



HECSOs
community engagement

**Building knowledge on
community engagement practices
A multi case study data analysis**



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HECSOs
community engagement

*Higher Education institutions and
Civil Society Organisations together
for community engagement*

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INDEX

Pag 4Introduction: *The project HECSOs*

Pag 5Literature review: *Definition of the construct of community engagement*

Pag 8Research question: *What are we searching for?*

Pag 8Methodology: *Description of qualitative multi-case study research*

Pag 10Findings: *1. The process of community engagement (starting from the challenge); 2. Value generation process; 3. The outcome: stakeholders empowerment; 4. key enablers of community engagement, 5. Know-how mapping*

Pag 16Short reference list

Pag 17Case studies: *short description of each case*

Pag 59.....Appendixes

INTRODUCTION

The project HECSOs

The present analyses has been conducted in the framework of HECSOs - Higher Education institutions and Civil Society Organisations together for community engagement, a project funded by the European Union in the framework of Erasmus + Key Action 2 – Cooperation among organizations and institutions (2021-1-IT02-KA220-HED-000032207).

The project aims at improving Universities' capacities to systematically and continuously cooperate with Civil Society Organizations on community engagement as an innovative and impactful way for socio-economic inclusion of people in need. HECSOs is currently implemented by 8 partners (4 Universities and 4 CSOs) from 6 EU countries (Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Italia, Romania, Spain), with the support of a European CSOs network (Caritas Europa), 2 Universities and 2 CSOs as associated partners. It started in January 2022 and it runs for 3 years. To know more about the project please visit <https://hecsos.eu/>.

The project consortium has established a trans-disciplinary and collaborative research group in order to develop international and research-based learning approaches to identify and disseminate innovative and evidence-based models of intervention and related implementation tools. The project consortium will also identify relevant professional roles that make community engagement approaches more effective and impactful, it will co-design corresponding skills and competency frameworks and develop related training (up-skilling) curricula and courses for students and CSOs professionals. Finally, the project partners will develop, through jointly-organized local policy multi-stakeholders workshops, guidelines and policy recommendations to enable environments that favor community engagement approaches.

The present multi case study data analysis is key for the development of the first Project Result, the development of a set of 6 Toolkits, structured as interactive digital “how to do” guides based on models of different successful typologies of action for community engagement in different areas/target groups. The toolkits will be made available to CSOs, and to the wider public, in order to support cooperation at local level in planning and adapting models of interventions in other contexts to promote the inclusion of people in need through community engagement, multi-stakeholder and regenerative approaches. This data collection and analyses phase is also fundamental for the other project results as they will be produced according to the findings here described.

Partners collected information from 75 case studies, out of which 16 were selected for an in-depth analysis according to the criteria described below. The 16 case studies are briefly presented in the second part of this report, while a list of all other case studies is provided as an annex.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of the construct of community engagement

The goal of the literature review is to develop a theoretical framework on Community Engagement with the aim to guide the HECSOs partner's field analysis. First, we start by defining a community as a group of people who share a common sense of identity, belonging, and care, around a certain (grouping of) common benefit resource(s).

Over the past ten years, the term “engagement” has been employed in a number of academic fields, including sociology, political science, psychology, and organizational behavior. For example, sociology has investigated “civic engagement”, psychology studied “social engagement”, educational psychology has examined “student engagement”, while political science explored “nation state engagement”. Additionally, the concepts of “employee engagement” and “stakeholder engagement” have been investigated in the literature on organizational behavior and management. In the academic literature on marketing and customer service, the terms “consumer engagement” have only recently emerged. Community engagement (CE) is a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a social business, an NGO) in focal service relationships (Brodie et al., 2013).

Within a collective domain, CE becomes an ‘interactive experience’ in which the community collaborates by carrying out processes of learning, sharing, socializing, co-developing and educating. Engagement states occur within a dynamic, iterative process of service relationships that co-create value.

“Engagement” represents a multi-dimensional concept, context-dependent state of mind characterized by three specific dimensions:

- 1) cognitive (thought processing and elaboration);
- 2) emotional (affective);
- 3) behavioral (actions, energy, effort, time).

The concept plays a central role in the process of relational exchange where other relational concepts are engagement antecedents and/or consequences in iterative engagement processes within the community (Brodie et al., 2013).

Relational engagement antecedent includes “involvement”, “participation”, “flow” and “rapport”. Engagement relational consequences include “commitment”, “satisfaction”, “trust” and “loyalty”. The iterative (cyclical) nature of the service relationships process implies that specific CE relational consequences may extend to act as engagement antecedents in subsequent engagement (sub-) processes and/or cycles: engagement behaviors lead to more satisfaction and affective loyalty, and at the same time, satisfied and loyal consumers take part in more engaged behaviors.

A positive relation between engagement and satisfaction occurs, as well as commitment. CE is, also, expected to be positively related to trust and loyalty. Bowden (2009a) and other authors, propose a range of conceptual frameworks that highlight different aspects of the concept. This takes us to interpret community engagement as the process (and the outcome of this process, in terms of capability) of collectively engaging around a common benefit that requires the use of different kinds of resources.

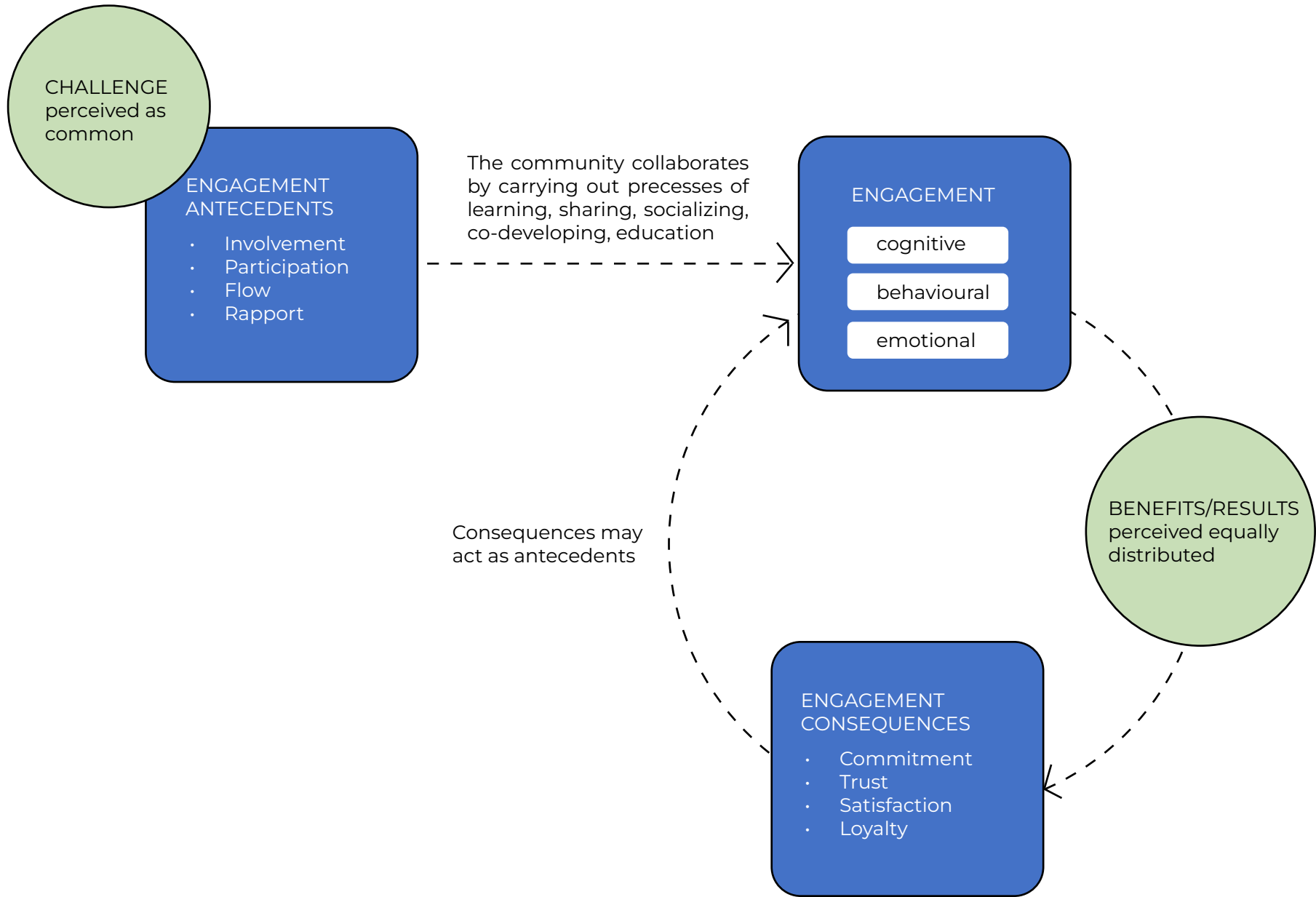


Fig 1:Community engagement cycle

A working definition guided our research:

Community engagement is the process (and the outcome of this process, in terms of capability) of collectively engaging around a common benefit resource. A common benefit resource is a (tangible or intangible) resource that is (potentially) available to the benefit of a certain collectivity, but whose sustained availability is vulnerable to collectivity's misbehavior.

Examples may be found in the following phenomena:

- Wikipedia's contents
- Fish in the sea
- A neighborhood park
- An industrial district's attractiveness for investors
- A local tradition (e.g. a festival)
- Public appreciation of a certain product (e.g. electric cars)
- A landscape's beauty
- An immigrant group's cultural identity
- The global climate

But also:

- A neighborhood's sense of racial status
- A criminal groups secrets
- A coalition's bullying capacities

Communities

are not positive forces "by definition"!

Typically, the common benefit resources that catalyze a community include an idiosyncratic configuration of intangible resources such as values, beliefs, tastes, interests, identities, lifestyles, knowledge, capabilities, traditions, and/or rules. Besides These «core community resources», that are typically intangible, other common benefit resources with a tangible nature may also contribute to catalyzing a community, such as a source of food (e.g. a fishery), a water reservoir, a safe neighborhood, a marketplace, a beautiful landscape, etc.

An engaged community strives to enlarge and protect the space for common benefit regeneration by developing three key groups of common benefit processes:

Tuning

(instituting and organizing a common system of social expectations as for behaviors, beliefs and feelings)

Contributing

(aligning behaviors to social expectations)

Learning

(collecting feedback, making sense, adapting)



Fig 2: Enabling and disabling processes in community engagement.

However, as the literature highlights, a set of barriers inhibit the process. Failure to believe, failure to refrain and failure to act shrink and jeopardize the space of common benefit (re)generation. An engaged community fights against the hostile processes that tends to shrink and jeopardize the space for common benefit regeneration:

estrangement-delegitimation

(collectivity members' failure to believe)

misuse-profiteering (collectivity members' failure to refrain)

inability-loafing (collectivity members' failure to act)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature review helped partners to define specific research questions to be addressed empirically.

As such, the field part of the context should answer the following issues:

What are the main processes that characterize the constitution and development of a community engagement project?

What is the value that a community engagement project is able to generate?

What kind of resources, in terms of skills and capabilities, are required to effectively build a community?

METHODOLOGY:

A MULTI-CASE STUDY APPROACH

The following section provides a brief description of the research method this project has decided to adopt. A case study is a type of qualitative research design that helps researchers understand a case within a specific context by collecting data from different sources (interviews, secondary data, direct observation, etc). The case study method is a particular research approach that makes an effort to develop more broad theoretical claims about regularities in the observed occurrences while also attempting to reach a thorough grasp of the event being studied.

A multi-case study appears to be an appropriate research technique for examining the community engagement phenomenon since a large variety of factors and relationships

are included where no basic laws exist to determine which factors and relationships are important and when the factors and relationships can be directly observed.

Researchers may be deterred by the absence of clear criteria for doing investigation even when they think a field study approach is suited for examining the topic they are interested in. For this purpose, this study followed Bogdan and Taylor (1975), who published a “how-to” guide for qualitative methods, while McCall and Simmons (1964) assembled insightful essays from numerous field researchers on a wide range of methodological concerns. Another example is the work of Carlson who developed a flowchart of the search process choosing a controlled comparison approach for data analysis. The generalizations that result from these studies are not asserted to be valid generally, but rather only in circumstances that are comparable to those under study.

By adopting a multi-case study instead of a single case one, limits the weaknesses of this approach. Indeed, single case studies are frequently thought to present low dependability and generalization challenges. As such, this method aimed to meet the conditions outlined by Yin (2017) and Ridder (2017): Despite the importance of these components in a case study, researchers: construct validity, which allows the researcher to accurately assess the studied concepts; internal validity, which checks the appropriateness of the inferences made from the data; external validity, which measures how well the results capture the phenomenon under study; reliability, which relates to the possibility of the study being replicated by another researcher.

Case study phases

The present study includes the basic procedures for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data from qualitative approaches. The goal is to get various viewpoints on a phenomenon using a variety of complementary sources of evidence. As a result, the investigator is perceived as being more thorough and reliable.

As such, following Yin (2017), we have implemented the below steps: Research goal; Research design (criteria, sample); Data preparation and collection (research protocol, planning, interview, transcripts); Analysis of cases and between cases (single case report; data sharing among partners); Elaboration of the findings (cross case study interpretation).

The first step of implementing a case study was the definition of the research goal. The goal of this research was to understand the processes that characterize community engagement and explore the main value a community is able to create. The findings will support the following phases of the project (i.d. design of a toolkit and design of training activities in regard to community engagement).

Case selection criteria were properly set in advance as they are crucial to ensure the investigation described above. The chosen criteria indicated that the case studies of community engagement had to cover the following fields:

- EU citizenship
- Migrants Integration
- Environmental Action
- Gender empowerment
- Economic integration of NEETS
- Management of common resources

Besides the field criterion, cases have been be selected when:

After a preliminary analysis, the case seems to be at least partially successful as for community engagement;

After a preliminary analysis, at least two processes among those listed in our reference model (e.g., loafing, tuning, contributing, estrangement) seemed observable;

At least two people were already available as interviewees (ideally, one person with an active role in community engagement, and a beneficiary of the common benefit resources that are or could be developed through community engagement);

Significant additional material was available (e.g. direct observation notes, web site, reports);

The community engagement action started no later than September, 2021 (not too recent, so that enough empirical information has accumulated);

Cases in other countries (other than you home country) were welcome;

After having shared and agreed on the case studies, partners have started the **data preparation** and **collection** by getting in touch with the people or organizations that the case study is targeting. The interviews began in June and ended in September 2022.

The partners of the project designed an Interview Protocol sharing the most important aspects to cover. The Interview Protocol helped partners to follow an agreed research structure, indicating a number of questions, but without limiting potential new insight that could emerge during the interview. The Interview Protocol facilitated the replicability of the project and provided uniformity in terms of translation and data administration.

Informed Consent Form to be filled in and signed by the interviewee and interviewer before the interview;

Final form for the transcription of the relevant information related to the community engagement case studied;

All interviews were transcribed and translated into English;

Along with the interviews, partners ensured a process for **triangulation** and synthesis of the data, identifying and categorizing the most important information while discarding the unnecessary ones.

The final step was to create unique reports for each case study. The process of producing this procedure is completed by the review of the final report, which is generated in the following section.

FINDINGS

General overview

All cases referred to community engagement projects that provided services to vulnerable groups of people (e.g. disadvantaged people, mainly from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds;...) with the aim to promote more equal opportunities by harnessing the enactment of resources.

The majority of case studies have been scaled and adapted to other geographic regions.

All case studies show the importance of an operative plan with key resources, time, personal involvement, risks.

Not all case studies seemed to adopt appropriate measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

The process:

Phases of Community Engagement

While all case studies analyzed included a recurrent, necessary community engagement requirement, which is **stakeholder participation**, the intensity and the form in which participation occurs varies. The case studies in this research can, as a matter of fact, be positioned along a continuum in which adjacent elements are not perceptibly different from each other, but the extremes are quite distinct. This continuum can be interpreted as an evolution in time, in which to pass from one category to another specific conditions need to be addressed. On one end we find communities that are created through **participation by cooperation**, in the middle we find communities that are created through **participation by collaboration**, and on the other extreme we find communities that are created through **participation by cocreation**. While all case studies displayed participation as a sine qua non condition, not all can be positioned in the category of community created through cocreation. Let's see the main characteristics of each typology.

Participation may take place through a basic form of **cooperation**, defined as the process in which different stakeholders perform a task that advances their own, and the others', interests, forming relationships to meet personal objectives. In this case we have a top down approach where a focal stakeholder designs and implements the activity delegating specific tasks to different stakeholders. The process is characterized by compliance where the focal stakeholder's main mission is to delegate sub-tasks to stakeholders and coordinate the required skills, designing clear mapping activities with instructions and deadlines. In sum, a strong hierarchy and organization favors the building of a community that is engaged thanks to the commitment of the main stakeholders. As a consequence, the community would dissolve without the coordination of the focal stakeholders since

the community members interact with each other on demand. The motto could be: “I do what needs to be done and what I am told to do”. We could define this category as a sort of “phase 1” in the building of a community engagement process, where the behavioral dimension is dominant.

A more complex form of participation in a community is enacted through **collaboration**. Collaboration can be defined as the process in which members work together on (a) shared goal(s) (vs working alone), revealing their beliefs and values in some salient respect. Collaboration is a process by which (semi-)autonomous actors interact (e.g., by jointly creating structures that govern their relationships). Collaborative arrangements differ from cooperative relationships in that the former do not contain a hierarchy. Moreover, cooperation reflects each party’s individual interest, while collaboration assumes stakeholders’ shared interests (Weinberg et al., 2013).

Relatedly, while hierarchical cooperation implies a focus on a central stakeholder’s (convener’s) goals, in collaboration goals tend to be more jointly determined. As such, we have a more bottom-up approach to community engagement. Stakeholder coordination is direct, with strong hierarchical relationships and processes. However, in collaboration, stakeholder coordination transpires more flexibly, and is characterized by a looser hierarchy.

The focal organization’s main mission is to engage stakeholders to work together towards a common purpose, developing a collectivistic attitude and climate within the stakeholders, aligning stakeholders and stimulating synergies. We could define this category as a sort of “phase 2” in the building of a community engagement process, where the behavioral dimension is supported by the cognitive dimension (strong sharing of values, beliefs, resources).

The third type of participation occurs through **cocreation** which is here defined as a creative association of stakeholders’ resources, where novel, effective outcomes arises from resource integration. While for cooperation and collaboration resource integration

reflects an aggregate, or summative, effect which represents the sum of their respective separate effects, for cocreation resource integration refers to resource integration that exceeds the sum of its parts: Cocreation involves emerging or transforming resources (Peters, 2016). Community participation, moreover, instills in the trainers and trainees, and community at large, a sense of co-responsibility in the integration process. Taking a Gestalt perspective, the value that is cocreated (which will be described in the following paragraph) is more than the sum of its single contributions, containing transformative elements. The process is self-organized by stakeholders and, often, solutions and activities are unpredictable. The focal organization has the role of Facilitator that is in a constant process of learning and adapting. From one year to another the additional interventions change or increase according to the raised necessities. members of the community are open listeners and learners, ready to catch any hints to better achieve solutions. We could define this category as a sort of “phase 3” in the building of a community engagement process, where the behavioral and cognitive dimensions are integrated with a more emotional one (sense of trust, satisfaction, joy, loyalty).

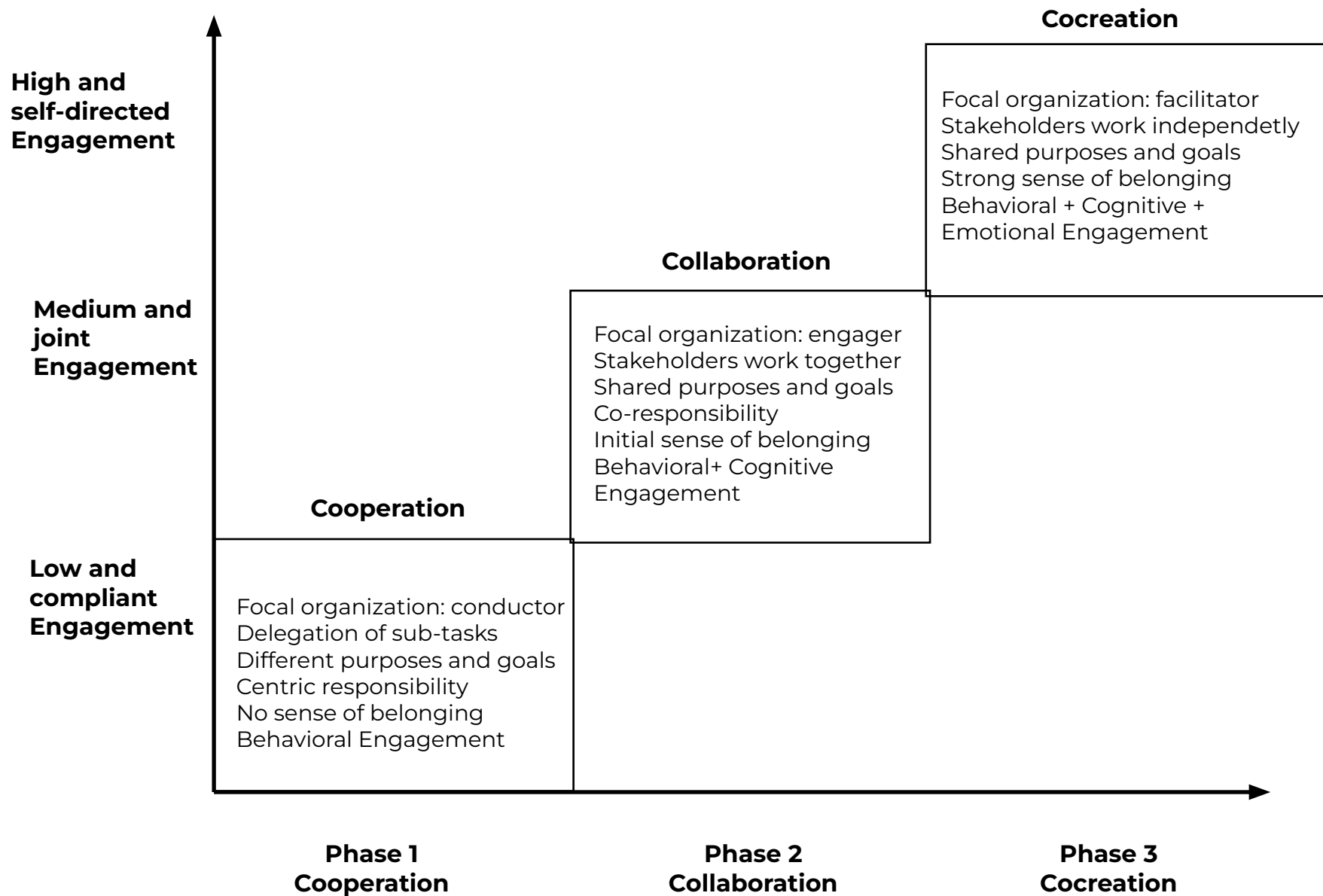


Fig 3: Phases of Community Engagement: Cooperation, Collaboration, and Cocreation

Value co-created by Communities

Community engagement can be defined as a value cocreation process that integrates stakeholder resources resulting in stakeholder empowerment.

The case studies showed that for each community under investigation the value generated could be multiple and belong to different categories outlined below:

intellectual value:

by teaching, mentoring, community members experience interest and curiosity that affects knowledge development and facilitates the development of different types of skills.

social value:

the findings show that social support, friendship and intimacy developed through social relationships are at the core of community engagement projects. (social integration, networking, connecting, social capital, and cohesion).

emotional value:

by sharing experiences members enact pleasurable emotional and sensory responses and express feelings of pride, satisfaction, enjoyment

creative value:

to realize creative value, members of the community integrate different kinds of resources, which are linked, and transformed in new ways to create solutions.

cultural value:

community members define a set of shared values, ideas, meanings, and symbols thus prescribing acceptable behavior in the community and creating the identity of it.

environmental value:

community members are able to generate a benefit for the environment and ecological issues

functional value:

the community supports members to achieve a given purpose, to fulfill the primary function.

economic value:

by finding new solutions to a problem the community is able to generate monetary value

Outcome:

Community empowerment

By cocreating value CE has the final aim to increase stakeholders' (in particular of vulnerable groups of people) overall empowerment. The data show that this occurs through the activation of resource participation and can be found especially moving upwards from phase 1 to phase 3.

The analysis enables the conceptualization of community empowerment that is built on the following dimensions: autonomy: the community is able to increase the autonomy of its members in terms of independence and self-determination of personal behavior, resistance to social pressures.

purpose in life:

the community is able to support its members in defining strong goal orientation and conviction that life holds meaning.

relation with others:

the community is able to encourage its members in meaningful relationships with others that include reciprocal empathy, intimacy, and affection.

self efficacy and environmental/context mastery:

the community is able to develop in its members a sense of mastery in managing environmental factors and activities, including managing everyday affairs and creating situations to benefit personal needs.

personal growth:

the community is able to encourage continued development, to open its members to new experiences, to help in the recognition of improvement in behavior and self over time.

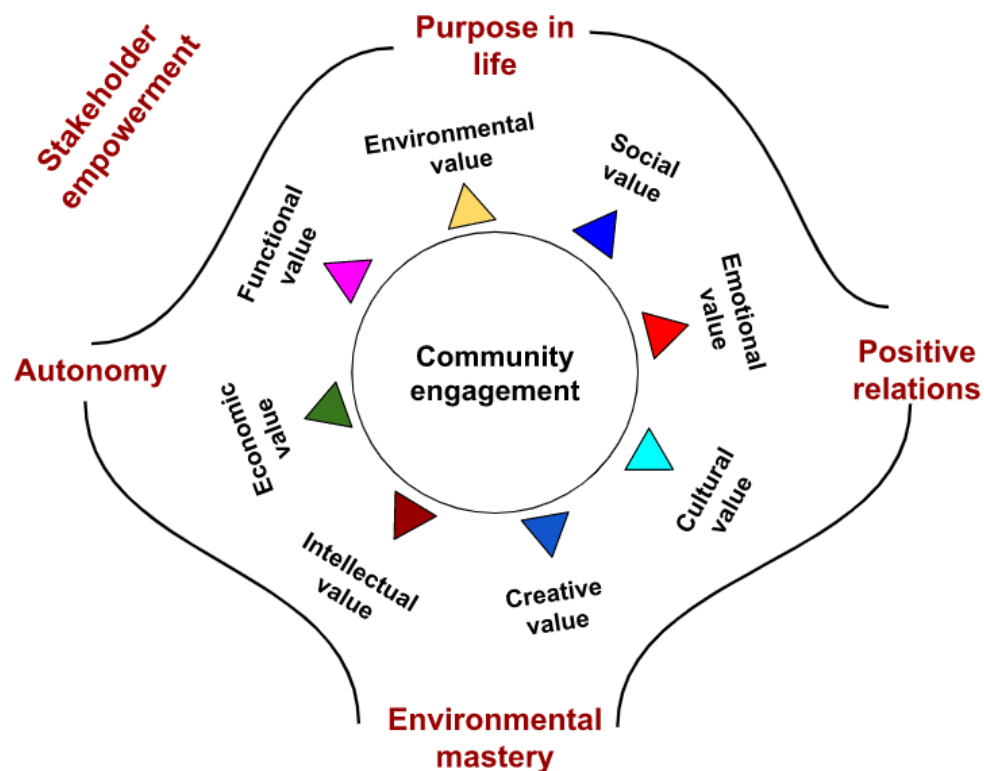


Fig 4: Community engagement, Value creation, Stakeholder empowerment

Key enablers for community engagement

Overall, the cases included in this project show how active and creative people, through participation and resource sharing, are able to contribute in creating an impact on society.

What are the key lessons we learnt and want to take into account when we decide to start a community and when we decide to support such replication?

To build a proper community, based on a feeling of belonging, interaction, in which members share resources, the stakeholders involved in the project need to bear in mind that without a set of key enablers they will end up with a project, maybe an amazing one, which cannot however be considered a community. To meet the above described conditions (sense of belonging, interaction among members, and resource sharing) we learnt that the following conditions need to be present.

Given the nature of this report we will select the 4 most challenging ones:

active listening at the beginning and in the following phases of the project: community members should not be considered as passive receivers of a service but as active participants whose resources should be integrated in the community. The ability to actively listen also ensures that the community will be able to change adapting to new circumstances.

dialogue: it is through dialogue that active listening takes place. Dialogue coordinates expectations among the players, it creates common knowledge that, in turn, drives motivation.

motivation: community members should be encouraged to actively participate and for this the community needs to

understand which are the triggers that motivate them (intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation). Leadership is necessary to find the right ways to motivate people in the long run.

delegate: to ensure that a community is able to cocreate value and self determine its activities it is important to recognize the relevant stakeholders to whom to delegate.

design and implement an environment that is able to nourish the community, favoring members' interaction and resource integration.

Conversely, the most recurrent obstacles can be summarized in a lack of stable financial aid, political pressure, coordination efforts and a pinch of paternalism are the drawbacks of working with several stakeholders.

Know-How mapping

A community engagement process can only be supported by identifying community assets, skills, resources, and strengths. Resources include skills, abilities, interests, experiences, and social networks of relationships; community members and institutions must also be considered as resources for action.

According to the following three phases that have been identified across the multi-case analysis, a set of skills and resources are essential. Our findings envision a Community Engagement Manager who is responsible for managing and implementing strategies that mobilize people to give, volunteer, and advocate.

1) Design:

This phase is devoted first of all to a deep understanding of the needs, pains, concerns, and expectations that need to be addressed. Traditional quantitative approaches, such as surveys, and structured qualitative interviews need to be supported with research approaches that are able to unveil the deepest, and often not verbalized, needs. The data shows the relevance of building active listening capabilities through ethnographic skills that are able to adopt research techniques such as participant observation, diaries, photovoice, participatory research. The researcher

does not simply document a need but is able to delve into the experiences of the people involved. This phase also requires being able to network with the most relevant stakeholders, where creativity and strategic thinking are essential in finding original partnerships, and communication is important to engage stakeholders from the beginning. Drawing from the disciplines of social innovation, design thinking, systemic design, intercultural communication, and fundraising, equips community managers in tackling social and economic issues from the beginning.

2) Implementation:

This phase requires management, self-management, documentation (database management) skills. Project cycle management, budgeting and funding, social media management. Moderation and Conflict management are needed to be able to address and tackle critical issues within the community and protect its members. In addition empathy and member support, being able to promote productive behaviors, motivating and rewarding productive members, and promote community advocacy. Finally good communication skills are required (strategic and operational ones) in all stages but especially in the implementation one.

3) Sustainability:

once the community is solid and needs to be scaled or replicated, community managers need, on one hand, to understand how to ensure sustainability to the project in terms of forward-thinking and vision of the future: business model development are important issues to know when new trajectories must be found. On the other hand, being able to evaluate the impact of the project is key. From the case study analysis what emerges is that once the community is solid it is necessary to understand which strategy to pursue looking ahead, whether to grow in size becoming attractive to larger audiences or to replicate the project in another geographic area keeping the community size.

Despite the majority of the cases analyzed adopted some quantitative measure (e.g. number of beneficiaries, time allocated, number of stakeholders taking part in the community) to evaluate the progress of the project, what seems recurrent across the cases is a limited longitudinal evaluation of the impact of the project.

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LIST CASE STUDIES

EU Project STROLL	18
DE Carb Project	20
ACG Sustainability and Community Engagement	22
NOLO Neighborhood	24
FC United of Manchester	27
GRATZELELTERN	29
SINDBAD Mentoring program	31
STOP - Districts without partner violence	33
BIO e Co - Ateliere fara frontiere	35
EDURIGHT4GIRLS- Equal access to education	38
FA BENE	41
ERSILIA - La biblioteca delle relazioni	44
LENGUANES	47
NO DEJE NADIE ATRAS	50
GARDENS OF THE FUTURE	53
HUB NICOSIA - NEUEYT	56

Greece, EU Project STROLL

Context

The project searches to develop less a substitute for physical student mobility, than a possible variation of it, which could complement mobility programs even in a post-Covid future. Not all the students would like to or can travel all the time. Having a virtual alternative makes it possible for students to exploit the possibilities inherent in learning in a different city even between two international travels. Student mobility is so popular because students value the intercultural learning opportunity that displacement offers: learning from local teachers, making friends with local students, strolling in the streets of a foreign city are all valuable, mind-opening experiences. Some of these experiences might be made available virtually using advanced technology.

Problem definition/Challenge

Promoting educational mobility has been in the core of European policies since the inception of the EU. Open borders for students within the EU creating possibilities for intellectual exchanges, intercultural learning and the development of a trans-European identity amongst the young generations have been in the centre of the European vision. Amongst other things, the Covid19 pandemic has disrupted this common sense together with its practice.

Project description

Stroll project is a virtual higher education program that aims to connect students of various European cities, allowing them to work on joint projects to different urban aspects through the creation of an original methodology with digital pedagogical tools.

The main objective of the project is to promote student mobility for educational purposes, even in times when travel is impractical or limited (such as during the pandemic period) by using technology and the integrated cooperation of universities across Europe. This objective will be achieved through the creation of an innovative educational course focusing on urban areas, which will be piloted during the project period and subsequently integrated into the curricula of the 3 universities participating in the consortium.

Field: management of common resources

Key activities

Stroll project will offer a virtual study abroad experience for students. The learning experience will involve on-line and off-line field work in small thematic search teams under the supervision of co-researchers next to their visiting peers.

The key activities include:

- Innovative use of digital platforms for collaborative learning in tertiary education;
- A curriculum for students;
- Case studies and best practices;

Key processes and practices

- Continuous dialogue;
- Networking;
- Innovation;
- Team working;
- co-design;

Key stakeholders

- Universities
- Vet centers
- Municipalities
- Schools

Greece, EU Project STROLL



“

Offer something new to local population, is really to put the locals to accept that they are all different and that their needs are not the priorities of all the community. There is a problem of individualism.

”

DeCarb Project

Context

DeCarb will support public authorities to initiate efforts, join forces and exchange experiences to: a) identify growth strategies to mitigate the impact of decarbonisation, b) make the most of EU funds & financing tools, and c) promote public dialogue on conflicting interests.

Problem definition/Challenge

The low-carbon energy shift of EU economies will have a profound economic & social impact on regions extensively involved in coal value chains. It is however acknowledged that this transition needs to be fair; EC's "Clean Energy For All Europeans" package was set in place to speed the clean energy transition and growth & job creation.

Project description

DeCarb brings together 9 partners (9 countries), to exchange experiences & transfer knowledge on how to transition from the carbon-intensive era towards the clean energy future. It will support regions to secure sustainable development, economic & societal stability, and a role in the 2030 energy mix.

Key activities

9 action plans to improve the addressed policy instruments, benefiting managing authorities & beneficiaries

2 interregional workshops, 3 site visits and 1 EU-wide policy learning event to promote capacity building among partners and stakeholders

16 policy briefs to transfer lessons learnt to EU public authorities

1 Training toolkit on the development of energy mix scenarios for regions undergoing decarbonisation

4 joint thematic studies and analyses reports on territorial needs and decarbonisation pathways

Key processes and practices

DeCarb project is encompassing joint thematic studies and analysis, regional and interregional policy learning and capacity building, and territorial action plans' development.

Key stakeholders

Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency (BG)
Lodzkie Region (PL)

Eszak-Alfold Regional Energy Agency Nonprofit Ltd. (HU)

South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency (RO)

Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, State of Brandenburg (DE)

House of Energy (DK)

Energy Agency of Savinjska, Saleska and Koroska Region (SI)

Extremadura Energy Agency (ES)

DeCarb Project



Greece, Attiki

ACG Sustainability & Community Engagement

Overview

The American College Greece (ACG) constitutes a Higher/Tertiary Education institution, run with the support of a USA Endowment Trust, offering both undergraduate and graduate programs accredited by the US Higher Education Accreditation Authorities.

The Case corresponds to the ACG's proposal for the accountability of Tertiary (Higher) Education addressing the following fields (of scope) of community engagement:

Environmental action ✓

Gender empowerment ✓

Management of common resources ✓

Community welfare ✓

Problem definition/Challenge

The ACG Case of the Sustainability Initiative comprises a “blend” of Sustainability activities, facilitating community engagement, which run on an annual basis following each academic year.

Community engagement is based upon inspiring the students to act voluntarily as civil society actors, facilitating philanthropic activity and broader involvement within community-based activities as well as liaising to the business community, environmental & recycling (suppliers & infrastructure).

Indicative Sustainability activities include an NGO-driven campaign on minimizing food waste by collecting left-over food merchandise in local open-air food markets, this food been packaged and distributed to NGOs offering meals to poor and deprived people. A peer-to-peer approach has been adopted for the recruiting of university students to get them engaged and increasing their voluntary work and social contribution.

As already described the Sustainability Project of the ACG is run on an annual basis, occasionally engaging other NGOs, like the “Doctors without Frontiers” or institutions like UNICEF and local

authorities like the Municipality of Agia Paraskevi, for restoration work of cultural sites and with the Athens University for blood donation. The sustainability of these community engagement activities is provided through the voluntary work of the students and the teaching staff.

Field: Management of common resources & Environmental action

Main results are being presented as follows:

[The American College of Greece | Social Impact – ACG Cares!](#)
[The American College of Greece | Community Engagement \(acg.edu\)](#)
[The American College of Greece | Campaigns \(acg.edu\)](#)
[The American College of Greece | Sustainability News \(acg.edu\)](#)

And they can be presented in the following Sustainability@ACG Newsletter past issues of

[March 2021](#)

[July 2021](#)

[September 2021](#)

[December 2021](#)

[Spring 2022](#)

[July 2022](#)

There is a monitoring and performance measuring system:

- Number and institutional status of organizations working with,
- numbers of engaged beneficiaries
- time allocated to voluntary work (staff & president)
- time allocated also in the record of students (co-curricular transcript)
- Students' awards: “Community Service Awards”, assigned by Committee of Staff & Students' reps (according to a ranking framework)

Greece, Attiki

ACG Sustainability & Community Engagement



Italy, Milan

NOLO Neighborhood

Context

NoLo, the district that develops north of piazzale Loreto, in the north-east of Milan, is located between via Padova and viale Monza, above Loreto. From the 1960s, the area underwent a major transformation: great migratory flow first from Eastern Italy and then from the South. NoLo became a large working-class district, inhabited mainly by citizens of southern Italy looking for work. In the last twenty years, this substrate of internal migration has been superimposed on that of immigration from other countries, typically non-European. In 2012 the name NoLo, North of Loreto, was proposed by the architects Francesco Cavalli, Luisa Milani and Walter Molteni: an effective and functional name to define an area that did not have a toponymic identity and which was often called Rovereto/Pasteur (two metro stops).

Problem definition/Challenge

The NoLo neighborhood has been affected over the years by a number of problems: micro-macro criminality that made it dangerous during the evenings; small shops and small businesses suffered from the opening of new chains and large department stores. The result was an urban image built on lowered shutters and unsafe and hostile public spaces. The neighborhood was in need of reclamation.

Project description

As part of the Polisocial, the interdepartmental program dedicated to CSR, the Politecnico di Milano has developed the “Off-Campus” project in the Nolo district. The goal of Off-Campus was to bring the university’s presence closer to the challenges of the territories and the community in order to identify a basin of new fruition scenarios to start a shared planning and relaunch the image of the district from the point of view cultural, economic and social. Through this project, the Politecnico di Milano has strengthened its presence in the city of Milan by taking a further step in the path of social responsibility and confirming itself as a university open to social challenges and attentive to the reality that surrounds it.

Italy, Milan

NOLO Neighborhood

Field: management of common resources

Key activities

Thanks to the “Off-Campus” project and the Nolo social district, ideas were born that over time have transformed neglected public spaces into tactical urbanism spaces. In collaboration with residents, SMEs, retailers, designers, artists different proposals were developed:

- Social solidarity services
- Radio Nolo web radio
- Yoga classes
- Gardening courses
- Walking tours
- Exhibitions
- Social media projects
- Saturday breakfast in the streets
- Co-working spaces

Key processes and practices

- continuous dialogue;
- networking;
- participatory research;
- Prototyping;
- co-design;
- design fiction

Key processes and practices

- Politecnico di Milano
- Politecnico di Milano's professors and students as free human resources
- Polisocial, the cross-departmental program dedicated to CSR, funded the project
- Municipality of Milan
- Inhabitants of the Nolo district

Italy, Milan NOLO Neighborhood



“ The success of a job is not evaluated only on the basis of its replicability. Furthermore, it is not easy to evaluate and understand the real impact of a community engagement project like that of Nolo. There are things that work because they are in that context and there are projects that can be replicable, but the latter is not an essential index of the success of the project. ”

Davide Fassi, Associate Professor at the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano.

FC United of Manchester

Problem definition

The football team was born from the belief that the game was becoming increasingly distant from the fans and that this had to change. The importance of the FC's involvement with the local community is enshrined in their club's rules: "The affairs of the club must be conducted for the benefit of the community served by the club and not for the benefit of its members". The team wanted to help the children of the community to improve themselves, to get closer to social life and to implement their skills to be able to approach the world of work.

Context

FC United of Manchester is a fan-owned, non-profit community football club based in Moston in north Manchester. In the 2005–06 season, FC United of Manchester (FCUM) was accepted into the North West Counties League for the first time. In their first three years of existence, they received three successive promotions, and for the 2015–16 season, they received a fourth promotion to play in the National League North.

Project description

The football team was born from the belief that the game was increasingly distant from the fans and that this had to change. By becoming member of the club, each individual becomes a co-owner, which costs little money, but entails to democratically equal vote on all significant club issues, including those involving the election of the eleven board members, ticket prices, membership dues, rule changes, management principles, and more. FCUM members have over time built a democratic, sustainable, successful football team that has created real and lasting benefits for local communities. Since 2005 they have created more than 100 projects based on a wide range of community areas, working on the inclusion, cohesion and education of children, adolescents and vulnerable adults.

Key activities

- Coaching sessions
- Inclusion workshops
- Healthy eating and healthy hearts sessions
- NEETs Project
- Leadership courses
- Social activities

As regards the NEETs Project, participants who successfully complete the program will receive the Level 1 Open Award in Employability and acquire beneficial job experience with the three organizations. The certification is listed on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and is nationally recognized and accredited by Ofqual.

Key processes and practices

FCUM mostly receives funding from nonprofit organizations. The FCUM is serving as a vital organization to carry out community works in the neighborhood, and this plan's economics is fully backed by reciprocity. The FCUM's overall scheme for the community works management is depicted in the figure below.

As regards the NEETs Project, FCUM worked in partnership with the MaD Theater Company, Collyhurst and the Moston Amateur Boxing Club to develop an accredited employability course. The theater company prepared courses to provide the boys with self-confidence, while the gym encouraged their physical training.



“ Football is the sport with the greatest participation and the largest audience; whether the sport is appreciated or not, it has a broader social impact and has the ability to attract the attention of people who would otherwise be difficult to reach. ”

Andy Walsh, former General Manager of FC United of Manchester.

Austria, Vienna - Grätzeleltern

Context

Vienna is a diverse city and has strongly been shaped by migration. Around 37 percent of the population have a migrant background, in some districts even more. Grätzeleltern (neighbourhood parents) are volunteers with different ethnic backgrounds who help other people in difficult life situations and develop concrete possibilities for action together with them. They are multipliers who have received a training to be able to support households – most of them with migrant or refugee background – in their arrival process and living in Vienna.

Problem definition

The process of arriving in Vienna/Austria can be difficult and challenging for many people. Questions arise such as “Where can I live? Where can my children go to school? How can I get financial support? What do I have to be aware of? Am I missing something?” Those questions are just examples and there are many more. It can be very overwhelming at first and it can be difficult to navigate where to start first. The Grätzeleltern multipliers offer low-threshold help directly in the communities and this in combination with help from professional social workers can support people in the process of arriving in Vienna.

Project description

The project has been initiated in 2012 by Caritas Neighbourhood and Community Work. Two social workers provide counselling and information sessions once a week at “Kulturhaus Brotfabrik”, a space in a former bread factory in Vienna’s 10th district which Caritas turned into a community centre with different social and cultural projects. Here multipliers and households can get further information and support. Currently Grätzeleltern are active in all of Vienna as their communities are not limited to only one neighbourhood but are spread throughout the city.

Field: Migrants integration

Key activities

- Counselling sessions – weekly information and counselling sessions held by professional social workers
- Monthly workshops based on multipliers needs and interests
- Trips
- Celebrations (for instance 10-year celebration of the project in 2022)
- Exhibitions

Since the start a growing number of volunteers has been trained to act as multipliers in their networks. Those multipliers were able to support various households and families from different communities in Vienna - among them many people with migrant or refugee background. At the moment about 35 Grätzeleltern are active.

Key processes and practices

counselling; trainings; peer to peer training; thematic workshops and excursions; continuous dialogue; networking; community activities
Reflection talk

Key stakeholders

Caritas Vienna
Volunteers/Multipliers (Grätzeleltern)
Households – families and people from different backgrounds mainly with migrant or refugee histories
Ministry of Social Affairs, Austria
Viennese Health Promotion, City of Vienna
Climate and Energy Fund, Austria
Different social institutions that cooperate for trainings, workshops and excursions as well as in regard to provide help for households in concrete difficult situations

Austria, Vienna - Grätzeleltern



“...we very often witness that, especially in the conversations with the volunteers, that the people they once supported selectively, that they then repeatedly come back, if there are somehow questions, just quick inquiries, or that they have then found access to different other groups, etc. And these are all somehow effects that we often just happen to get to know about in dialogue with the volunteers. So that's a shame, because I think they are important impacts, but it's just hard to measure.”

Barbara Eibelhuber, project leader of Grätzeleltern Caritas Vienna

“ When I came to Austria, I lacked orientation and knowledge about everyday life here. Through my voluntary work with 'Grätzeleltern' I have learned a lot myself and can now pass on my experiences to others. ”

Abeer Mohamed, Grätzeleltern Volunteer

Austria, Vienna - Sindbad Mentoring Program

Context

The purpose of the program is to help young people in the transition from compulsory schooling to an apprenticeship or secondary school. A special focus is on supporting disadvantaged young people, mainly from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The goal is that more youth finds their way into educational programs that are of value to them which makes Sindbad's approach a preventative one.

The program's duration is 12 months, so usually new mentees are 14 years old in the beginning. During those 12 months the mentees engage with their mentors and also attend workshops or other events offered and organized by Sindbad.

Problem definition

In Austria it is mandatory for children to attend school for nine years. After that time there are multiple ways those children could choose. Usually, they are 15 years old at that point which can make it very difficult to know which academic or professional is the best for them. Knowing about this issue Joseph Kap-herr, Andreas Lechner and Matthias Lovrek initiated Sindbad's mentoring program 2016 in Vienna.

Project description

As mentioned, the program started 2016 in Vienna. In the beginning there were 40 teams (40 mentors and 40 mentees) and now there are approximately 250 teams with Sindbad in Vienna. Furthermore, the program has been scaled and adapted to other federal states in Austria (all expect from Burgenland). Since the beginning until February 2022 2.432 young people were reached through the Sindbad program. 82.5% of the mentees completed the program and 83% of those 82.5% managed to get into an apprenticeship or further education. After completing the program 92% of the mentees would recommend Sindbad to a friend.

Field: Economic integration of NEETs

Key activities

- 12 months mentoring program especially for (socio-economically) disadvantaged young people
- Mentoring sessions
- Workshops for mentees and mentors
- NEETs Project
- Various (social) events

Key processes and practices

- mentoring;
- human resource management methods;
- networking;
- public relations;
- workshops;
- trainings;
- supervision

Key stakeholders

- Mentees
- Mentors
- Private investors
- Austrian Integration Fund
- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Federal states or cities
- Sindbad as a Limited Liability Company
- Vienna Department of Education
- Schools, universities, associations

Austria, Vienna - Sindbad Mentoring Program



“ And that brings me to a very important thing, which for me is actually - I think - not only important for community engagement, but it is especially important for it - that you are in a constant process of adaptation and never stop this, because society simply changes.

Gerhard Blabensteiner,
site management Sindbad Vienna

” The social added value should be that more kids get into education which they also find to be good. That is, in an education where they are in a field of work that they exercise longer, so that there is less youth unemployment.

Gerhard Blabensteiner,
site management Sindbad Vienna

Austria, Vienna

StoP – Districts without Partner violence

Context

StoP – “Stadtteile ohne Partnergewalt” [Districts without Partner violence] has been initiated by Sabine Stövesand, a German professor. She saw the need for action since every fourth woman in Germany has experienced domestic violence. In Austria the figures of partner violence and femicides are even higher, especially through a crisis like Covid-19, which clearly shows that actions are necessary.

Problem definition

StoP is a violence prevention project with the aim to develop good, non-violent neighbourhoods. The purpose of StoP, a community-oriented project, is to change attitudes so that those affected by violence no longer have to hide out of fear and shame. Neighbors should be strengthened and encouraged to be more aware and attentive to each other by showing them strategies of actions in suspected cases of partner violence.

Project description

StoP is a neighborhood project with the goal of preventing partner violence and domestic violence. Since 2019 the association “AÖF – Autonome Österreichische Frauenhäuser” [Autonomous Austrian Women’s Shelters] coordinates StoP in Margareten (Vienna’s 5th district) together with numerous project partners. Since 2021 the project has been implemented in other districts as well.

Field: Gender empowerment

Key activities

- Active surveying and educational work in different neighborhoods of Vienna (also in other parts of Austria)
- Awareness campaigns on the topic of partner violence
- Workshops for multipliers
- Exchange formats «Women’s tables» and «Men’s tables»

Key processes and practices

- networking;
- public relations;
- workshops;
- trainings for multipliers;
- social space analysis;
- active surveying;
- «women’s tables» and «men’s tables»

Key stakeholders

- Multipliers (neighbors)
- Association of Autonomous Austrian Women’s Shelters
- Ministry of Social Affairs Austria
- FOOTPRINT
- FGÖ («Fonds Gesundes Österreich»)
- Vienna Health Promotion
- Neighborhood Centers
- «Wohnpartner»

Austria, Vienna

StoP – Districts without Partnerviolence



“ StoP ‘Stadtteile ohne Partnergewalt’ [Districts without Partnerviolence] is a project that aims to prevent violence in the neighborhood and that primarily focuses on the neighbors. [...] because the basic idea is that neighbors are the first, the closest people to the victims in cases of domestic violence. ”

Clara Bauer, StoP Favoriten project manager

Romania, Ciocănari, Dâmbovița County Bio&co, Ateliere fără frontiere

Context

In Romania there are organizations that not only develop organic crops, but also combine several causes for a better world. For 13 years, Ateliere fără frontiere - AFF (No borders workshops) have been collecting used computers, refurbishing them and donating them to children from vulnerable backgrounds, transforming advertising materials into sustainable products, and more recently they have created an organic farm in Ciocănari, a village in Dâmbovița county. AFF is a Romanian non-profit association, which creates jobs for disadvantaged people in social and solidarity economy workshops / social insertion enterprises in order to prepare them for full social and professional reintegration into the conventional labour market.

Problem definition

Helping the local community to develop, but also vulnerable people to find a job, AFF produces organic vegetables at the social farm located in Ciocănari village and distributes them by weekly subscription to those who want healthy food, who sign up on <https://bio-co.ro/>

Project description

AFF has developed a social farm in a small community near Bucharest (about 40km). The NGO has developed an eco-friendly and fully bio system of farming, with vegetables having a taste of work, of dignity, of solidarity, of nature and of the land, as they advertise. Customers can subscribe for different plans, and they get a vegetable basket, delivered at various delivery points (e.g., other NGOs, healthy food providers, companies). Revenues go to the families (people) owning and gardening the land. The NGO also promotes a balanced and healthy diet for all, additionally building a solidarity program to feed the families in need and disadvantaged people with the same products. They also provide their customers with training, recipes, and lifestyle recommendations. The aim is supported through awareness-raising activities for customers and raising funds to support other projects (responsible usage of plastic, DEEE recycling and conversion, reskilling of vulnerable people) in order to increase employment, skilling, social integration etc. .

Romania, Ciocănari, Dâmbovița County Bio&co, Ateliere fără frontiere

Field: Economic integration, upskilling and reskilling of vulnerable people

Key activities

The model that those from Ateliere fără frontiere have is a working model of a social enterprise, of insertion that relates to vulnerable people who are far from the labour market. Thus, for them to reach the labour market, they are guided, they are offered a path, a transition that will help them reach the labour market:

- Planting and growing vegetables;
- Marketing of vegetables;
- Training courses for farm workers;
- Awareness campaigns;
- Career orientation sessions;
- Healthy eating sessions;
- Induction;
- Workshops;
- Study visits;

Key processes and practices

- continuous dialogue;
- guidance / mentoring, career orientation services;
- Study visits to the farm and storytelling about vegetables and healthy eating, activities related to learning the types of vegetables, seeing them, tasting them

Key stakeholders

- Municipality of Ciocănari;
- social workers;
- vulnerable adults;
- clients;
- agriculture training providers;
- Schools and students.

Romania, Ciocănari, Dâmbovița County Bio&co, Ateliere fără frontiere



“ the bio&co community is different. The people who buy lettuce grown by bio&co are among those people who come with their reusable bags to pick them up, careful to leave the boxes for the next delivery. I think the best phrase to describe the bio&co customer community would be environmental responsibility,,

The people in the community have not had that classic journey or maybe they have started it and somewhere something has occurred and ended it. And they fail to make things happen, to manage themselves so that they can get back on track. We believe that having a job, having stability in having a job, is somehow a main pillar, because if one does not have a job there are many things that you no longer have.

If one did not get an education, if one can't read or write and has children or other dependant people, the job is vital. Without the job we offer, they have nothing!

Lorita CONSTANTINESCU, project manager, Ateliere fără Frontiere.



Romania, various places

EDURIGHT4GIRLS - Equal Access to Education!

Context

The GO-AHEAD Association is a non-governmental organization founded in August 2017 whose mission is educational change (equal educational opportunities, social inclusion, increasing the quality of education). Authorized provider of training, information and professional counselling, GO AHEAD Association supports personal development and proposes an innovative concept to improve educational, professional and personal outcomes. .

Problem definition

Making education systems inclusive and connected to society requires providing the right conditions for students of different backgrounds to succeed. This goes beyond the question of offering financial support to disadvantaged groups, although this is vital for those from low-income backgrounds. EDURIGHTS4GIRLS is about helping students and creating support mechanisms so that no one is left behind. In this context, supporting girls education and women in science is of great importance and therefore some of the project's activities can be replicated in higher education institutions.

Project description

The project "EDURIGHT4GIRLS - Equal Access to Education!" is implemented by the GO-AHEAD Association as the Promoter of the funding, together with the Neamt County School Inspectorate and the Suceava School Association for Education and Development, as Partners, in the North - East development region of Romania. The general objective of the project is to increase the level of awareness and application of human rights, especially those related to gender issues and access/right to education through specific measures of personal development, counselling, therapy, benefiting at least 480 students and 210 teachers from 14 educational establishments in Neamt and Suceava counties, as well as extended actions of awareness raising, monitoring, benefiting more than 2000 people - students, parents, teachers, actors from the targeted communities.

Romania, various places

EDURIGHT4GIRLS - Equal Access to Education!

Field: Economic integration, upskilling and reskilling of vulnerable people

Key activities

- Coaching sessions;
- Counselling sessions;
- Research;
- Training;
- Ecosystem and social engagement;
- Awareness campaigns.

These activities were meant to ensure that the student body entering and graduating from European (higher) education institutions reflects the diversity of population, improved access and completion rates by disadvantaged and underrepresented groups should be targeted. Strategies, methods, and tools (digital tools included) to help disadvantaged and underrepresented students access and go on to complete higher education are a promising way of achieving these objectives.

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Key processes and practices

- Carrying out research studies on which the intervention is based;
- Engaging powerful and relevant local actors (NGOs or public institutions);
- Awareness campaigns;
- Social engagement through social media and visual methods (infographics);
- In person round tables and other advocacy events;
- Contests;
- Training, counselling, coaching;

Key stakeholders

- girls from vulnerable backgrounds;
- Teachers working with students from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Parents;
- NGOs;
- Public authorities.

Romania, various places

EDURIGHT4GIRLS - Equal Access to Education!



“

I'd like to tell you what my moto is: „It always seems impossible until it's done. You can do it so never quit! Believe and fight for your dreams!” So, to me, community engagement is a work to make the dreams come true. From a more pragmatic point of view, community engagement takes a particular way of building relationships, bonding with various partners, communicating in order to achieve goals and see results or impacts. As I said earlier, I think the world we live in has many needs. The need for education is one of them. I'm thinking more about a certain way of doing education. But to do education requires more stakeholders. And here I am thinking of teachers, parents, local authorities, civil society and students. It is in fact this ecosystem that we set in motion. The community is like a living organism in which you have to take care that all the component parts function, not just one of them. And therefore community engagement means building this awareness of community members first. This is one of the reasons why we try to involve as many stakeholders as possible in all our projects. To achieve the desired impact requires a joint, sustained effort.

Alexandra Bălșeanu, CEO, GO-Ahead Association

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Italy, Torino Fa Bene

Context

The context in which the project developed was initially that of the 2007 crisis and its resulting precariousness among different targets of the population of Turin, North Italy. The purpose was to answer to new forms of poverty with a new model of social and collective solidarity, observing that previous approaches for sustaining families in need was no longer sufficient. Another moment that was crucial was 2019 Covid pandemic not only for economic reasons but also for its impact in terms of community disgregation, especially in big Italian cities.

Problem definition

2007 crisis brought to the surface new forms of poverty and fragmentation among new targets of the population that was not usually addressed before by helping measures and the caring system. The challenge was then to answer to people's needs (primarily access to food) putting them in an active position, restoring dignity and self-esteem and not only provide for goods and services. The idea was that of re-building a system of solidarity within communities, strengthening people's capacities, reducing stigmatisation and build proximity strategies between citizens, making them protagonists of actions of civic participation, believing that reciprocity could also generate economic value and promoting circular economy.

Project description

Fa Bene.® is a system of practices, services and products that "are good" for people and their communities and which aim to generate services and economies that tend to reduce inequalities of opportunity, developing programmes of civic participation and skills development for the most fragile people in collaboration with their local community. Fa Bene is characterised from the outset by certain ingredients: food, relationships, quality, social and solidarity economy and circularity. From the very beginning, the mechanism has been that of the Pending Coffee: you go to the market, you buy for yourself and leave a paid expense for someone in your own neighbourhood. The trader, who earns more, also leaves a quantity of goods available to the project. This format spread in several city market allowing families in need to have free access to food through a solidarity chai. Not only networks and relationships born against isolation but reciprocity as value was encouraged inside communities.

Italy, Torino

Fa Bene

Field: environmental actions

Key activities

- Infopoint fa bene: in local markets, where the presence of the stands “fa bene” encourages citizenship (shoppers, schools, families) to civic participation and the right to health;
- Fa bene in ascolto: listening processes managed by volunteers to strengthen people’s capacities, reduce stigmatisation and build proximity strategies between citizens;
- Radio fa bene: a radio programme to entertain with music, stories and activities, even the most fragile people.
- Community kitchens: a set of workshops (culinary, artistic etc.), intertwined in various ways with the initiatives mentioned above that broadens opportunities for participation focusing on empowering the most vulnerable citizens, strengthening their soft skills;
- Fa bene products: a line of food products derived from social agriculture supply chains and based on circular economy and social circular and social economy processes;
- Fa bene lab training course, which offers a learning path on social innovation practices aimed at reducing social inequalities.

Key processes and practices

- Awareness-raising campaigns
- Workshops on social innovation, theory of change, circular economy
- Cultural events and actions (radio programmes and activities)

Key stakeholders

- people and families in difficulty
- traders, protagonists of actions to reduce food wastage activators of solidarity
- the citizens, who donate fresh, quality food and who feel part of a community
- local associations
- social investors (foundations and philanthropic bodies), which, by financing a project as ‘fa bene’, invest in a proximity process that generates environmental, social and economic benefits;
- the Public Administration

Italy, Torino Fa Bene



“ Giving value back to things and people, restoring dignity and importance even to a kilo of donated courgettes, can have a multiplicative effect by virtue of the reciprocity principle inherent in gratitude and recognition and gratitude. Reciprocity is above all a way of acting and a way of being. ”

Tiziana Ciampolini, founder of Fa Bene.

Italy, Milano

Ersilia - La biblioteca delle relazioni

Context

In the years preceding the project, ASF was approached by a colleague close to the housing rights movements in Milan to facilitate and participate in a process of legalisation desired by the Roma inhabitants of an occupied cantonment house in the Calvaire district, who wanted to get out of squatting. The project did not come to fruition, but some time later, a group of Roma mothers from the nomad camp in via Bonfadini in contact with that first group of inhabitants contacted ASF to intervene with initiatives in the camp. Their interest was in slum upgrading the camp, concerned for their children, who were exposed to the various conflicts and marginality present in the nomad camp and stigmatization by the surrounding residents of Calvaire.

Problem definition

The starting point of the project was the observation of a strong and clear-cut separation and social segregation between the inhabitants and families of the Via Bonfadini camp (now evacuated) and the other residents of the neighbourhood, mainly due to the absence of opportunities to meet and get to know each other and the difficulty for the camp inhabitants to tell their stories and act on the perceived social stigmatisation.

Project description

The challenge of Ersilia-Lab was to promote relationships between Roma people and their not-Roma neighbours (called Gagé, that is to say “not-Roma” in Romani tradition). After a year-long process, made of workshops, meetings, events and neighbourhood parties, ERSILIALab La Biblioteca delle Relazioni has culminated in the construction of a mobile pop-up wagon, called Il Carro di ERSILIA. The carriage has been built by Roma and Gagé neighbours all together, and it has been conceived as a public mobile space designed to share mutual knowledge. Further, it is both a physical and a social space to diffuse Romani culture not only in the neighbourhood but across the entire city of Milan. Thanks to a series of events, it has provided opportunities to create cultural relationships between Roma and Gagé.

Italy, Milano

Ersilia - La biblioteca delle relazioni

Field: minorities integration

Key activities

- Community and participatory workshops to build together the Ersilia's wagon;
- Training opportunities for people interested in working in the field of participatory planning and socio-territorial development through bottom-up capacitation paths;
- Training opportunity for people interested in acquiring technical and practical skills in the processing and assembly of wooden artefacts;

Key processes and practices

- Focus groups with the inhabitants and the different stakeholders
- Participatory architecture

Key stakeholders

- Roma community of via Bonfadini and via Sacile
- Residents of Molise-Calvairate-Ponti districts;
- Partners: Fondazione Somaschi, Casa della Carità; Otto per mille Chiesa Valdese; Fondazione Cariplo; Comune di Milano;

Italy, Milano

Ersilia - La biblioteca delle relazioni



“ ‘Doing it together’ was an important opportunity to cement relationships that would otherwise have been distrustful to begin with. ”

Giulia D'Antonio, member of Architetti Senza Frontiere

Spain, Leganes Lenguanes

Context

Leganes is a small city near Madrid whose population is increasingly becoming multi-cultural by the year. The Spanish Language and Culture program 'Lenguanés', has been created to ferry Madrileños toward a multicultural vision of their spaces. The program 'Lenguanés', in addition to working on language learning and facilitating the approach to our culture to neighbors with origins in different parts of the world, has worked on these dates on aspects such as cohesion and the construction of coexistence based on all the aspects that unite us.

Problem definition

The city of Leganes has seen, in the last year, an increase of immigrant residency. 14% of the population of Leganés was not born in Spain and many of these people face a language barrier. Migrants' integration became a priority for the Department of Education and Social Service of Leganes' City Council. Migrants' needs were several, among the others they needed to learn a new language, needed support for nationality and job applications. They needed to find their place in a new society with different rules, different language and a bit of wariness and distrust. The classes are places in which the learners can share their concerns and difficulties about integration. The ultimate purpose of Lenguanes, is to change the attitudes towards immigrants in the community of Leganes and to strengthen integrations and participation.

Project description

Lenguanes is a language and cultural program for immigrants designed by the team of intercultural area of the City Council of Leganes (Madrid). The language classes do not aim to increase immigrant employability, but rather, their integration. In addition, during the months of the course the students will participate in a wide range of different training activities in response to specific needs, such as talks, workshops, courses on foreigners and administrative procedures, institutional resources, basic computing, as well as cultural activities, excursions, visits, video-forum, etc. There are currently 30 groups open in Leganés, in which Spanish and literacy classes are given to foreigners of different nationalities living in the city.

Spain, Leganes Lenguanes

Field: migration integration

Key activities

Thanks to the Department of Education and Social Services of Leganes' City Council in collaboration with residents, and a network of associations and NGOs the "Lenguanes" project was born that over time have transformed public spaces into multicultural spaces where several activities were developed:

- Spanish Literacy class
- Cultural Integration Class
- Exhibitions
- Employability Workshop
- Focus and helping Group

Key processes and practices

- Spanish and literacy classes
- Networking
- Public Relations
- Workshops
- Trainings for multipliers
- Active surveying
- Social space analysis

Key stakeholders

- la Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR), Ciudad Escuela de los Muchachos (CEMU),
- Asociación de Madrid Dame la Mano, Asociación Entre-lenguas, Asociación ONDA de Madrid, AMPA del IES José María Pereda, Casa de Colombia en España (ACCOES), Asociación de Vecinos de San Nicasio, Asociación de Vecinos Polígono de Zarzaquemada, Casa de Rumania, Asociación Mujeres del Mundo y la Junta Municipal de Distrito de La Fortuna.
- University Carlos III of Madrid, Autonomia University of Madrid, University Complutense, IES Salvador Dalí-Grado
-
- Neighborhood centers,
-
- Volunteers from other association and universities

Spain, Leganes Lenguanes



“ Our idea of community engagement is to hold responsible the entire community for the integration of the immigrants. So that everyone does their part, and everyone is an active agent. ”

Santiago Elvías, Project Manager of Lenguanes

Spain, Madrid

No Deje Nadie Atras

Context

“No dejes a nadie atrás (Leaves no one behind)” is an initiative that aims at generating spaces for activism at the University around forced displacement, migration and the fight against racism and xenophobia, in line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

Funded by the Spanish Cooperation Agency (AECID) and carried out since January 2022 in seven university communities, the project proposes different awareness-raising, training and mobilisation actions aimed at promoting active and responsible university citizenship at the university.

Problem definition

“We invite you to embark on a journey to learn about the experiences of nine people who have lived through the consequences of forced displacement. Their path could be yours. Just like their voices, their attachments and their dreams for the future. Extraordinary and at the same time very common stories that demonstrate the capacity of many refugees to reinvent themselves every day despite the difficulties.”

The cycle of seminar is based on such immersive perspective. During the program the student will try to tackle and debunk the prejudice and preconcept about who are refugees? who are environmentally displaced persons? The main goal, in finding answer to these questions, is to promote participation as a transformative element, an element that puts people at the center in their process of building activism. In this process student and university communities becomes agents of changes.

Project description

The project has six universities involved, which are Complutense, Carlos III, University of Zaragoza, University Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, University de Murcia, the Polytechnic University of Valencia. The project is already in its first phase of implementation and it is more or less halfway through.

The project has four spheres of action: outreach activities, cooperative conceptual framework, activism workshop, volunteering activities.

The initial idea of change that the Committee want to bring about is related to the concept of co-responsibility, of cohesion of purpose among the various organizations participating in these projects

Spain, Madrid

No Deje Nadie Atras

Field: global citizenship

Key activities

- Coaching sessions
- Inclusion workshops
- Leadership courses
- Social activities

The Spanish Committee of Acnur plays the roles of promoter and organizer of course and seminars for university students on global citizenship and refugees' integration. The committee collaborates with different universities, which within themselves host different office like the office of volunteerism, of diversity and the teaching office. The working group usually start their work with a participatory diagnostic exercise to detect the level of xenophobic attitude within the university.

Key processes and practices

- Workshops
- Trainings for multipliers
- Outreach activities
- Chatbox seminars

Key stakeholders

- Universidad de Zaragoza,
- Universidad Carlos III de Madrid,
- Universidad Complutense de Madrid,
- Universidad Politécnica de Valencia,
- Universidad Las Palmas de Gran Canaria,
- Universidad de Murcia.

Spain, Madrid

No Deje Nadie Atras



“ The strategy we put the focus on the idea of co-responsibility, and on the idea that inclusion systems for refuge are not simply the responsibility of those who organize them or those who are the beneficiaries of them, but they are an issue that goes much further and actually implicates all of us

Annalisa Maitilasso, Project Manager.

Cyprus, Nicosia Gardens of the Future

Context

The Gardens of the Future concept emerged from questions raised, to which the founding members attempted to find innovative solutions that were directly related to the project's objectives. What exactly does it mean to run a green business? What can we do in the heart of a city to bring people of various cultures, ages, social and economic backgrounds together? How can we teach these people to "grow" their own food in their gardens or in a community garden? The Gardens of the Future entered competitions that provided them with the financial resources to get started in order to bring their ideas to life. They came in second place overall in the Global Climathon Awards. Furthermore, Gardens of the Future was labeled one of the 1000 best ideas for combating climate change in 2020. Gardens of the Future also won the Pusula Campaign after a public vote.

Problem definition

Nicosia used to have an abundance of water, wells, orchards, and gardens, but as with many other cities, this has changed as a result of urbanisation. The Garden of the Future was created to encourage local production, a very current and difficult issue for the city's urban development, in order to create a culture of sustainable development and collectively promote a new urban identity with a social, environmental, and economic dimension.

Project description

Gardens of the Future is a social and environmental innovation project, specifically it aims to be a network of urban spaces, kickstarting in Nicosia and expanding across Cyprus. The project's aims are to establish zero-waste and circular economy premises in the heart of Nicosia, empower locals to become agro-entrepreneurs, educate youth on open source technologies, process waste to produce new construction materials, and build sustainable communities that foster social and economic development. This project was founded on the values of community building, circular economy, and agro-entrepreneurship.

Cyprus, Nicosia

Gardens of the Future

Field: a network of communal gardens in cities

Key activities

Gardens of the Future aims to become a zero-waste hub, in other words a sustainable role model. The project's activities, however, are not only focused on gardening, but also on how to achieve prosperity in cities. To accomplish this, the project has been divided into three phases:

- Building communities– Sharing experiences in a communal garden enables us to welcome everyone regardless of age, gender, religion, or ethnicity, to embrace our social differences, and to facilitate the exchange of ideas and practices of care and hospitality.
- Circular economy– The garden's design becomes an ambassador for innovative techniques in responsible farming, resulting in a dynamic urban food sharing ecosystem.
- Agro-entrepreneurship: The garden's goal is to be a social hub in the city while also creating new job opportunities in the neighborhood and beyond. Assisting locals in learning how to create their own gardens, grow their own food, and open doors to economic freedom through agricultural activities.

Key processes and practices

- Working collaboratively;
- Consider the existing diversity in the group;
- Show empathy and generosity;
- Development of partnerships and coalitions that help mobilise resources and influence policy systems;
- Must dedicate resources such as time, funding, and people with the necessary skills

Key stakeholders

- Volunteers
- Policy makers
- NGOs
- Private organisations

Cyprus, Nicosia Gardens of the Future



“ Embracing a circular economy approach, we promote the philosophy of building from ‘waste’ and practice the loop of recycle – reuse – reduce ”

“ Remember when Nicosia had an abundance of water, wells, orchards & gardens? Imagine reviving this feeling by creating a lush, green paradise in the heart of Nicosia for everyone ”

“ The garden’s aim is to be a social hub in the city and create new work opportunities for the neighbourhood and beyond. ”

Cyprus, Nicosia

HUB NICOSIA - NEUEYT

Context

The NEUEYT project aims at developing a Framework of blended initiatives that will promote the active citizenship and democratic participation of young people, who feel particularly underrepresented in policy making decisions and/or live in remote/rural areas with limited access to learning opportunities. Special attention will be given on the digital approach of the newly developed participation processes to reduce the gap among the invisible youth.

Problem definition

Despite widespread use of the internet, social media, and digital communication tools, a common phenomenon and resulting need can be identified across Cyprus and Europe as a lack of active participation of young people in democratic life. The first issue is one of accessibility: young people in rural and peripheral areas may face limitations due to a lack of connectivity. Second, recent studies show an increasing digital divide in terms of effective internet use: it is possible to identify a limited exploitation of the potential of digital tools by young users who appear to struggle in being able to transform the possibilities offered by digital tools into opportunities that improve their lives. In this regard, there is a growing need for digital skills to manage the internet. Furthermore, a lack of “political education” can be attributed to rising phenomena such as a lack of civic engagement, passive behavior, a lack of critical thinking, and populism.

Project description

The NEUEYT methodology focuses on the active involvement of youngsters and policy makers to the activities in local communities, thus engaging them from the research to the piloting phases, and from the development of the policy recommendations to the feedback given to the initiatives of the framework. Action research, co-creation, and community development principles will guide this approach.

Cyprus, Nicosia

HUB NICOSIA - NEUEYT

Field: active citizenship and democratic participation

Key activities

The project created a NOVEL Framework with 8 suggested actions that are transferable and replicable in other contexts.

- Self advocacy influences
- Part-me
- Roadmap to digital youth council
- Pinpointed
- Silent debate
- Voice up
- We & Us Panel
- 6 steps to participation in civic and democratic processes

Key processes and practices

- Working collaboratively;
- Respect others' opinion;
- Consider the existing diversity in the group;
- Show empathy and generosity;
- Development of partnerships and coalitions that help mobilise resources and influence policy systems, change relationships among partners;
- Must dedicate resources such as time, funding, and people with the necessary skills

Key stakeholders

- Young people
- Policy makers in the field of youth policy
- Local communities
- Municipalities

Cyprus, Nicosia

HUB NICOSIA - NEUEYT



“ Community engagement is one of the most successful processes and strategies in order to involve the public in problem solving or decision-making and use public input to make decisions. ”



“ The fact that we went to the community, established relationships, built trust, worked with the formal and informal leadership, and sought commitment from community organizations and leaders to create processes for mobilizing the community, created trust in the project and the process. ”

APPENDIXES

1	Informed consent form.....	60
2	Interview protocol.....	61
3	Final form of the Community Engagement case.....	62
4	List of other projects that were considered for analysis.....	63

Appendixes

The three documents that were utilized during the interviews are included in the following pages.

Informed Consent Form

Date ___ / ___ / _____

Name of participant _____

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project.

This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation.

	YES	NO
I agree to take part in the interview		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason		
I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me. All or part of the content of my interview may be used in academic papers, policy papers or news articles		

Signing this form is to approve the following:

- ✓ the interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced
- ✓ access to the interview transcript will be limited to students, academic colleagues and researchers with whom they might collaborate as part of the research process
- ✓ any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed
- ✓ I also understand that my words may be quoted directly
- ✓ I don't expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation
- ✓ I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

I confirm that I have read and understand the above information sheet for the workshop and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Signature

Interview Protocol

Before the interview, you need to have the HECSOs Interview Informed Consent filled in and signed by the interviewee and interviewer. The interview must be recorded and transcribed into English. The duration of each interview must be specified at the top of each transcription.

Interview questions should include (but are not limited to) the following:

QUESTIONS	COMMENTS FOR INTERVIEWER
Please tell me briefly about you and your present and past experience in community engagement.	<i>Ask to describe the organization(s) and/or project(s)</i>
Please let us pick a community engagement case that you think is particularly significant and tell me about its initial purpose and its final results.	<i>Ask to describe the composition of the community, and the expected benefits and beneficiaries of the community engagement action.</i>
Who were the main stakeholders in the case? Were all of them aware of and interested in what they had at stake? How and why did their beliefs, discourses, feelings, postures and behaviours evolve? Can you identify relevant conflicts or events?	<i>Try to draw a timeline with the main trends, patterns and turning points of the case evolution</i>
Who were the organizations and/or groups of people that were active in the process of community engagement? Can you identify and comment on leadership roles?	<i>Try to draw a map of the stakeholders with the interviewee, identifying the most active/passive ones and their respective beliefs, feelings, behaviors, interactions</i>
What were the beliefs/feelings/behavior or other factors that threatened the community and why? What has been done against these threats? With which consequences?	<i>Try to get concrete examples</i>
What skills, capabilities, organizational capital, and human resources (and possible mismatches) were key in the process?	<i>Try to get concrete examples</i>
In your opinion, what are the main pros and cons of the community engagement practices and techniques that were activated in this case? Should other practices and techniques have been adopted?	
In your opinion, what are the key quantitative indicators that have been considered in this community engagement initiative? Do you think that other indicators should be considered? What are the main problems in monitoring, managing and reporting about the impacts of the community engagement action?	
How could we get access to further information on this case?	<i>Try to get information about further interviewees, websites, reports, databases, videos, field notes...</i>
Please feel free to share your experience, thoughts and feelings on community engagement, even beyond the previous questions.	

Final form of the Community Engagement case

No word count limits! Please try to be concise but feel free to include all of the information that you think is relevant. Please save this file with the Case name listed in the first line of the table below.

Case name (Name of the organization / community / project under analysis)	
Area(s) of community engagement action(s) observed (e.g. EU citizenship, gender gap reduction, migrant integration...)	
Location (country and city)	
Short description of the community engagement purpose and context	
Community engagement initiative's results: is this a (partial) success? What has (not) been achieved?	
Key processes and practices observed	
List and short description of the stakeholders of the community engagement action (please synthesize the posture, power and behaviour of each stakeholder)	
Key ideas/notes from the case investigation (please be creative and feel free to share your thoughts!)	
List of the interviews conducted (with number of minutes for each interview and the name and/or role of interviewees). Please mark with an asterisk (*) the interviews that in your opinion are particularly important/interesting, You may also add some keywords/notes for the most important interviews.	
Additional material retrieved/developed (e.g. reports, field notes) (please provide a copy in the case material folder)	
Minimum 3 relevant quotes	
Minimum 3 pictures of the project in high resolution	
Case Proponent (Name of the HECSOs partner proposing the case)	
Case investigator(s) (Name of the people who collected the information and/or filled in this form)	
This form has been filled in on... (date).	

Case name/title	Name of the organisation implementing the case	Country
Socrates CEU	CEU	Austria
Lokale Agenda 21	Caritas Vienna	Austria
Community Cooking	Caritas Vienna	Austria
Start with a friend Austria	SWaF	Austria
FoodX Wien	FoodX	Austria
Riverwatch	Riverwatch Vienna	Austria
Laaerberg Bauer*innen	Verein LaaerBergBauerInnen	Austria
PEPPA Mädchenzentrum	Caritas Vienna	Austria
SToP Favoriten (auch in anderen Stadtteilen)	Stadtteile ohne Partnerschaftsgewalt	Austria
Die Villa	Türkis Rosa Lila Villa	Austria
Maiz	Unabhängiger Verein Maiz Linz	Austria
reStart	Caritas Vienna	Austria
Wärmestuben	Caritas Vienna	Austria
Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus	Citizens In Power & CARDET	Cyprus
Europe4All	Hub Nicosia	Cyprus
Urban Sustainability	AKTI	Cyprus
Enalia Physis	Enalia Physis	Cyprus
New ABC	SYNTHESIS	CYPRUS
MiHub	CARDET, University of Nicosia, and Cyprus University of Technology	Cyprus
HEARTWARMING FOOD	Caritas Denmark	Denmark
EUSTEPS	AUTH	Greece
Ethexis - Volunteers of the University of Patras	University of Patras	Greece
ALL-IN: Pathways to belonging: From intercultural dialogue to social inclusion	Municipalities' Union of Dytiki Makedonia Region	Greece
DEVOTE: Developing the competencies of teachers to integrate students from migrant	UTH	Greece
The Garden with People (Grădina cu oameni)	CismiCivic	Romania
Gardens of Solidarity	Caritas Italy	Italy
Programa Global Challenge	Ongawa	Spain
Socio Economic Integration	Movimiento por la Paz	Spain
Green Urban Data	Green Urban Data	Spain

Green Routes - Learning about sustainable trends in European cities	UTH	Greece
EnvironmentYou - Environmental Management Enhancement by Youth-run SMEs	Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia	Greece
FFEM - Fostering female entrepreneurship mindset	UTH	Greece
Coordination in Support for Integration	Municipality of Athens	Greece
Skyros Project	University of West Attica / Port of skyros	Greece
American College of Greece - Community Engagement	America College of Greece	Greece
Refugees Welcome Italia	Refugees Welcome Italia	Italy
DRIS	Eccom Italia	Italy
A Green Square for Sant'Andrea	KCity	Italy
Comunità Energetica di Magliano delle Alpi	<u>Comune di Magliano delle Alpi</u>	Italy
Orti Generali Mirafiori	Associazione Coefficiente Clorofilla	Italy
Consorzio ABN	Borgorette/ Perugia	Italy
Roots Modena	Association for The Integration of Women	Italy
D-Hub Atelier	D-Hub Atelier	Italy
Altretterre	Mondo Donna Onlus Bologna	Italy
Open Space	Action Aid	Italy
Generazione Boomerang	Distretto Sociale di mantova / Fondazione Cariplo	Italy
Segni di Futuro	Fondazione Cariplo	Italy
Intrecciati Solidarity Network	Caritas Italy	Italy
Colori Vivi - Social Enterprise	Colori Vivi	Italy
Food Pride	Associazione Eufemia	Italy
Rete delle Portinerie di Comunità	RETE ITALIANA DI CULTURA POPOLARE APS	Italy
Clever Cities	https://clevercities.eu/the-partners/	Italy, others
No Neet - Comunità di Capodarco	Comunità di Capodarco	Italy
The Migrant Home		Romania
Climate and citizenship	Ayuda en Acción	Spain
Educación para la Ciudadanía Global (EpCG)	ACNUR	Spain
Youth 4 Tree	Iroko	Spain
GREENER TOGETHER	Greater London Authority	UK
NEETS in Action	The Tavistock Institute	UK

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