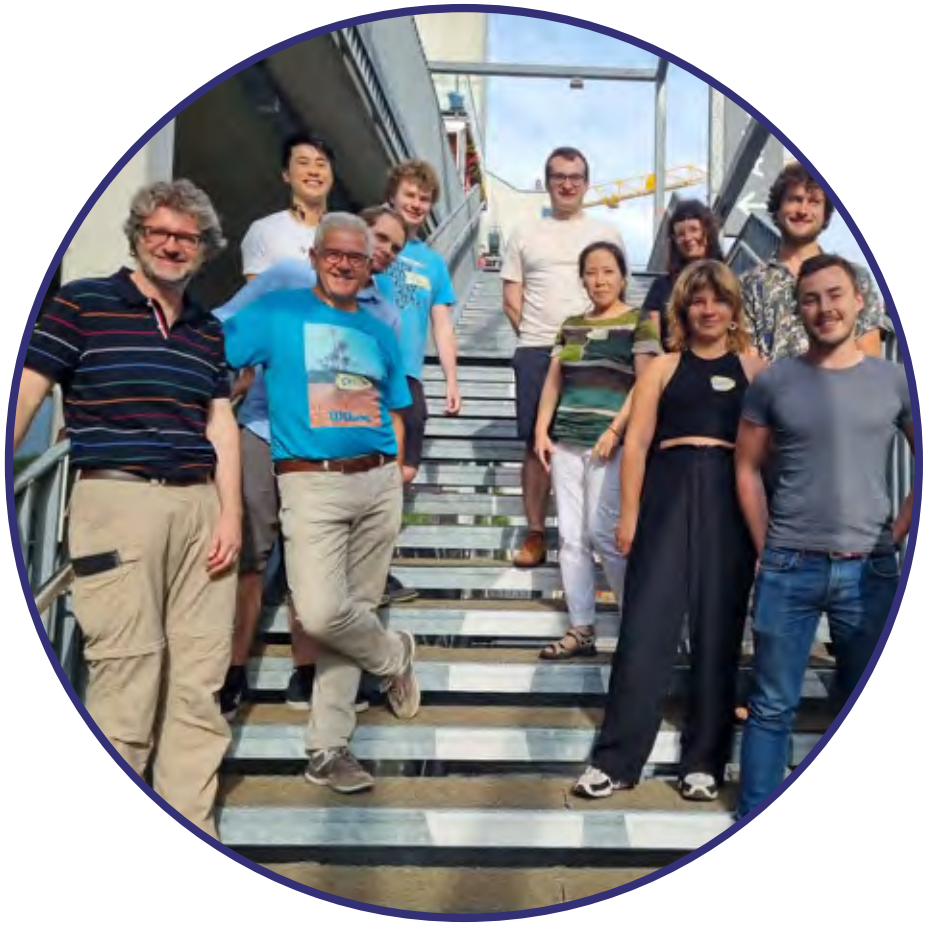
Energie-Hilfe

2023 - 2024

Caritas Vienna

Vienna, Austria





Training and skills development
City / Informal education / Environmental sustainability / Empowerment

Texts by Marc Somers, Caritas Europa, in collaboration with Florian Sam Caritas Wien

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

This is an innovation project that aims to develop a new service for its beneficiaries. It tries to **address** the persistent **issue of high energy costs and energy poverty by creating a cost-effective and scalable service for economically disadvantaged individuals.** The aim is to identify and implement practical energy-saving measures for households, such as optimising heating and appliance settings. The "Stromspar-Check" project in Germany serves as a reference, showcasing that simple measures result in substantial energy and cost savings, along with notable CO2 reductions. The absence of comparable offerings in Austria for the target audience underscores the need for such a service. By providing **guidance on efficient energy use, the project strives to empower vulnerable individuals to reduce their energy consumption**, thereby alleviating financial burdens and contributing to environmental sustainability. The ultimate goal is to create a positive impact and long-term outcomes, fostering both economic and ecological benefits for the affected households.

Awards and Acknowledgements

Partly funded by Austrian Research Promotion Agency

Main objectives

Develop a service that

- shows the target group the most effective energy-saving potential in their own household
- supports the implementation of savings measures
- has low costs per household contact, is scalable
- can be financed through a social business model
- closes a gap in the existing supply.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

People in Vienna who are not able or in danger of not being able to pay their energy bills

People in Vienna who have lower incomes or suffer from energy poverty



The context

High energy costs for financially vulnerable individuals in Austria, exacerbated by **outdated appliances, lack of energy knowledge, and complex billing issues**, persist even post the recent energy crisis. The situation is anticipated to worsen due to predicted long-term high energy prices, impacting those already grappling with inflation-induced financial strain. This issue not only burdens affected households but also strains public resources, **exacerbates societal inequalities, and contributes to environmental challenges,** necessitating urgent and comprehensive interventions.

Main achievements and goals obtained

During test-consultations it has been gathered qualified knowledge how to achieve

- effective consultation of the target group in order to find and explain the most effective energy-saving potentials in their own household
- the implementation of savings measures
- close a gap in the existing supply

Goals that are not yet achieved but are in development:

- low costs per household contact, is scalable
- can be financed through a social business model

Number of people working on the project

3 People in project management team with (62h per week in total)
14 Volunteers

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Project is in development-phase. During this period there is a limited number of contact to beneficiaries possible, since the focus is to develop a good service rather than achieving high quantity.

Approx. 2 household contacts per week x 2,21 People per household = 4,25 people per week

Number and type of organisations / institutions involved

Several departments at Caritas Vienna.
5+ other Organisations/Institutions

Monitoring and evaluation

The project team adopts the Lean Startup method, uses hypotheses, minimal viable products, and iterative testing to transform ideas into viable social business models. The process utilises **social business model canvas and value proposition canvases**, formulation of hypotheses, and conducting real-world tests. This facilitates continuous learning and refinement. Monitoring and evaluation occurs within this system through **quantitative and qualitative data collection** during tests. Results are formalised, analysed, and then compared to previously formulated hypotheses.



ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Energy poverty is closely linked to financial poverty. By reducing energy costs and assisting in managing energy bills, the project contributes to poverty eradication, particularly for those already living below the poverty threshold.



The project promotes sustainable energy usage by supporting the target group in optimising their energy consumption and learning efficient energy utilisation methods. This not only reduces financial burdens but also diminishes the ecological footprint.



The primary target group faces challenges in responsibly utilising energy and comprehending the mechanics of energy consumption. The project aims to assist individuals in developing a sense of responsibility in their energy usage and fostering a deeper understanding of how energy is consumed, contributing to sustainable practices.



The project requires collaboration between the government, energy providers, non-profit organisations, and civil society to develop and implement effective solutions for energy poverty. Strengthening such partnerships maximises the impact of the project.

Target of the project

The primary target group, grappling with energy poverty in Austria, comprises **individuals with incomes at or below the poverty threshold, experiencing an acute disparity between their financial means and disproportionately high energy costs.** These vulnerable individuals often reside in small rented apartments, lacking sufficient insulation, and face challenges in maintaining adequate heating.

The burden of energy expenses severely impacts their daily lives, necessitating **difficult choices between paying utility bills and meeting basic needs such as groceries.** The vulnerability is heightened by the absence of homeownership and is prevalent among those with migration backgrounds.

The socio-demographic parameters include one-person households, individuals with only basic education, recipients of social assistance, single parents, and those facing leeway challenges in spite of incomes surpassing the poverty line. The linguistic and cultural diversity within this group poses additional hurdles, making communication with energy providers challenging. A lack of understanding regarding energy usage exacerbates the issue, leading to difficulties in adopting energy-efficient practices. **The target group's urgent needs include clear communication, accessible information on energy efficiency, and tailored support to alleviate the impact of high energy costs on their overall well-being.**

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Recipients of the project acquire new capabilities and resources that empower them to manage their energy consumption effectively. Through personalised consultations or home visits, participants gain the ability to comprehend complex energy bills, identifying specific cost components and consumption patterns. Armed with knowledge, households learn to optimise heating systems and electrical appliances for efficiency, resulting in reduced energy expenses. Additionally, they develop skills to address mould issues, read and interpret utility meters, and grasp the root causes of high energy costs. The project instils a sense of self-empowerment, **enabling individuals to take charge of their energy usage.** With a newfound understanding of their household dynamics, participants can proactively shape behaviours and make informed choices, fostering a sustainable and energy-conscious lifestyle. Overall, the project equips recipients with **practical skills, knowledge, and a heightened awareness that collectively contribute to long-term energy savings and environmental responsibility.**



Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The practice aligns with local policies, showcasing innovation and coherence. It supports regional sustainability goals by instilling practical energy-saving skills. Its disruptive potential lies in challenging traditional consumption norms, while coherence is maintained through complementing existing policies. **The project acts as a catalyst for positive change, reinforcing and advancing local sustainability objectives.**

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

Testing demand: Assessing interest within the target audience for such a service through real-life offerings made available to authentic target groups. Participation is facilitated by directly involving the target audience, measurable through service bookings and demand levels.

Testing concept feasibility: Evaluating if the concept can be implemented effectively for the given setting and target audience. The concept is tested under genuine conditions with real target groups and systems.

Problem-solution fit: Verifying if the concept meets the needs of the target audience by observing counselling sessions. Assessment includes whether audience inquiries align with expected topics, captured through household surveys.

Volunteer satisfaction: Assessing volunteer contentment and efficacy through direct feedback sessions and post-contact surveys filled out by volunteers.

Collaboration with other counselling services: Exploring interest and feasibility of collaboration with other entities by developing various concepts offered for feedback.

Example of output delivered by the project

Household contact questionnaire: Utilised for statistical analysis and control, serving as the foundation for internal presentations and not intended for public release.

User journeys, business model canvases, concepts: Utilised in ongoing development, continually refined, and employed as working foundations. Successful project completion will lead to internal presentations.

Hypotheses and related insights: Continuously considered, exclusively contributing to the development process.

Training materials for volunteers, process plans: Internally presented and adopted upon successful completion.

Experiences, insights regarding volunteer work and coordination: Communicated to other internal departments with similar activity profiles.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

During the development phase, **the design thinking process was employed. In accordance with this approach, a primary step involved conducting a target audience analysis, which included interviews with the identified demographic.** Throughout the development phase, comprehensive consideration was given to all factors influencing household issues.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Beneficiaries actively contribute during the project implementation phase through direct engagement. **They participate in real-life offerings, influencing the project's direction.** Their feedback, gathered through surveys and interactions, ensures the initiative aligns with their needs, fostering a collaborative approach for effective implementation.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Two innovation managers steer the project, embodying roles expected of future project team members. This approach fosters a profound understanding of tasks and challenges.

A volunteer coordinator, with a primary focus on managing volunteers, oversees their training and maintains ongoing communication.

Team members fluidly distribute roles and tasks among themselves, ensuring nearly every role is embraced by all contributors. This dynamic structure enables flexible work methods, optimising adaptability to project demands.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Innovations Management and Leadership:
Project Team (2 People): Over 10 years of experience in innovation project development, execution, and process facilitation.

Volunteer Management and Coordination:
Project Team (1 Person): Specialised in volunteer management and coordination, contributing to the human resource aspect of the project.

Business Development and Strategy
Project Team (1 Person): Expertise in Social Business Model Canvas, Value Proposition Mapping, Personas, Stakeholder Mapping

Innovation Process Facilitation:
Project Team (2 People): Proficient in testing and learning workflows, documentation, and guiding innovation processes.

Discovery Techniques and Experiments:
Project Team (2 People): Utilises interviews, questionnaires, story mapping, and various discovery experiments such as A/B testing, prototyping, and pre-sales.

Energy Efficiency Consulting:
External Partner (2 Companies): Bring expertise in energy efficiency, savings potentials, and energy-saving solutions to the project.

Project and Process Support:
Consulting Company (1 Company): Provides project and process support, Lean Startup experience, and expertise in developing and implementing new digital solutions in various sectors.

Collaboration and Networking:
External Partners (5+ Companies and Organisations): Contributes external networks and resources for collaborative efforts and insights.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

A significant portion of volunteer training occurs through a programme provided by the **Austrian Energy Agency.** Additionally, they provide numerous energy-saving tools that are distributed to households free of charge. Collaboration with **external energy consulting firms** refines volunteer training and the consulting concept. In the later stages of the project, consideration will be given to exploring project financing with external funders.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

The collaboration with services within our organisation is highly valued, as Caritas Vienna operates numerous diverse programmes. The developed service may be of benefit to a wide range of target groups, so it is strategically offered at all appropriate points and is adapted to meet specific requirements if needed. A robust partnership is established with Social Counselling, a crucial point of contact for households struggling with high energy bills. These households are then referred to the newly developed service, and Social Counselling plays a pivotal role in facilitating connections with suitable households. This collaboration ensures effective outreach and engagement, enhancing the impact of our services.

Mediterranea

2018 - 2020

Associazione Culturale Linaria

Rome, Italy





Useful Links

Project website

Training and skills development
Refugees / City / Job training / Innovation / Empowerment / Environmental sustainability

Texts by Cristian Campagnaro, Sara Ceraolo, Marco D'Urzo, Politecnico di Torino

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Mediterranea is a project (and later also an independent association) developed to start **cultivating a vegetable garden.** However, in a few months, **the idea evolved** in multiple directions, with the **more ambitious goal of building a sustainable economic model and a social innovation laboratory that could represent concrete job opportunities**. Thus, in addition to the vegetable garden, a nursery is started up with a small botanical collection of Mediterranean, resilient and xerophilous plants and a garden of aromatic plants, with which salts and flavoured sugars are produced, thanks to original mixes of herbs and spices.
At the same time, a **design workshop** is born, characterized by a continuous search **for functional, sustainable and ecological solutions that involve the exclusive use of poor, discarded, abandoned or underused materials.** Working in a dimension rich in nuances and different perspectives, thanks to the contribution of the working group, the workshop has become a **place for dialogue and collaboration and collaborations** that have given rise to objects with a hybrid character, resulting from the fertile coexistence of different cultures.
Thanks to numerous activities, a series of events, courses and workshops, in just a few months, Mediterranea has become a place of **'enterprise', care, training and development of local resources and networks.**

Main objectives

- Professional retraining of the team

The context

The working context was a **two-hectare park in the centre of Rome** next to Villa Doria Pamphilj, where Mediterranea was also able to make use of a 300 m2 farmstead that was used partly as a home and partly as an indoor workshop, warehouse and showroom. Owned by the Congregation of the Mission, the land and farmstead were initially used free of charge.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Asylum seekers and refugees received in the Reception Centres of the Medihospes Cooperative in Rome.

Credits

Associazione Culturale Linaria, Michela Pasquali

Main achievements and goals obtained

- Economic independence
- Living arrangements
- Language learning
- Project development and development
- of skills
- Public relations
- Understanding of the project-production-sales chain.

Number of people working on the project:
40 people

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved
For the first three months 24 people; thereafter and until the end of the project 6/8 people.

Total: 40

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

Associazione culturale Linaria,
Congregazione della Missione,
Cooperativa Medihospes

Monitoring and evaluation

A formal monitoring/evaluation was never carried out. **The project was observed and monitored informally and every month between the three project partners**, both for the solution of various problems and to identify new possibilities for development and new initiatives.

Awards and Acknowledgements

WeWelcome UNHCR 2020/21 award special mention Chiara Zevi Prize for the project to regenerate the outdoor spaces of the Bakhita SPRAR Centre

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Target of the project

The project participants were asylum seekers and refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. They **urgently needed to find work and housing,** especially to solve various documentation problems, including renewals and appointments at the police headquarters. The group was affected by this situation of **extreme vulnerability,** which was also reflected in the work. Linaria and the Medihospes Cooperative have always considered individual situations and, in several cases, assisted in the search for permanent employment contracts.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

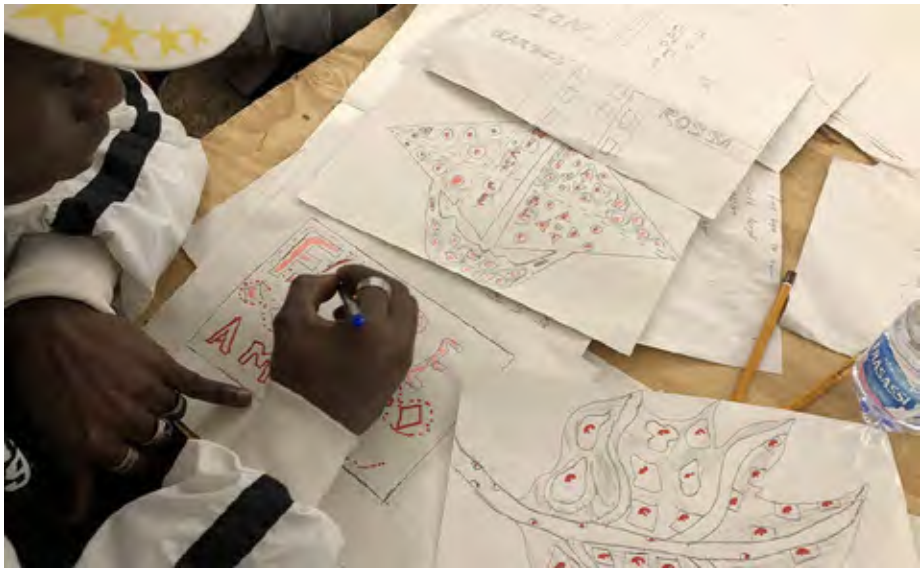
New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

- Improved language learning;
- Improved team-relationship skills;
- Excellent project and production skills.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

Given the lack of resources, Mediterranea has always tried to align with local policies through active citizenship projects, especially within various public contexts, such as schools in the Roman suburbs, aiming at solving real problems in the management of outdoor spaces, solving, even if only minimally, the needs of the territory.





EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

The project achieves its inclusion objectives by generating different **participative strategies** through several training workshops, intending **to develop the skills and resources of the working group from various backgrounds.** With simple and easily replicable techniques and thanks to the use of recycled materials using blacksmithing and carpentry skills, the group successfully delivered several projects, including the furniture of the Grotta Perfetta Market (Rome), the furniture elements for Milano Design Week 2018, an urban vegetable garden for the SAI San Bruno Centre.

Example of output delivered by the project

From the outset, **the project envisaged multiple work possibilities articulated into two macro categories:**

The agricultural activities produced all the plants in the nursery, flavored salts and sugars, and fresh vegetables;

The design and craft activities produced pots and plant holders, tables and chairs, bookshelves and shelves, and children's games, as well as generating new vegetable gardens in different contexts.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

The **beneficiaries** have always been **involved** in all phases of the Mediterranea project, **from the choice of name and logo to the definition of activities and objectives.** The project started from the assumption that precisely the **synergy between different points of view and other cultures could generate a system of collaboration and sharing and the development of a virtuous and circular economy.**

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

The beneficiaries have also always been involved in the realisation of the various projects and furnishing elements, as well as in the choice of the type of crops, always following a methodology between social design and participatory processes that Linaria has always adopted.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

The beneficiaries have always been personally responsible for contacting customers and our various partners, developing projects, and implementing and delivering them. There was never any evaluation of the results except informally for Problem-solving and finding functional solutions.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

There were no overly defined roles, also due to the continuous evolution of the group work. Linaria (Michela Pasquali) always played a general coordinating role, but everything was always discussed with the working group.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Design/craft sector: the beneficiaries were all involved according to their skills between blacksmiths, carpenters, painters. Interactions and exchanges between skills and roles often took place.

Nursery, kitchen garden and aromatic garden sector: the whole working group was always involved in turn for plant monitoring and maintenance.

Events sector: the entire working group was involved in setting up events, inside and outside Mediterranea. Two people, again together with other project partners, were involved in the preparation of the catering part.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Numerous collaborations have been set up throughout the project with schools of all levels, including -**Universities** (Washington University, Temple University, Isia), **Institutes** (Gustolab, Academy of France), **Companies** (Enel, Amex), **non-profit organisations and associations** (RomAltruista) **and many artists, artisans, volunteers who have made Mediterranea a place of contamination, encounter and exchange.**

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Linaria brought into Mediterranea several pre-existing projects (such as the regeneration of several school gardens) and campaigns (such as Frutta Urbana for the collection of fruit that grows in the city), also sharing its partners (such as the Washington University and Romaltruista) in order to collaborate more closely in the growth and development of an increasingly complex project.

Mermaids For Inclusion

2024 – 2026

Komet Finswimming Team

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, Greece





Texts by Maria Koimisoglou and Theodoros Tsanakas, AKADIMOS KDVM EPE

Useful Links

Project website

Training and skills development
People with disabilities / Barriers

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

Project Mermaids aims to introduce finswimming in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, using the **sport as a platform for promoting gender equality and the integration of ethnic and religious minorities through advanced educational tools and best practices from Croatia and Greece**. The sport's appeal and the symbolic mermaid's tail used in finswimming provide a unique way to engage various community members.

The context

The Western Balkans faces significant challenges in integrating ethnic and religious minorities and advancing gender equality. **Sports provide a non-confrontational setting to foster inclusion and challenge prevailing societal norms**.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Local athletes, coaches, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo

Credits

Finswimming Team Komet – Klub plivanja s perajama Komet -The Komet Finswimming Team, founded in 2011 in Zagreb, Croatia, specialises in finswimming competitions and training. Additionally, they offer guidance to other finswimming clubs and federations globally, and participate in projects funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ Sport Programme.

Main objectives

- Establish finswimming as a recognised sport in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo
- Use finswimming to promote social integration and gender equality
- Transfer educational tools and best practices from Croatia and Greece to local sports bodies
- Create a sustainable model for using sports for social inclusion that can be replicated in other contexts

Main achievements and goals obtained

Increased participation in finswimming, improved community relations, enhanced visibility and role of women in sports, established guidelines for using sport as a tool for inclusion.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring through regular feedback sessions with participants, annual evaluations by the participants, and ongoing assessment of programme impact on community integration and gender equality.

Number of people working on the project:

Per year, on average:
At least
1 project manager
1 project team member From each organisation
Four Organisations with numerous individuals including coordinators,educators, researchers, trainers, and volunteers

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Approximately 50 participants including athletes, coaches, and community members annually.

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

Total: 8, including sports federations, local NGOs focused on minority rights, and gender equality initiatives.

Leader:
Finswimming Team Komet – Klub plivanja s perajama Komet

Partners:
Akadimos KDVM(Lifelong Education & Training Centre) Bravo (Bosnian Representative Association for Valuable Opportunities, non-profit and Non-Governmental Organisation)
KSU Otrila, based in Pristina, Kosovo,competitive swimming club

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Target of the project

Participants often face social exclusion or limited access to public life due to gender or minority status. The project targets women and minorities to empower them and provide a platform for active participation and visibility.

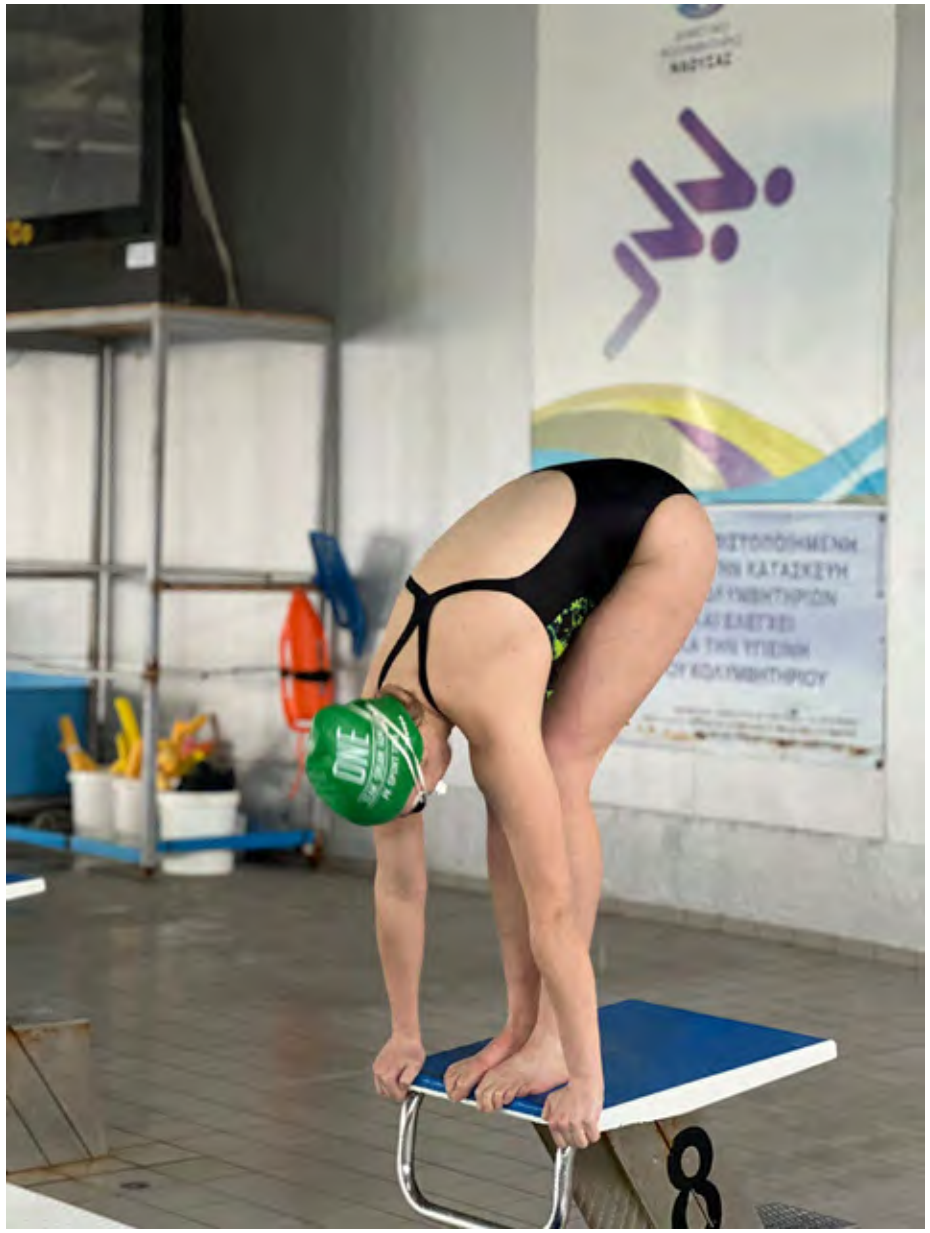
EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

- Participants gain skills in finswimming
- Enhanced understanding of social inclusion principles
- Ability to foster gender equality in sports.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The project aligns with local government efforts to enhance social cohesion and supports EU integration goals by demonstrating innovative approaches to inclusion through sports.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

- Training workshops for coaches
- Finswimming competitions to engage the community
- Interactive sessions on gender equality and social inclusion in sports.

Example of output delivered by the project

- Development of a finswimming curriculum
- Creation of inclusive sports events
- Publication of best practices for promoting social inclusion through sports.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

In the "Mermaids for Inclusion" project, **beneficiaries are involved from the initial phases, particularly during the context analysis and identification of influential factors**. This involvement is crucial as the project focuses on integrating ethnic and religious minorities and promoting gender equality in the Western Balkans. By engaging these groups directly, the project ensures that their needs and perspectives shape the development of project objectives and strategies

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

During the implementation phase, **beneficiaries play a significant role in "Mermaids for Inclusion"**. They are actively involved as participants in the finswimming courses and related training sessions designed to enhance their skills in both sports and social inclusion. This hands-on participation not only helps in skill development but also ensures that the training is relevant and effective, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment among the beneficiaries.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

In the "Mermaids for Inclusion" project, beneficiaries are involved primarily through **feedback mechanisms, particularly after key activities such as training sessions, dissemination events, and courses on the training platform**. This structured feedback process is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the project. During the management and delivery phases, while beneficiaries may not be directly involved in day-to-day management or decision-making processes, their input is solicited post-activity to ensure that their experiences and insights inform ongoing project refinement.



MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

Coordinators oversee project implementation, trainers provide sports training, while gender and minority rights experts facilitate educational sessions. Each member contributes their expertise to create a comprehensive programme.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

- Sports training
- Gender equality advocacy
- Minority rights
- Community organising
- Educational programme development

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Partnerships with local schools, community centres, and international sports organisations enhance the project's reach and impact.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

The project fosters cooperation between different departments within the same organisations, such as community outreach and sports departments, to ensure a holistic approach to inclusion.



Preventing Violence

2021 - 2022

Altro Abitare - Akadimos

Veroia, Greece - Toscana, Italy



Training and skills development
Young people / Awareness / Innovation



Texts by Maria Koimisoglou and Theodoros Tsanakas, AKADIMOS KDVM EPE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The Erasmus+ project "Preventing Violence" is a **collaborative effort** between **Altro Abitare,** an association for social promotion based in Italy, a**nd Akadimos**, a Lifelong Learning and Training Centre in Greece. **The project aims to raise awareness and prevent various forms of violence**, including physical and mental violence, abuse, mistreatment, and sexual violence, among others.

The project consists of a **26-hour course** series on Preventing Violence in Relationships, **featuring experts from different fields such as law, counselling, and psychology.** Additionally, the project includes interventions such as online awareness campaigns, collaborative feedback sessions, development of infographics and visual articles, newsletters, photo competitions, and live presentations to organisations and institutions.

Participants in the project have learned about the prevalence of violent incidents, legislative measures to punish perpetrators, and the importance of prevention. They consider the project to be valuable and believe in its potential for further expansion, particularly in reaching out to different age groups to raise awareness about preventing violence. Overall, **the project aims to create a more effective legal framework and societal understanding to protect all individuals from violence.**

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Adolescents and young adults, with a focus on preventing physical, mental, and sexual violence.

Women and men at risk of abuse, abandonment, mistreatment, or exploitation.

The broader community, benefiting from increased awareness and preventive measures against violence in relationships.

Main objectives

The objectives of the project were:

- Increasing and sharing, with the volunteers of partner associations and their network, knowledge and skills on knowing how to prevent and combat the main forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, abandonment, mistreatment or exploitation, including sexual violence on boys and girls, as well as adolescents and young people, adult women.
- effectively raise awareness of the local and national community, such as stakeholders and different associations and among all participants of the activities of the project
- promote approaches to preventing physical and mental violence, incidents of abuse, abandonment, mistreatment or exploitation, including sexual violence of men and women, as well as adolescents and young adults.

The context

The Preventing Violence project, framed under Small-scale partnerships in adult education, addresses topics such as Social Assistance and Welfare, Prevention of Bullying, and Inclusion, Promoting Equality and Non-Discrimination.

Led by Altro Abitare and Akadimos, it aims to elevate awareness on violence prevention across Italy and Greece. Through a 26-hour course series and additional interventions like **online sessions, collaborative feedback, and educational materials,** the project targets a broad audience, including volunteers, communities, and stakeholders. It focuses on combating physical, mental, and sexual violence, ensuring the final beneficiaries — vulnerable individuals and the wider community— gain insights into prevention strategies, legal frameworks, and the importance of a unified effort against violence.

Main achievements and goals obtained

Awareness and Empowerment: raised awareness on violence, bullying, and hate speech. The project empowered individuals and communities with knowledge and strategies to prevent violence.

Educational Impact: conducted training on rights, gender equality, and prevention of male violence against women. These sessions expanded to include discussions on violence against disabled women, hate speech, and cyberbullying.

Community Engagement: fostered community involvement and built networks for supporting victims of violence. The project's collaborative nature between Italy and Greece highlighted the importance of cultural exchange in understanding and preventing violence.

Feedback and Continuation: received positive feedback from participants, who expressed a strong interest in continuing the initiative and participating in future actions aimed at violence prevention.

Visibility Efforts: increased visibility around the issue of violence through informative sessions and materials, effectively communicating prevention strategies.

Monitoring and evaluation

The project aimed at preventing violence, supported by the European Union, utilises a structured system for its monitoring and evaluation. This includes the use of feedback questionnaires following training courses, reflective surveys for volunteers and team reflections, and collaborative meetings between partner countries. These methods ensure ongoing assessment and improvement of the project's impact and effectiveness.

Awards and Acknowledgements

Good Practice - EU Project

Number of people working on the project:

Per year on average:
- At least 2 project staff members from each partner organisation
- 1 project manager from each organisation
- At least 1 educator specialised in social sciences per organisation

Primary target beneficiaries involved

On average:
Courses: 40 participants
Dissemination & Impact: 5 interventions from each partner including promotion to 600 volunteers/ 5 organised awareness events/ 3 meetings with local community from each partner (at least 60 students & 10 trained volunteers, 37 individuals from Greece)/ 5 meetings in each country to share project results with involvement of non-profit organisations

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

Leading:
Coordinator Altro Abitare Aps (Coordinator Type: Non-governmental organisation/association/social enterprise)
Partner AKADIMOS KDVM (Partner Type Educational centre – Adult education)

Partners Involved:
AVIS Carrara ODV
A.FA.PH. Associazione Famiglie Portatori di Handicap ODV
High School in Massa Carrara
Individuals from local communities

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Through its educational programmes on preventing violence, the project contributes to quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all, emphasising the importance of non-violence and tolerance.



By educating on gender-based violence and promoting gender equality, the project aims to reduce inequalities and empower women and girls, tackling issues such as domestic and psychological violence.



The project takes a stand against hate speech and bullying based on racial, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual orientation, and disability factors, promoting the inclusion and rights of all individuals.



By fostering a culture of non-violence and legal awareness, the project contributes to building peaceful communities with access to justice and promoting accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Target of the project

The project's target includes **individuals and communities vulnerable to various forms of violence, including gender-based violence, bullying, hate speech, and cyberbullying.**
It aims to empower volunteers and community members to recognise, prevent, and combat physical, mental, sexual violence, and exploitation. Recurring socio-demographic parameters in the target group include a focus on adolescents, young adults, and those marginalised due to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, highlighting a broad approach to tackling vulnerabilities across different sections of society.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Capabilities
Social and Relational Skills:
Empathy and Understanding
Effective Communication
Conflict Resolution

Self-Management Skills:
Responsibility and Awareness
Adaptive Learning
Practical Skills
Preventive Strategies
Awareness Raising

Relationships
Inclusive Community Building:
The project brought together individuals from diverse backgrounds to learn from and support each other, creating a community united against
violence.

Collaborative Networks:
Fostered new relationships and networks among participants, volunteers, and organisations, enhancing collaborative efforts towards violence prevention.

Resources
Empowerment and Self-Esteem:
Participants gained a sense of empowerment and increased self-esteem through their active involvement in violence prevention.

Knowledge and Tools:
The project provided valuable knowledge and tools for participants to use in their personal and professional lives, contributing to safer environments.

New Perspectives:
By engaging with people from various backgrounds and cultures, participants developed a broader perspective on the issues of violence and the importance

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The "Preventing Violence" project aligns with local policies by innovatively addressing the challenges of violence and inequality. It introduces fresh perspectives on prevention through education and community engagement, ensuring coherence with broader societal goals of safety and inclusivity.

While it complements existing frameworks, its approach can be seen as disruptive by actively involving volunteers and leveraging cultural exchanges, thus enriching local policy scenarios with new methodologies and collaborative networks for combating violence. This synergy amplifies the project's impact and its contribution to a safer, more equitable society.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

1. Implementation of Training Courses: Volunteers participated in comprehensive training courses on preventing violence in relationships. Topics covered included rights and gender equality, knowledge of male violence against women, strategies for protection from gender-based violence, and the operation of anti-violence centres.

2. Local Raising Awareness Campaigns: Both in-person and online sessions were organised to raise awareness about preventing violence. These sessions served as platforms for trained volunteers to share their learnings, engage with the community, and brainstorm ideas for local and national awareness campaigns.

3. Collaborative Feedback Stage: After the training courses, volunteers were involved in a collaborative feedback process through questionnaires. This stage aimed to gather their insights and ideas on preventing violence campaigns at the local level, fostering creativity and strategic thinking towards sustainability and prevention efforts.

4. Infographics Development and Delivery: Based on volunteers' feedback, infographics were developed to visually promote the importance of preventing violence. These infographics highlighted research results and the diversity of violent acts in various human relationships.

5. Informative Visual Articles and Newsletters: The project also included the creation and distribution of informative visual articles for local and national stakeholders, along with newsletters to the Greek mass media. These materials aimed to further the reach of the project's message and engage a broader audience in violence prevention efforts.

Example of output delivered by the project

Training Courses on Violence Prevention: Central to the project were comprehensive training sessions designed to educate volunteers on various aspects of violence prevention. These courses covered topics such as gender equality, rights, and strategies for protection against gender-based violence, emphasising the role of education in combating societal issues. Co-Design Practices: **The project employed co-design practices, engaging volunteers and stakeholders in the development of strategies and materials for violence prevention.** This participatory approach ensured that the outputs were relevant, effective, and inclusive of diverse perspectives. **The training courses have become a foundational element for ongoing education and awareness initiatives.** Participants who completed these courses are now equipped to lead their own sessions, spreading knowledge and strategies for violence prevention within their communities. This ensures a **multiplier effect, where the impact of the project continues to grow and reach new audiences over time.** The co-design practices introduced during the project have fostered a culture of collaboration and innovation among participants. These practices are being replicated in other contexts and projects, promoting a participatory approach to addressing social issues. The materials and strategies developed through these practices are used in various settings, from educational institutions to community centres, ensuring the project's sustainability and adaptability.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

Programme Development: After a series of internal meetings, the project partners decided on the programme's structure, including its content, learning objectives, and outcomes. This collaborative approach ensured that the course content was relevant and effectively addressed the issue of violence in relationships.

Course Series Creation: A 26-hour course series was developed on preventing violence in relationships. This series included theoretical concepts, practical solutions, and a focus on the cultural bases of violence. By covering these areas, the programme aimed to deepen participants' understanding of violence in intimate relationships, raise awareness of violence prevention, and encourage the development of new ideas towards this cause.

Joint Group Meetings: Participants from Italy and Greece met to further explore the subject of violence prevention. These meetings allowed for a deeper engagement with the material and facilitated cross-cultural exchange and learning.

Feedback and Experimentation: After completing the courses, volunteers used Google Forms to evaluate the topics covered. This feedback was essential for assessing and confirming the quality of the course content. Furthermore, volunteers engaged in co-designed experimentation and intervention activities within their communities. These activities were aimed at raising awareness and preventing the emergence of violence in relationships, particularly towards those most at risk.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

Beneficiaries played a crucial role in the implementation phase of the project. After completing the designed courses and interventions, volunteers took action within their communities to apply what they had learned. They were involved in co-designing and implementing activities aimed at informing and raising awareness about preventing forms of violence in relationships, particularly towards those most at risk. This hands-on involvement ensured that the beneficiaries were not just passive recipients of the project's outputs but were actively engaged in executing its objectives, applying theoretical concepts, and practical solutions in real-world settings.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

In the project management and delivery phase, particularly during the evaluation of project results, beneficiaries' involvement was again highlighted. The ALTRO ABITARE team and volunteers who participated in the project activities were asked to complete a reflective questionnaire. This tool was designed to gather their overall experiences and evaluations regarding the project's implementation processes. The questionnaire covered various aspects, including their satisfaction with the interventions they participated in, the effectiveness of these interventions in impacting the local community, and whether these efforts successfully raised awareness about preventing violence. The feedback collected from this reflective process indicates that beneficiaries were integral to evaluating the project's success and effectiveness, suggesting a model of participatory evaluation that values the insights and experiences of those directly involved in the project's activities

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

In the small-scale project, the project team's structure was streamlined, primarily including project managers from the 2 organisations who oversaw various aspects of the project's execution. These managers were responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring, and closing phases. They worked closely together, ensuring the project's objectives were met efficiently and effectively. This close-knit team approach allowed for agile decision-making and rapid response to any project challenges, facilitating a focused and coordinated effort towards achieving the project's goals within its scope and timeline.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Law & Legal Services
Psychology
Translation & Interpretation
Social Sciences
Project Management

In the joint preventing violence project between Italian and Greek organisation, a multifaceted approach was employed, leveraging the expertise of attorneys, psychologists, and educators to address the legal, mental health, and educational aspects of violence prevention courses. Interpreters played a critical role in facilitating communication and understanding in the courses shared between the organisations, ensuring that language barriers did not impede the effectiveness of the programme. Throughout the entire life cycle of the project, project management professionals were engaged on behalf of the organisations to oversee the planning, execution, and evaluation phases, ensuring that the project adhered to its goals and timelines, and effectively coordinated the diverse expertise involved

Collaborations and alliances with external community

AVIS Carrara ODV - Massa Carrara: A non-profit organisation engaged in blood donation. A meeting was held with AVIS Carrara OdV to raise awareness about violence in relationships and its health consequences.

A.FA.PH. Associazione Famiglie Portatori di Handicap ODV - Massa: A non-profit organisation focused on the protection of people with disabilities. The project worked with AFAPH OdV to address violence in relationships and disability, and to promote accessibility and non-violence education.

Centre for Counselling and Support for Abused Women: This public organisation, under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Veria, involves its scientific staff in various phases of the project.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Joint Planning and Execution: The partners in the project, after a series of internal meetings, created and decided on the final structure of the programme courses, their content, learning objectives and outcomes, as well as the division of the sub-contents. This indicates a high level of coordination and collaboration between different services within the participating organisations.

Collaborative Training and Awareness Sessions: The project includes the implementation of training courses for volunteers on the topic of preventing violence in relationships, covering a wide range of subjects such as rights and gender equality, gender-based violence, and strategies for protection from such violence. This approach suggests a collaborative effort between various departments or services within the organisations, including educational, administrative, and outreach services.

Shared Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms: The project utilised reflective questionnaires for volunteers and team members to express their general experience and provide their evaluation regarding the processes of the implementation of the Project. This process likely involves collaboration between the evaluation, monitoring, and project management services within the organisation.

Cultural Exchange and Learning: The project emphasised cultural exchange and continuous dialogue between Italian and Greek partners, learning from each other's practices and approaches to combating violence. This aspect underscores the collaborative efforts between international departments or services focused on cultural exchange and learning.

Network Building and Community Engagement: The project's efforts to build new networks for collaboration and support, as well as to engage the community in preventing violence, suggest a concerted effort between community outreach, volunteer coordination, and external relations services within the organisations.

She did it

2018 - Ongoing

Lien Warmenbol

Flanders, Belgium





Useful Links

Project website

Training and skills development
Women / Job training / Empowerment / Awareness

Texts by Elena Tornariti, SYNTHESIS Centre for Research and Education

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

#SheDIDIT has been on a mission since 2018 to create an **inclusive space for diverse womenpreneurs**. **This Belgian-based non-profit focuses on women from diverse cultural backgrounds who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs or are already established in their entrepreneurial journeys.** By offering various coaching programmes, access to workshops and networking events, and fostering a supportive community, #SheDIDIT aims to help women achieve their dreams. As an inclusive incubator and accelerator supporting female founders, it strives to create a space where diversity and womenpreneurship intersect.

The context

The initiative was inspired by its founder, Lien, who observed that women of color (WoC) had less access to the traditional entrepreneurial landscape. Despite their talent and motivation, WoC faced limited access to coaching, networks, knowledge, and entrepreneurial organisations.

When #SheDIDIT began in 2018, it focused on reshaping the image of an entrepreneur through the power of storytelling. **By sharing stories and highlighting role models, the community quickly grew. Challenging the status quo, #SheDIDIT aimed to create more seats at the traditional table, but finding it insufficient, they built their own, ensuring there would always be room**.

Today, #SheDIDIT offers a wide range of services to support and coach women at various stages of their entrepreneurial journey. They address both known and unknown barriers and work towards achieving business and personal growth. Diversity is seen as a strength, not a hurdle. The initiative leverages tools and motivations from different perspectives and cultures to reinforce entrepreneurial beliefs. While #SheDIDIT focuses on a niche audience, it welcomes all women who align with its mission.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Women from diverse cultural backgrounds interested in becoming entrepreneurs or already being one.

Main objectives

- Create an Inclusive Space: Establish a supportive and inclusive environment for women from diverse cultural backgrounds who are interested in entrepreneurship.
- Provide Access to Resources: Offer various coaching programmes, workshops, and networking events to equip womenpreneurs with the necessary tools, knowledge, and skills for their entrepreneurial journeys.
- Support Women's Business Growth: Assist women in different stages of their entrepreneurial endeavours, focusing on both business and personal growth.
  Foster a Supportive Community: Build a community where women can share experiences, challenges, and successes, providing mutual support and encouragement.
- Challenge the Status Quo: Address and dismantle barriers that women of color and other underrepresented groups face in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Promote Diversity as a Strength: Highlight and leverage the strengths that come from diverse cultural perspectives to enhance entrepreneurial success.
- Expand Access and Opportunities: Ensure women of color have better access to networks, coaching, and entrepreneurial organisations, which are often limited in traditional settings.
- Encourage Storytelling and Role Models: Use the power of storytelling to reshape the image of entrepreneurs and inspire others by sharing stories and role models from diverse backgrounds.

Number of people working on the project

Team and board members: 21

Number of primary target beneficiaries involved

Since its inception in 2018, #SheDIDIT has engaged and supported approximately 1,300 women from diverse cultural backgrounds who are either aspiring to become entrepreneurs or are already on their entrepreneurial journey. This number reflects the primary target beneficiaries who have participated in various coaching programmes, workshops, networking events, and community-building activities provided by #SheDIDIT.

Number of organisations/ institutions involved

Overall, #SheDIDIT has collaborated with approximately 50 organisations and institutions, including non-profits, educational institutions, government agencies, and private sector partners.



Main achievements and goals obtained

Supporting Over 1,300 Women: Providing coaching, workshops, and networking opportunities to a significant number of women from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Building a Robust Community: Creating a supportive and inclusive community for womenpreneurs.

Promoting Diversity: Successfully leveraging diverse cultural perspectives to enhance entrepreneurial success.

Challenging the Status Quo: Addressing and reducing barriers faced by women of color in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Successful Partnerships: Collaborating with around 50 organisations and institutions to expand resources and opportunities for womenpreneurs.

Monitoring and evaluation

Regular Feedback Surveys: Conducting surveys among participants to gather feedback on coaching programmes, workshops, and events to assess their effectiveness and impact.

Progress Tracking: Monitoring the progress of participants through regular check-ins and follow-up sessions to evaluate their entrepreneurial journey and personal growth.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Utilising KPIs such as the number of participants, business success rates, and community engagement metrics to measure the initiative's overall success and areas for improvement.

Partnership Reviews: Periodically reviewing collaborations with partner organisations to ensure they align with the goals of #SheDIDIT and contribute effectively to the mission.

Impact Reports: Compiling annual impact reports that document the achievements, challenges, and outcomes of the initiative, providing transparency and accountability.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Promoting gender equality by empowering women from diverse cultural backgrounds through entrepreneurship, thus tackling the gender gap in the business world.



Reducing inequalities within and among countries by providing women of color with access to resources, networks, and opportunities that are often limited in traditional entrepreneurial settings.

Target of the project

Needs:
1. Access to Resources: They need coaching, mentorship, workshops, and networking opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills required for entrepreneurial success.

2. Supportive Community: They require a supportive community that understands and addresses their unique challenges.

3. Visibility and Representation: They benefit from role models and storytelling to see themselves represented in the entrepreneurial landscape.

Conditions of Vulnerability:
1. Limited Access to Traditional Networks: Many women of color and those from diverse cultural backgrounds have limited access to traditional entrepreneurial networks, which hinders their ability to find mentors, investors, and collaborators.

2. Systemic Bias and Discrimination: These women often face systemic biases and discrimination that can limit their opportunities and growth in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

3. Financial Barriers: Access to funding and financial resources is often a significant hurdle, affecting their ability to start and scale businesses.

Socio-Demographic Parameters:
1. Cultural Diversity: Women from various ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds.

2. Economic Backgrounds: Often from lower to middle-income backgrounds, facing additional financial constraints.

3. Educational Attainment: Varying levels of education, with some needing additional training and skill development to compete in the entrepreneurial space.

By addressing these needs and conditions of vulnerability, #SheDIDIT aims to empower these women, helping them overcome barriers and achieve success in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Capabilities:
Entrepreneurial Skills: Enhanced skills in business planning, marketing, financial management, and other key areas through coaching and workshops.
Confidence and Leadership: Increased confidence and leadership abilities, empowering them to take charge of their entrepreneurial ventures.
Problem-Solving and Innovation: Improved problem-solving skills and the ability to innovate, leveraging diverse perspectives to find unique solutions.

Relationships:
Mentorship Connections: Access to mentors who provide guidance, support, and industry insights.
Networking Opportunities: Connections with other entrepreneurs, potential business partners, and investors through networking events and community engagements.
Supportive Community: Membership in a supportive community of like-minded womenpreneurs who share experiences and provide mutual support.

Resources:
Educational Materials: Access to a wealth of educational resources, including workshops, seminars, and online courses tailored to their needs.
Funding Opportunities: Information on and access to funding opportunities, grants, and financial resources to support their businesses.
Tools and Technologies: Exposure to the latest tools and technologies that can aid in business development and growth.

By gaining these new capabilities, relationships, and resources, recipients of the #SheDIDIT project are better equipped to overcome barriers, achieve their entrepreneurial goals, and contribute to a more inclusive and diverse business landscape.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

#Innovation:
Complementary Approach: #SheDIDIT introduces innovative methods to support women from diverse backgrounds, which complements local policies aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and diversity.
Inclusive Practices: The initiative's focus on inclusivity and leveraging diverse perspectives adds a unique, innovative layer to the existing entrepreneurial support landscape.

Coherence:
Alignment with Policies: #SheDIDIT aligns with local policies that promote gender equality, diversity, and entrepreneurship. It supports governmental efforts to reduce inequalities and enhance economic participation among underrepresented groups.
Supportive of Policy Goals: By empowering women entrepreneurs, #SheDIDIT contributes to broader policy goals of economic growth, social inclusion, and community development.

 # Disruptiveness:
Challenging the Status Quo: #SheDIDIT disrupts traditional entrepreneurial ecosystems by addressing systemic biases and creating new opportunities for women of color, thereby challenging and transforming existing norms.
Creating New Standards: The initiative sets new standards for inclusivity and support in the entrepreneurial sector, encouraging other organisations and policies to adopt similar approaches.

Overall, #SheDIDIT is both coherent with and disruptive to the local policy scenario, fostering innovation and aligning with policy goals while challenging traditional practices and promoting systemic change.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

1. Coaching Programmes:
One-on-One Coaching: Personalised coaching sessions where womenpreneurs receive tailored advice and support for their specific business challenges.

Group Coaching: Group sessions where multiple women can share experiences, learn from each other, and receive collective guidance from a coach.

2. Workshops:
Skill-Building Workshops: Practical sessions focused on developing essential entrepreneurial skills such as business planning, financial management, marketing, and leadership.

Industry-Specific Workshops: Workshops tailored to specific industries or sectors to provide relevant knowledge and insights.

3. Networking Events:
Networking Meetups: Regular events where womenpreneurs can connect with peers, mentors, and potential investors or partners.

Pitch Events: Opportunities for women to pitch their business ideas to a panel of judges, receive feedback, and potentially secure funding.

4. Storytelling Sessions:
Role Model Stories: Events or online sessions where successful women entrepreneurs share their journeys, challenges, and successes to inspire and motivate others.

Personal Narrative Workshops: Sessions that help participants craft and share their own entrepreneurial stories, enhancing their public speaking and narrative skills.

5. Community Building Activities:
Peer Support Groups: Regular meetings or online forums where women can discuss their challenges, share advice, and offer mutual support.

Mentorship Programmes: Pairing less experienced entrepreneurs with seasoned mentors for guidance and support.

6. Incubator and Accelerator Programmes:
Business Incubation: Programmes that provide early-stage support, including office space, resources, and mentoring, to help new businesses get off the ground.

Accelerator Programmes: Intensive programmes designed to rapidly scale existing businesses, often culminating in a demo day where participants present to potential investors.

These activities help create a robust and supportive environment for diverse womenpreneurs, addressing both the personal and professional aspects of entrepreneurship.

Example of output delivered by the project

1. Coaching Manuals and Guides: These resources provide ongoing support and reference materials for womenpreneurs, helping them navigate various aspects of starting and running a business effectively.

2. Workshop Materials: Participants use these materials to continue learning and applying new skills acquired during workshops, such as business planning, financial management, and marketing strategies.

3. Networking Events and Pitch Event Recordings: These recordings are valuable for those who could not attend live, offering insights into successful pitching, networking strategies, and the experiences of fellow entrepreneurs.

4. Success Stories and Case Studies: Published stories and case studies inspire and motivate other women by showcasing real-life examples of overcoming challenges and achieving business success.

5. Incubator and Accelerator Programme Curricula: The curricula provide a structured path for new and scaling businesses, ensuring participants have a clear roadmap to follow for growth and development.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

1. Surveys and Focus Groups: Collecting feedback on their challenges and needs.

2. Leadership Roles: Empowering beneficiaries to take on leadership roles and represent their interests.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

1. Pilot Testing and Prototyping

2. Workshops and Training Sessions

3. Community-Based Projects

4.Feedback and Iteration

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

In the delivery phase, beneficiaries co-facilitated workshops and managed resources.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

The working group at #SheDIDIT comprises various roles that collaborate throughout the project. The Project Manager, Community Outreach Coordinator, Marketing and Communications Manager, Financial Manager, and Technology Coordinator work simultaneously to manage daily operations and community engagement. The Mentor and Coach function in rotation based on coaching schedules, while the Programme Development Specialist works in phases to develop and refine programmes. The Workshop and Event Coordinator operates intermittently, focusing on event logistics.

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

The #SheDIDIT project integrates a variety of areas of expertise and disciplines critical to its success. This includes project management for overseeing operations and ensuring goals are met, community outreach for engaging with diverse womenpreneurs, programme development to design tailored coaching and educational content, event planning for organising workshops and networking events, and marketing and communications to promote visibility and share inspiring stories.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

#SheDIDIT actively collaborates with external community bodies and organisations to enhance its support for womenpreneurs. These partnerships include educational institutions for training and resources, local community groups to expand outreach and provide networks, business and entrepreneurship networks for mentorship and development opportunities, and non-profit and social impact organisations to collectively address barriers in entrepreneurship.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

#SheDIDIT fosters collaborations and alliances among its internal services to create a cohesive support network for womenpreneurs. Programme development collaborates closely with community outreach to tailor initiatives to the specific needs of diverse women entrepreneurs. Marketing works in tandem with event planning to ensure effective promotion and execution of workshops and networking events. Mentors and coaches integrate their expertise with programme developers to offer aligned support throughout entrepreneurial journeys. Financial management aligns resource allocation with programme goals.



SwitchOn - Supporting people aged 55+

2021 - 2023

Spread your Wings

Poland, Spain, The Netherlands, Greece





Useful Links

Project website

Training and skills development
Older people / Digital training / Access to technology

Texts by Maria Koimisoglou and Theodoros Tsanakas, AKADIMOS KDVM EPE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

"Switch On" is an innovative educational and development initiative targeting Europeans aged 55+ who face social and professional exclusion. This programme is a collaborative effort among four NGOs from Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, and Greece. It addresses the challenges faced by older adults due to technological advancements and the post-pandemic shift in work dynamics. The project consists of tailored workshops and digital tools designed to enhance soft skills, self-esteem, and employability among the participants.
The key components include an e-coursebook for trainers with guidelines, lesson scenarios, and case studies, alongside original tools like the "POWER BOX" and an "E-GAME ROOM" for interactive learning. These resources are structured around three main themes: social inclusion, equality and anti-discrimination, and digital skills.

The programme conducted 30 workshop meetings, blending theory with practical activities to foster meaningful engagement and learning. The initiative will culminate in a series of dissemination meetings across the four countries, aiming to reach a broader audience of HR professionals and educators, thereby amplifying its impact on older adults' integration into social and professional spheres.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Individuals aged 55+ facing social and professional exclusion in Poland, Spain, The Netherlands, and Greece

Main objectives

- Develop interpersonal and soft skills for individuals aged 55+
- Increase motivation and capacity for ongoing professional development
- Facilitate social and professional reintegration using innovative educational tools

The context

The "SWITCH ON" project arises in response to the challenges faced by individuals aged 55+ in Europe's contemporary labour market. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated their social and professional exclusion due to increased social isolation and rapid technological changes, which they often find challenging to adapt to. This age group has seen a decrease in opportunities for personal and professional development, leading to lower self-esteem and motivation. Recognising the need for tailored educational interventions, "SWITCH ON" aims to enhance the skills and competencies of older adults, thus supporting their reintegration into society and the workforce. The project leverages the expertise of NGOs from four countries, offering a holistic programme that combines practical training with digital learning tools to address these issues effectively.

Number of people working on the project:

On average, per year:
1 Project Manager
1 Project Team Member
1 specialised staff For each partner organisation

Primary target beneficiaries involved

40 workshops
at least 40 participants
8 professional trainers

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

Leader:
Rozwiń Skrzydła (Poland)
Partners:
Indepcie Sca (Spain)
Vi One Consultancy (The Netherlands)
Akadimos Kdvm Epe (Greece)

Main achievements and goals obtained

Development of Tailored Educational Tools: The creation of an E-COURSEBOOK for trainers, featuring comprehensive guidelines, 30 detailed lesson scenarios, and engaging case studies, tailored specifically to meet the needs of individuals aged 55+ and their trainers.

Innovative Learning Platforms: Introduction of unique tools such as the "POWER BOX" and "E - GAME ROOM," which foster interactive and immersive learning experiences, promoting the autonomy and engagement of participants in a supportive environment.

Enhanced Skills and Competencies: Participants have gained essential soft skills, improved their communication abilities within multigenerational teams, and enhanced their self-esteem and personal management skills, contributing to their overall employability and social reintegration.

Extensive Workshops and Training: Successful execution of a three-month programme involving 30 workshop meetings that facilitated real change in the life attitudes and professional trajectories of older adults, thereby actively combating their social and professional exclusion.

Dissemination and Impact: Conducted numerous dissemination meetings across Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, and Greece, reaching approximately 280 professionals such as trainers, tutors, coaches, and HR specialists, further expanding the project's influence and fostering broader societal awareness.

Collaborative International Effort: Fostered a robust partnership among NGOs across four nations, facilitating the exchange of best practices and experiences, which enriched the project's content and approach.

Monitoring and evaluation

A structured evaluation process involving periodic assessments through workshops, participant feedback, and performance metrics to gauge the effectiveness of educational tools and integration strategies.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



Focuses on reducing the risk of social and professional exclusion among individuals aged 55+ by enhancing their adaptability to the modern labour market and societal roles, aligning with UN SDGs on reduced inequalities (Goal 10) and decent work and economic growth (Goal 8).

Target of the project

The project targets older adults who have experienced increased isolation and disconnection from the labour market due to rapid technological changes and societal shifts, impacting their economic stability and mental health.

EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

New Capabilities:

Recipients of the "SWITCH ON" project gained several new capabilities that are critical for both personal and professional development. One significant area of enhancement is digital literacy, which empowers older adults to engage confidently with modern technology, essential in today's digitally-driven world. Additionally, they acquired soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are vital in navigating the multigenerational workplace. The programme also focused on personal management skills, including time management and self-motivation, equipping participants with the tools needed to manage their careers and personal growth effectively.

Relationships:

The project facilitated the formation of new relationships among participants and between participants and trainers. By participating in interactive workshops and group activities, individuals were able to forge connections with peers facing similar challenges, fostering a supportive community environment. These networks provide emotional and professional support, enhancing participants' sense of belonging and community engagement. Furthermore, relationships with trainers and mentors developed through the programme offer ongoing guidance and professional advice, crucial for continued personal and career development.

Resources:

Participants gained access to a variety of new resources that support continuous learning and career development. The e-coursebook and other training materials provided are lasting tools that participants can refer back to as needed.

The "POWER BOX" and "E-GAME ROOM" introduced innovative, engaging methods for self-directed learning and skill reinforcement. Additionally, the open educational platform set up as part of the project offers an accessible resource for ongoing education, allowing participants to continue learning and developing skills beyond the formal end of the workshops. These resources not only enhance individual capabilities but also ensure that learning and development can be sustained over time.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The "SWITCH ON" project aligns well with local and EU policies that focus on social inclusion, lifelong learning, and digital literacy, especially pertinent as Europe pursues smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. By introducing innovative learning tools and methods tailored for the 55+ demographic, the project is not only innovative but also coherently supports existing educational and employment strategies.

However, the project does bring a mild disruptiveness by challenging traditional views on the learning capabilities of older adults and emphasising their potential for continued professional development. This approach could potentially influence policy adjustments to more actively include older adults in lifelong learning and digital training initiatives.

EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

- Implementation of training workshops
- Use of coaching cards and e-coursebooks in group settings
- Online quizzes and games designed to foster team building and learning

Example of output delivered by the project

- E-coursebooks and manuals for trainers used in ongoing education efforts
- Coaching cards that facilitate development sessions
- An interactive online platform that hosts quizzes and games to enhance learning and interaction

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

In the development phase of the Switch On Project, beneficiaries, including educational leaders, trainers, HR specialists, and people over 55, actively participate in the context analysis and identification of factors critical to the project's success. Their involvement helps ensure the educational programme accurately addresses the unique challenges faced by the older workforce in adapting to new technologies and work methods. This collaborative approach not only enriches the project's relevance but also tailors it to the real-world needs and preferences of its target audience.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

During the implementation phase, the beneficiaries of the Switch On Project engage in practical applications of the tools and resources developed. This includes participating in activities such as the Game Room on the educational digital platform developed by AKADIMOS. These activities are designed to foster healthy competition and integration across diverse work teams, crucial for enhancing the professional capabilities of the 55+ demographic. Their direct involvement in using and testing these tools provides immediate feedback and ensures the interventions are effectively meeting their needs

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project management / delivery / evaluation phase

Beneficiaries play a critical role in the management and delivery phases of the Switch On Project. They are involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the project through feedback mechanisms and participating in dissemination events organised by the project partners in various European countries. This feedback is integral to refining the educational content and making iterative improvements to the project's delivery. Additionally, their experiences and testimonials during these events help in fine-tuning the project's approach to better serve this demographic in future iterations.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Roles and responsibilities of the working group

- Coordinators manage project logistics and partner communications
- Trainers and facilitators deliver educational content and lead workshops
- Evaluators assess the effectiveness of the interventions and collect data for continuous improvement

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

- Adult education and training
- Digital literacy and IT
- Social work and community engagement
- Project management and evaluation

Collaborations and alliances with external community

Partnerships with local community centres, educational institutions, public and private schools and employment agencies enhance resource sharing and broaden the impact of the project.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Collaborations exist between different departments within partner organisations to leverage diverse expertise and resources, enhancing project delivery and outcomes.

Think Outside the Bus

2020 - Ongoing

Casa Naturii, Țara Tinerilor Uniți, EduBuzz, BrightEd

Augustin, Romania





Useful Links

Project website

Social media

Training and skills development
Young people / Rural / Mobile / Innovation / Barriers

Texts by Patricia Isabela Brăileanu and Gabriel Dima, National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of the project

The project EduBuzz focuses on addressing the educational challenges faced by children in rural and economically disadvantaged communities, particularly exacerbated during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the collaboration of organisations like Casa Naturii, Țara Tinerilor Uniți, EduBuzz, and BrightEd, the project implements various initiatives.

Casa Naturii, located in Laslea, Sibiu County, provides educational opportunities for children and youth aged 6 to 25, emphasising entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and environmental education. They have adapted to the digital era, offering online classes and educational materials, ensuring continuity of education during the pandemic.

Țara Tinerilor Uniți, based in Bucharest, focuses on educational and social projects in rural areas, offering feedback and support to schools and families in need. They provide educational resources and support, including tablets and mentoring programmes, to help students in areas like Vaslui and Prahova overcome digital and educational barriers.

EduBuzz, an innovative project in Augustin, Brașov County, transformed a decommissioned bus into a mobile educational space. This initiative provides an unconventional yet engaging learning environment, equipped with educational tools and resources, addressing the lack of adequate school infrastructure in rural areas.

BrightEd, initiated by Fabian Leiba and Diandra Fechita, aims to prepare rural students for the digital world through workshops and mentorship. They provide internet connectivity, devices, and educational support, ensuring students in places like Vărbilău, Prahova County, gain essential digital skills. These initiatives collectively strive to bridge the educational gap for children in disadvantaged areas, promoting access to quality education, fostering digital literacy, and empowering communities to overcome educational challenges, particularly in times of crisis.

Main objectives

- Provide access to quality education for children in rural and disadvantaged areas;
- Bridge the digital divide by offering internet connectivity and digital literacy training;
- Foster entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and environmental education;
- Create innovative educational spaces and resources tailored to local needs;
- Ensure continuity of education during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Empower communities to overcome educational challenges through collaboration and support.

The context

In Romania, access to education remains a significant challenge, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated existing inequalities, highlighting the digital divide and lack of resources in these communities. According to Save the Children Romania, 35.8% of children from disadvantaged families are at risk of dropping out, with a higher percentage in rural areas.

Organisations like Casa Naturii, Țara Tinerilor Uniți, EduBuzz, and BrightEd recognised the urgent need to address these issues. In Laslea, Sibiu County, Casa Naturii promotes education through entrepreneurship and civic engagement, despite infrastructural challenges like lack of internet access. Similarly, Țara Tinerilor Uniți, based in Bucharest, supports rural communities by providing resources and feedback to schools. In Augustin, Brașov County, EduBuzz creatively transformed a decommissioned bus into an educational space, addressing the lack of adequate school infrastructure. Meanwhile, BrightEd, initiated by youth in Vărbilău, Prahova County, focuses on preparing rural students for the digital world through workshops and mentorship.

These organisations operate in a context where many children lack access to quality education, internet connectivity, and educational resources. By providing innovative solutions and community-driven initiatives, they aim to bridge the educational gap and empower children in disadvantaged areas to thrive despite challenging circumstances.

Primary target users/beneficiaries

Children from Disadvantaged Areas - these are children living in rural or economically disadvantaged communities who lack access to quality education resources, including internet connectivity, educational materials, and mentorship opportunities;

Families in Disadvantaged Communities - families living in these areas often face financial constraints and may struggle to provide educational resources and support for their children;

Teachers and Educators - teachers working in rural or disadvantaged schools are also beneficiaries of this project, as they receive support, resources, and training to enhance their teaching practices and better serve their students;

Community Leaders and Organisations - local community leaders and organisations involved in education and social welfare initiatives benefit from the collaboration and support provided by the project, enabling them to better address the needs of their communities;

Volunteers and Mentors - individuals volunteering their time and expertise to support educational initiatives in disadvantaged areas are essential beneficiaries, as they play a crucial role in implementing programmes and providing guidance and support to children and families.

Credits

Published by:
Casa Naturii;
Țara Tinerilor Uniți;
EduBuzz;
BrightEd.

Contributors:
Elena Șerbănescu (Casa Naturii);
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Natalia Ginghină and Adrian Secal (EduBuzz);
Fabian Leiba and Diandra Fechita (BrightEd).

Supporters and Sponsors:
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Implemented by Asociația Act for Tomorrow;
EduLab programme by Fundația Noi Orizonturi.

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Asociatia Casa Naturii;
Tara Tinerilor Uniti;
EduBuzz;
BrightEd.

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Number of people working on the project:

The overall number of people working on the project is not explicitly stated, but based on the information provided, it possible to estimate:
- Casa Naturii - it mentions three professionals working pro bono for the project;
- Țara Tinerilor Uniți - it involves at least five volunteers initially;
- EduBuzz - Natalia Ginghină and Adrian Secal are mentioned as the main contributors, but it does not specify additional personnel;
- BrightEd - the project involves Fabian Leiba, Diandra Fechita, Cristina, and around 50 volunteers.

Primary target beneficiaries involved

The overall number of primary target beneficiaries involved in the project includes:
- Casa Naturii - it provides educational opportunities for children and young people aged 6 to 25 in Laslea, Sibiu County;
- Țara Tinerilor Uniți - it implements educational projects in communities across Buzău, Teleorman, Vaslui, and potentially other regions.
- EduBuzz - it conducts workshops and activities for children in Augustin, Brașov County;
- BrightEd - it organises workshops and mentorship programmes for students in Vărbilău, Prahova County, and potentially other areas.

Given the scope of these projects, the overall number of primary target beneficiaries involved could be several hundred, potentially ranging from 200 to 500 children and young people across different regions.

Number and type of organisations/ institutions involved

1) Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
Casa Naturii;
Țara Tinerilor Uniți;
EduBuzz;
BrightEd.

2) Schools
Various schools in rural communities where the projects are implemented.

3) Funding Organisations
Kaufland Romania (through the Start ONG programme);
Asociația Act for Tomorrow;
Fundația Noi Orizonturi.

Main achievements and goals obtained

1) **Improved Access to Education**
Provided access to quality education for children in rural and disadvantaged areas;
Bridged the digital divide by offering internet connectivity and digital literacy training.

2) **Empowerment and Skill Development**
Fostered entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and environmental education among children and young people;
Developed critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills through various educational activities.

3) **Innovative Educational Spaces**
Created innovative educational spaces, such as the EduBuzz bus, to provide unique learning experiences;
Developed educational resources tailored to the specific needs of local communities.

4) **Continuity of Education During Crisis**
Ensured continuity of education during the COVID-19 pandemic by adapting activities to online and outdoor formats; Provided online classes, educational materials, and mentorship support to students during lockdowns.

5) **Community Engagement and Support**
Engaged local communities in educational initiatives, fostering collaboration and support; Provided assistance to families in need, including food, masks, and household appliances.

6) **Expansion and Sustainability**
Expanded the reach of educational projects to new regions and communities; Established partnerships with funding organisations to sustain and expand project activities.

Monitoring and evaluation

- **Regular Assessments:** regular assessments are conducted to evaluate the progress of the educational programmes. These assessments measure the academic performance, skill development, and engagement of the students.
- **Feedback Mechanisms**: feedback from participants, teachers, and community members is collected to assess the effectiveness of the programmes; feedback is obtained through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions.
- **Data Collection**: data is collected on various indicators such as attendance, academic achievements, and participation in extracurricular activities; this data is analysed to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- **Quality Assurance**: quality assurance measures are implemented to ensure that the educational content and activities meet the desired standards; this includes reviewing curriculum materials, lesson plans, and teaching methodologies.
- **Impact Assessment**: impact assessments are conducted to evaluate the long-term effects of the programmes on participants and communities;
this may include tracking the educational attainment, employment outcomes, and civic engagement of programme graduates.
- **Reporting and Documentation**: regular reports are prepared to document the progress and outcomes of the project; these reports are shared with stakeholders, funding organisations, and the wider community.





ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY



By providing educational opportunities to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, the project addresses the inequality in access to education (UN SDG 4: Quality Education); It targets children from rural areas and low-income families who often lack resources for proper education.



The project aims to bridge the digital divide by providing access to digital education tools and resources (UN SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure); It offers online educational materials, tablets, and internet access to students who otherwise wouldn't have such resources, thereby ensuring their inclusion in the digital world.



By focusing on children from economically disadvantaged families, the project addresses the economic inequality prevalent in society (UN SDG 1: No Poverty); It aims to break the cycle of poverty by providing quality education and skills training, empowering children to pursue better opportunities in the future.



The project targets marginalised communities and ensures their inclusion in educational programmes (UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities); It creates a supportive environment where children from all backgrounds can learn and grow together, reducing social exclusion and fostering social cohesion.



The project promotes gender equality by offering educational opportunities to both boys and girls (UN SDG 5: Gender Equality); It encourages girls' participation in education and addresses specific challenges they may face, such as early marriage or limited access to schooling.



The project integrates health education into its curriculum, addressing health disparities and promoting well-being (UN SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being); It educates students on topics like hygiene, sanitation, and reproductive health, empowering them to make informed decisions about their health.



Through community involvement and engagement, the project empowers local communities to take charge of their children's education (UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions); It fosters partnerships between NGOs, schools, parents, and other stakeholders to create sustainable change and resilience within communities.

Target of the project

The primary target of the project comprises children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those in rural areas, low-income families, and marginalised communities. These individuals face multiple challenges due to their vulnerable circumstances. Many children in rural areas lack access to quality education due to insufficient resources, poorly equipped schools, and long distances to educational institutions. This results in lower literacy rates and limited opportunities for personal and professional growth. The digital divide exacerbates educational inequalities, with many children lacking access to computers, internet connectivity, and digital learning resources. This hampers their ability to participate in online education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families in these communities often struggle with poverty, making it difficult to afford basic necessities, including school supplies and uniforms. Economic hardship can lead to early dropout rates as children are forced to work to support their families. Children from marginalised communities often face discrimination and social exclusion, affecting their self-esteem and sense of belonging. This can lead to disengagement from school and limited social interactions, hindering their overall development. Poor access to healthcare and hygiene facilities in rural areas exposes children to health risks. Lack of awareness about health issues and limited resources for medical care contribute to higher rates of illness and malnutrition among these children. Girls in these communities often face additional barriers to education, including cultural norms favoring boys' education, early marriage, and household responsibilities. Gender inequality perpetuates a cycle of limited opportunities for girls, restricting their future prospects. Rural areas often lack community resources such as libraries, recreational facilities, and extracurricular activities, depriving children of opportunities for holistic development and exposure to diverse experiences. Overall, the target beneficiaries of the project are children and youth who face significant socio-economic challenges, hindering their access to education, health, and opportunities for personal growth. The project aims to address these needs and empower them to break the cycle of poverty and inequality.



EMPOWERING/ BUILDING CAPABILITIES

New capabilities/relationships/ resources gained by the recipients of the project

Through the project, recipients gain access to new capabilities, relationships, and resources that **empower them to overcome socio-economic challenges and improve their quality of life**. They gain access to **quality education** through digital learning resources like tablets, laptops, and educational materials, enabling them to engage in online learning. Additionally, they develop essential **digital literacy and technology skills** through workshops and programmes. Recipients establish new relationships with peers, mentors, and volunteers involved in the project, fostering a sense of belonging and community. Health education workshops and resources increase their awareness about hygiene, nutrition, and disease prevention.

Mentorship programmes provide **guidance, support, and encouragement, helping them set goals and build confidence**. They also receive essential resources such as food, hygiene products, and medical supplies, addressing immediate needs. Participation in various activities develops **essential life skills** like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking. Exposure to new opportunities for personal and professional growth expands their horizons and aspirations. By overcoming challenges and acquiring new skills, recipients become more resilient and empowered to face future obstacles, breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality.

Relationship between the practice and the local policies' scenario

The practice aligns with local policies by innovatively addressing gaps in education access and resources, thereby contributing to the broader goal of reducing inequality. However, its coherence with existing policies varies depending on the region and specific initiatives. In terms of innovation, the project introduces **novel approaches to education delivery**, such as using refurbished buses as mobile classrooms or implementing digital learning platforms in rural areas.

These innovative methods disrupt traditional education models, especially in regions with limited resources or infrastructure. Coherence with local policies is evident in areas where the project complements or extends existing initiatives. For instance, in regions with digital education strategies, the project's provision of online learning resources and digital literacy training aligns with government objectives to promote digital inclusion. Similarly, in areas with policies emphasising community engagement in education, the project's focus on mentorship and volunteer involvement reinforces these efforts. However, **in some cases, the project may challenge existing policies or highlight their inadequacies**. For example, the need to provide internet access to facilitate online learning exposes gaps in infrastructure and digital inclusion efforts.

Similarly, the project's emphasis on informal education and community-driven initiatives may contrast with formal education policies centred on standardised curricula and assessment.



EXTENSIVELY PARTICIPATORY

Example of participatory activities carried out within the project

Community Workshops - Engaging local communities in workshops to identify needs and co-design solutions. This involves brainstorming sessions, group discussions, and prioritisation exercises;

Needs Assessments - Conducting surveys or interviews with community members to understand their specific challenges and aspirations regarding education;

Focus Groups - Organising focus group discussions with beneficiaries to gather feedback on project activities, curriculum content, or programme effectiveness;

Cooperative Planning Sessions - Collaborating with local stakeholders, including educators, parents, and community leaders, to plan and implement project activities;

Interactive Training Sessions - Providing training sessions that encourage active participation, such as role-playing exercises, group problem-solving tasks, or interactive presentations;

Student-Led Initiatives - Empowering students to take leadership roles in organising events, clubs, or projects within their schools or communities;

Feedback Mechanisms - Establishing channels for continuous feedback, such as suggestion boxes, online forums, or regular feedback meetings, to ensure the project remains responsive to community needs;

Peer Learning Sessions - Facilitating peer learning among students, where they teach each other on topics of interest or share their skills and knowledge;

Community Action Projects - Supporting community-led initiatives that address local education challenges, such as setting up libraries, organising clean-up campaigns, or renovating school facilities;

Cultural and Artistic Activities - Incorporating cultural activities, storytelling, art, music, and theatre into educational programmes to foster creativity and self-expression among participants.

Example of output delivered by the project

- Development of textbooks, workbooks, and educational resources tailored to the needs of the target beneficiaries. These materials are used by teachers and students during formal and informal learning sessions. After the project ends, they continue to be used as reference materials for ongoing education and skill development.
- Provision of tablets, laptops, and internet connectivity to facilitate online learning. These resources enable students to access educational content and participate in virtual classes. Post-release, the technology infrastructure remains in use, supporting continued access to digital learning opportunities.
- Implementation of training programmes for teachers, parents, and community members. These programmes equip participants with knowledge and skills to support students' educational journey. After completion, participants continue to apply the acquired knowledge, contributing to ongoing educational support within the community.
- Establishment of community learning centres, libraries, or educational hubs. These spaces serve as venues for educational activities, meetings, and community gatherings. Post-release, they remain accessible for continued learning, meetings, and community events, fostering education and collaboration.
- Organisation of workshops, seminars, and educational events. These events provide platforms for knowledge sharing, networking, and skill development. After release, presentations, handouts, and recordings are often shared online or distributed to participants for continued reference and learning.
- Development of online platforms or educational websites. These platforms host educational content, interactive modules, and communication tools for students and educators. Post-release, they continue to support self-paced learning, resource sharing, and communication among participants.
- Creation of project reports, case studies, and documentation. These documents capture project activities, outcomes, and lessons learned. After release, they serve as valuable resources for knowledge dissemination, advocacy, and future project planning and implementation.
- Support for community-led initiatives, such as small-scale projects or awareness campaigns. These initiatives address specific educational needs or challenges within the community. Post-release, they may evolve into ongoing programmes or inspire similar projects, contributing to sustained community engagement and impact.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project development phase

- Beneficiaries are directly involved in providing insights into the local context, including socio-economic factors, educational needs, and existing challenges. Their input helps in understanding the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the community;
- Through interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions, beneficiaries contribute to identifying their needs, priorities, and aspirations. This participatory approach ensures that the project's objectives are aligned with the actual needs of the community;
- Beneficiaries participate in setting project goals and objectives based on their identified needs and desired outcomes. This ensures that the project's objectives are realistic, relevant, and achievable;
- Beneficiaries provide feedback on project design, including the selection of educational materials, technology solutions, and learning approaches. Their input helps in tailoring the project to the local context and ensuring cultural relevance;
- Beneficiaries are involved in co-designing implementation strategies, such as the scheduling of training sessions, the location of community centres, and the selection of training topics. Their involvement enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of project activities;

- Beneficiaries participate in monitoring project progress and evaluating its impact. This may involve regular feedback sessions, participatory assessments, and community meetings to review progress and address challenges;

- Beneficiaries contribute to adapting project activities based on their feedback and evolving needs. This iterative process allows the project to remain responsive to changing circumstances and ensures continued relevance and effectiveness.

Involvement of beneficiaries in the project implementation phase

- Beneficiaries participate in training sessions and workshops where they acquire new skills, knowledge, and tools. Their active engagement in these sessions ensures that the training content is relevant and tailored to their needs;

- : Beneficiaries play a crucial role in reaching out to other community members, mobilising participation, and promoting project activities. They act as advocates for the project, encouraging others to get involved and benefit from the initiatives;

- Beneficiaries often provide peer-to-peer support, sharing their knowledge and skills with others in the community. This peer learning approach fosters collaboration, solidarity, and continuous learning among beneficiaries;

- In certain projects, beneficiaries are involved in managing project resources, such as community centres, equipment, or materials. They may participate in decision-making processes related to resource allocation and utilisation;

- Beneficiaries contribute to monitoring project progress by providing regular feedback on the implementation of activities, identifying challenges, and suggesting improvements. This participatory monitoring approach ensures that the project remains on track and responsive to community needs;

- Beneficiaries actively participate in adapting project activities to suit changing circumstances or emerging needs. Their input helps in innovating new approaches, techniques, or solutions that enhance the effectiveness of project interventions;

- Some beneficiaries are involved in documenting project activities, capturing success stories, and preparing reports. This involvement helps in highlighting the impact of the project and sharing lessons learned with stakeholders;

- Beneficiaries provide feedback on the quality and relevance of project activities, which is essential for ongoing evaluation and improvement. Their input contributes to assessing the project's effectiveness and identifying areas for enhancement.

MULTI-EXPERTISE/ DISCIPLINES

Expertises and disciplines involved in the project

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) - NGOs play a central role in project implementation, providing resources, expertise, and organisational support. (Number of organisations: 2);

Government Agencies - Government agencies collaborate with the project to provide support, resources, and regulatory oversight. (Number of organisations: 1);

Academic/Research Institutions - Academic and research institutions contribute knowledge, research, and expertise to inform project design and implementation. (Number of organisations: 1);

Healthcare Sector - Healthcare providers and facilities deliver health services and interventions to beneficiaries, addressing their healthcare needs. (Number of organisations: 2);

Education Sector - Schools, colleges, and educational institutions provide training, workshops, and educational resources to enhance beneficiaries' skills and knowledge. (Number of organisations: 1);

Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) - CBOs work closely with beneficiaries at the grassroots level, facilitating community engagement, mobilisation, and empowerment. (Number of organisations: 3);

Private Sector - Private companies may provide funding, resources, or technical expertise to support project activities, particularly in infrastructure development.

Collaborations and alliances with external community

The project involves collaborations and alliances with various external community bodies and organisations, which are crucial for its success. These partnerships enhance resources, expertise, and community engagement. Examples include local NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), government agencies, academic/research institutions, the private sector, international organisations, and community leaders/ influencers. Local NGOs provide insights into community needs, CBOs foster community ownership, government agencies offer resources and regulatory support, academic institutions bring knowledge and innovation, the private sector contributes resources and expertise, international organisations provide funding and technical support, and community leaders build trust and engagement. These collaborations create synergies and maximise the project's impact by harnessing the collective efforts of diverse stakeholders.

Collaborations and alliances between several services of the same organisation/institution

Collaborations and alliances between various services within the same organisation/ institution are common and beneficial for project success. These collaborations ensure effective utilisation of resources, sharing of expertise, and streamlined service delivery. For instance, within an NGO or an academic institution, different departments or units might collaborate to implement various aspects of the project. This could include collaboration between education, research, and outreach departments, where education provides content expertise, research offers data and analysis, and outreach facilitates community engagement and dissemination of information. Such collaborations enhance efficiency, promote interdisciplinary approaches, and ensure holistic project implementation.

KEY WORDS

Target Group
Young people
Refugees
Adults
Women
Older people
People with disabilities

Context
City
Suburbs
Rural areas
Mobile

Process
Informal education
Job training
Peer-to-peer
Digital training
Craftmanship

Reason Why
Empowerment
Awareness
Community activation
Collaborative dialogue
Environmental sustainability
Innovation
Access to technology
Barriers

Active — People with disabilities / Barriers
Agueda Living Lab — Young people / Innovation / Access to technology
Area programs for a socially sustainable Malmö — City / Collaborative dialogue / Community activation
Avventure di Latta — Refugees / Young people / Job training
Be Able — Informal education / Barriers / Empowerment
Biovilla — Rural areas / Environmental sustainability / Innovation
Blossom — Women / Digital training / Empowerment
Brindisi Smart Guide — People with disabilities / City / Awareness / Barriers
Buffer Fringe Performing Arts Festival — Young people / City / Innovation / Collaborative dialogue
Cantieri di Dialogo — Young people / Peer-to-peer / Suburbs / Collaborative dialogue / Barriers
Caritas Hellas Social Spots — Refugees / Job training / Barriers
City Council Plan for Migrant Integration in Sintra Municipality — Refugees / City / Barriers / Collaborative dialogue
Co-Liza 2.0 — Mobile / Innovation / Barriers / Community activation
Community for socially excluded people — City / Barriers / Awareness / Community activation
Costruiamo Saperi — Refugees / Women / Suburbs / Job training / Empowerment
Costruire Bellezza — City / Craftmanship / Innovation / Barriers / Empowerment
Design Thinking for Social Inclusion — Adults / Digital training / Empowerment
Digital skills for social inclusion — People with disabilities / Digital training / Access to technology
EDL - Emotional Distance Learning — Young people / Innovation / Access to technology
Education and Psychosocial Support — Adults / Digital training / Empowerment
Emergency Room for Associations — Peer-to-peer / Innovation
Energie-Hilfe — City / Informal education / Environmental sustainability / Empowerment
Fashion truck — Mobile / Environmental sustainability / Empowerment
Fruska — Young people / Women / Craftmanship / Peer-to-peer

Gardens of the Future	City / Job training / Community activation / Environmental sustainability
Green on the Morii Canal	Suburbs / Community activation / Environmental sustainability
Heartwarming Food	Older people / Barriers / Empowerment
Inclusive Editorial Team	People with disabilities / Barriers / Empowerment
Les Petites Cantines	City / Community activation / Environmental sustainability / Barriers
Mediterranea	Refugees / City / Job training / Innovation / Empowerment / Environmental sustainability
Mermaids for Inclusion	People with disabilities / Barriers
Mind-Mad in Design	Young people / City / Collaborative dialogue
Mobile Library BookTruck	Young people / Mobile / Rural areas / Informal education / Empowerment
Mutfluencer*innen	Young people / Peer-to-peer / Empowerment / Innovation
My Human Kit	People with disabilities / Empowerment / Barriers
Normali Meraviglie	People with disabilities / Older People / Craftmanship / Empowerment / Collaborative dialogue / Barriers
Our Creek at La Teneruri	Suburbs / Empowerment / Collaborative dialogue
Pharaon - Pilots for healthy and active ageing	Older people / Access to technology
Preventing Violence	Young people / Awareness / Innovation
Project Room	Young people / Access to technology / Collaborative dialogue
Rassegna Singolare e Plurale	People with disabilities / City / Barriers
Salus Space	Suburb / Community activation / Collaborative dialogue
She did it	Women / Job training / Empowerment / Awareness
Social entrepreneurship as a tool for fighting social exclusion and poverty	People with disabilities / Job training / Empowerment
Spirit of Malmö	City / Community activation / Collaborative dialogue
Switch on - Supporting people aged 55+	Older people / Digital training / Access to technology
Talking Heads	Young people / Empowerment
Think Outside the Bus	Young people / Rural / Mobile / Innovation / Barriers
Urban Gardening in Malmö	Young people / Older people / City / Community activation / Collaborative dialogue
Xtra Mena	Young people / Refugees / Awareness

International co-design practices for the social inclusion of vulnerable people

A catalogue by the ATELIER project

Developed within the Erasmus+ project *ATELIER – innovATive Education for sociaL Inclusion via codEsign pRactices*, the catalogue brings together 50 international co-design initiatives promoting the social inclusion of vulnerable people across Europe. Based on a rigorous collaborative research process carried out by the project's eight partners, the selected case studies showcase innovative collaborations among Higher Education Institutions, Civil Society Organisations, and local communities.

As part of a broader Learning Programme designed for students, educators, and early-career professionals, the catalogue highlights transformative and multidisciplinary practices that advance inclusion, capability-building, and social justice through community engagement, training, healthcare, integration, and artistic expression, serving as an entry point to a transdisciplinary understanding of co-design for social inclusion.

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