

VOICE

Volunteer Organizations' Input
to Community Education



VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS INPUT ON COMMUNITY EDUCATION



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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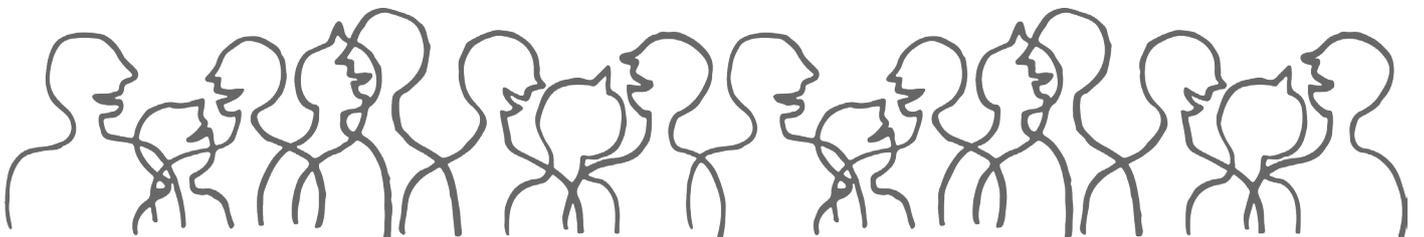


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INTRODUCTION



Community education promotes learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods. Community education is significant for local social, economic, cultural, environmental and political development.

Volunteer centers, intercultural centers as well as neighborhood centers are important providers of community education in a local context. In dialogue with their communities and participants they develop non-formal education and training opportunities as well as a variety of volunteer programs and activities. Through these learning, training and volunteer activities they support the capacity building of individuals and groups of all ages and backgrounds and improve their ability to participate in democratic processes. As their scope is much broader and less formal than educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities, they reach large sections of the population, and therefore are taking out learning and development opportunities to socio-economically disadvantaged individuals and poorer areas within their communities.

6 volunteer organisations from Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, and Romania started the project “Volunteer Organizations’ Input to Community Education (VOICE)” under the EU-programme Erasmus+. Within this project partners explored the community education approach practiced by volunteer centers, intercultural centers as well as neighborhood centers, and exchanged their expertise in providing non-formal learning and training opportunities for their communities.

As a result of this project they created this E-Book with an input about community education, practical tips on implementation of community education in local communities, the role and success factors of volunteer/neighbourhood/intercultural centers as important providers of community education as well as a good practice collection of learning and training programs offered by the involved partners.

Hopefully this EBook will be an inspiration to other volunteer organisations using and taking up our findings and recommendations. We want to encourage others to use, copy and implement our results and start their own community education programme.



INVOLVED ORGANISATIONS

- **Gemeinsam leben & lernen in Europa, Passau (Germany)**
www.gemeinsam-in-europa.de
- **Intergenerational and Volunteer Center TOTEM, Pilsen (Czech Republic)**
<http://en.totemplzen.cz/>
- **Stadtlabor Graz, Graz (Austria)**
<http://www.stadtlaborgraz.at/>
- **Intercultural Center of Kuopio (Finland) Kuopion Settlementti Puijola ry, Moni-
kulttuurikeskus Kompassi**
www.puijola.net/kompassi
- **Centrul de Voluntariat Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca (Romania)**
www.centruldevoluntariat.ro
- **Auróra / Marom Budapest (Hungary),**
<https://auroraonline.hu/civil-szervezet/marom/?lang=en>



CHAPTER I

COMMUNITY EDUCATION



WHAT IS COMMUNITY EDUCATION?

Community education (CE, also known as community-based education or community learning and development) is a process whose main goal it is to sustain communities through education and learning. CE promotes learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities, using a range of formal and informal methods. CE advocates and supports the creation of innovative programmes and activities, as well as the collaboration between all members of a community.

CE is for everyone and involves people of all ages and backgrounds. Its underlying idea is that by educating all members of a community, one can reach a better quality of life and a more cohesive society. CE improves not only the capacity of individuals and groups of all ages but also the capacity and sustainability of communities. In CE it is fundamental to detect the potential and the existing resources of a community and to use them in order to empower its members for the benefit of the community as a whole. CE is rooted in the idea that people can learn through, with, and from each other to create a “better world” through a better community.

CE programmes and activities are usually developed when a specific need or problem is detected within the local community, and members of it (local citizens, organisations, or institutions) address these through education.

Community Education can cover a wide variety of learning activities and various types of educational programmes that are open to all community members.

“During the process of writing an Erasmus+ proposal, I did some research on the kinds of training and learning opportunities that European NGOs offer to their volunteers. I accidentally came across the word ‘Community Education’, which resonated with me immediately. I quickly discovered that this is exactly what we do in our organisation, and I got interested in finding out more about it. I found it so powerful that I initiated the VOICE project, so that other NGOs could learn more about this concept and share their ideas in order to improve the services they offer in their local communities.

Our NGO provides trainings for volunteers engaged in various fields on local level: language mentoring for migrants, project management in volunteer projects, communication training, and much more. We also give volunteers the opportunity to share their knowledge, skills and expertise with others.”

Perdita Wingerter, managing director of “Gemeinsam leben & lernen in Europa“, Germany and coordinator of the VOICE Erasmus+ project



PRINCIPLES AND FORMS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community Education is based on the following principles:

- **CE is participatory and democratic:** it aims to create a participatory and democratic learning culture that incorporates principles and practices of respect, mutual support, inclusiveness, lifelong learning, skill building, self-appreciation, entrepreneurship, and leadership development. CE is non-hierarchical and invites the participation of any member of a community. The participatory principle also implies that community members actively shape the CE programmes they take part in and feel responsible for their success.
- **CE works on the basis of equality and inclusiveness:** everyone in the community is welcome to get involved. For that reason CE activities are often free of charge so that they may be accessible to people from socially disadvantaged groups. Community Education aims to include all members of the community in its different activities, and through that helps to build networks and friendships between groups which otherwise might not have come in touch with each other. This social exchange strengthens the community as a whole as it leads to a more open-minded and inclusive group dynamic.
- It is crucial that the events and projects of Community Education respond to **actual needs and wishes of the community**. Thus, CE programmes and activities often start at grass-roots level and are closely linked to everyday realities.
- **CE promotes self-help:** the goal of its learning processes is not primarily to raise participants' factual knowledge, but rather to help them acquire competences which are useful for them throughout their life. Participants will be able to find the factual knowledge they need on their own and to conceive it critically.
- **Self-determination is the key in Community Education:** CE does not force learners to follow a specific curriculum, but it allows them to voice their concerns and to learn what they consider relevant knowledge and skills.
- **Partnership building is crucial for CE:** the creation of collaborations on local but if necessary also on regional, national or international level is highly important. It is crucial



to build partnerships with relevant individuals, groups and institutions (education, government, business, service organisations, neighborhoods, families, philanthropy, social and civic organisations).

- **CE avoids hierarchies but also promotes leadership skills:** some CE activities may be led by “experts”, but overall, hierarchies are avoided and learning mainly takes peer to peer approach. But CE programmes and activities can also support leadership development: through learning, individuals gain skills and competences to lead local initiatives and local development.

OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

- To provide community members with practical skills that are directly relevant to them
- To build communities that are inclusive and proactive
- To empower (disadvantaged) community members by encouraging them to participate in community development and political decisions
- To encourage civic engagement by activating passive members of the community and by supporting those who are already active
- To promote dialogue and collaborations between various groups (social, religious, age) within local communities and institutions



BENEFICIARIES OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Beneficiaries of CE are the communities as a whole, and more specifically those who are disadvantaged or discriminated against socially, politically or in any other way. Anybody who participates in CE programmes and activities will benefit from them by acquiring new skills, competences and factual knowledge or simply by getting connected with other people they have not known before. If CE programmes and activities address personal needs, interests or values, the individual benefits of each participant are clearly visible.

RELEVANT PROVIDERS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Providers of CE can be governmental or non-governmental organisations as well as individuals and groups. Volunteer organisations, volunteer centers, neighborhood-help centers, (inter) cultural centers and youth centers are important providers of CE, next to cultural groups, sports or music clubs, and religious organisations. National or local governmental organisations may also be involved in the provision of CE programmes and activities or can give financial support to non-governmental CE providers.

FORMS OF LEARNING IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Learning and teaching methods in Community Education differ from the educational approach of formal institutions, such as high schools, vocational schools, universities and the like. There are many specific terms for describing different types of learning. One distinction is that between formal, informal, and non-formal learning. A definition of these types of learning is provided, for example, by the Council of Europe (COE) and by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (see end of chapter for sources). According to these definitions, the types of learning can be described as follows:

Formal learning is mainly encouraged in educational institutions such as schools, vocational schools, and universities. Formal learning is seen as intentional from the perspective of the learner. This means, it is clearly defined what students should learn and if this learning objective is met, students have usually made a conscious effort to do so and have not picked up knowledge incidentally.

The learning process is highly structured: it follows a prescribed syllabus which often leaves little room for adapting learning contents to the specific interests or needs of individuals. Learn-



ing outcomes are usually measured by formal assessments.

In contrast to this, informal learning does not involve a conscious learning process with specified aims. Instead, it is a form of learning by experience that takes place unconsciously in all kinds of situations, both within and outside of the context of formal education.

Non-formal learning combines elements of both formal and informal learning. It usually takes place outside of educational institutions and participants consciously try to achieve a particular learning objective (such as learning a type of sport or an instrument).

However, formal assessments are not necessary and the learning process does not have to follow a prescribed syllabus. This means that activities can be tailored more specifically to the needs and interests of the participants.

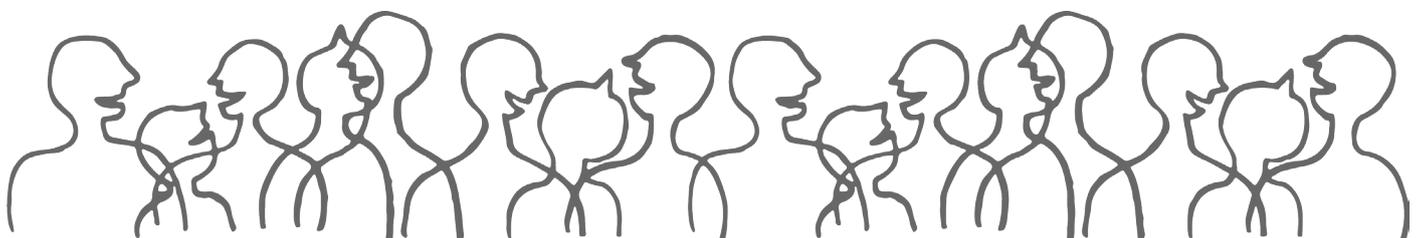
CE activities focus on non-formal and informal learning approaches. They encourage “practical” learning, which means that participants learn not only by observation but mainly by active involvement. As a complement to the knowledge gained in formal education, CE participants experience new types of learning methods and make new experiences.

You do not have to use the classifications

outlined above to give an exact description of your CE activities. In fact, there is no complete consensus on the definitions of the three categories, and your CE projects might not fit neatly into either of them. You could use a relatively structured learning approach, for example in a language class, but participants will still pick up things that were not explicitly part of the learning objectives (such as intercultural competence, organisational skills or self-confidence).

But being aware of different types of learning can be useful if you want to define the value of your CE activities more clearly. CE projects can offer advantages that formal education does not have. These include, for example, the ability to respond to participants’ individual needs and to give them responsibility for shaping learning contents and processes.

Also, CE programmes can consolidate the knowledge participants acquire in formal contexts and help them to apply it in their everyday life. For example, if migrants learn the language of their new country in a formal setting, non-formal CE programmes can give them the opportunity to apply their skills in a more relaxed setting, to become more confident in their use of the language and to uphold and improve their skills in the long term.



RELEVANCE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community Education is highly relevant to the development of the local community as a whole and for the integration and empowerment of disadvantaged or marginalized groups in particular. Formal education often fails to discuss the specific needs of minorities, and in many cases these minorities lack access to and representation in the educational system. Because of this, many social problems arising in local communities cannot be addressed in the context of formal education. Community Education aims to give a voice to all members of the community and it tries to overcome the social or economic barriers that tend to exclude minorities from formal education. The main attraction of CE is that it creates a vibrant atmosphere and that it can adjust both to the needs of the community and to a quickly changing field of learning, using a variety of educational methods during its activities.

Community Education is crucial to the process of political empowerment and active citizenship. Sharing one's experiences can create a sense of belonging, and if community members know each other personally, they might feel more responsible towards each other and for the well-being of the community as a whole. Ideally, this includes that community members become more active politically,

for example by using their right to vote.

TYPES OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

Community Education can include countless types of learning programmes and activities. Some examples are:

- Short events and one-off events (such as visits to places of interest like broadcasting institutions, publishing houses, small family-led businesses...)
- Regular meetings with different activities (book discussion clubs, music or sports clubs, language clubs, religious group meetings...)
- Simulation games on different themes and situations (political or economic decision making, conflict management, teambuilding sessions...)
- Quiz games
- Workshops or volunteer trainings with short lectures and presentations
- Cultural activities (theatre games, choirs, art clubs, visits to the theatre or to exhibitions and museums...)
- Other group activities such as urban gardening or neighborhood breakfasts



RESOURCES NEEDED FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Various resources are necessary for providing CE activities.

First of all, human resources are needed. Activities and projects can only be established if there are people with ideas, know-how and motivation (see chapter 2). Experts, coordinators and volunteers have to use their energy, their competences and their existing networks in the community.

Second, material resources have to be acquired. This includes physical spaces where activities can take place and the different types of materials that are needed for these activities (such as writing utensils, kitchen equipment, sports equipment, musical instruments, material for arts and crafts activities).

In order to acquire these materials, funding is required. Strategies of fund-raising can be diverse (see chapter 2). They could include the collection of donations from private persons or from larger organisations and co-operations, or they could involve selling products (such as food and drink) before or during community activities.

And of course, time is also an essential resource for planning, implementing, and maintaining different activities.

CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

In the process of implementing CE projects, you might face different challenges. Often, volunteer organisations struggle with funding, and without sufficient financial support, the result is material resources are hard to provide. However, CE programmes may be very diverse and many of them require almost no material resources. If you have an idea and a few people who are willing to give some time to implement it, you can often realise projects with very little financial means. Also, if you need material resources, it is always worth asking people if they can donate something or just lend you equipment for an event. People might not become aware of your projects on their own, but if you become active and ask them for support, this can really make a huge difference!

Sometimes it may be difficult to find out what types of activities are wanted or needed in a community. You might have a great idea, but there is no actual demand for this particular type of project in your area. If you do not have the time or the means to conduct a large-scale needs assessment, your best chance might just be to try something out and see if it works.

Once you have identified a need and set



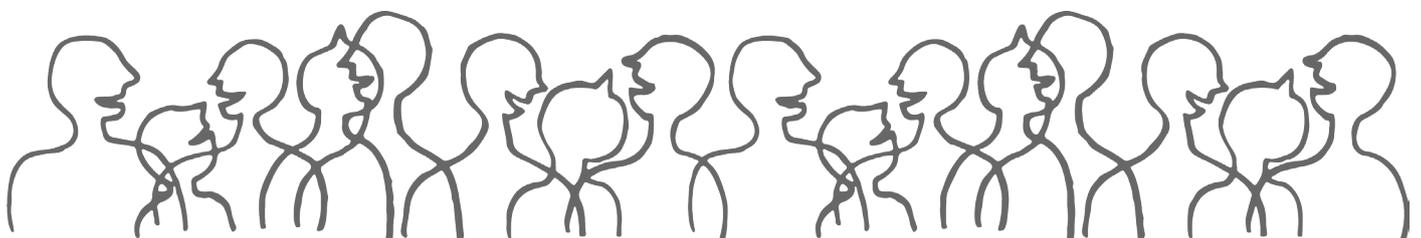
up a project, you have to make people aware of it and activate your target group. Good promotion is the key: you should use different media and channels of communication (e. g. word of mouth, newspapers, flyers, newsletters, social media) to see how you can best reach your target group (see chapter 4). Often, people are more likely to come to an event if you invite them personally.



This is also linked to another challenging but highly important aspect of CE projects: networking. It is very helpful to have a large network of volunteers and potential “experts” who can support you in your projects. If you have only recently established your projects or your organisation, then it might take a while to establish such a network, but it will definitely be worth it. Once you have built a network of supporters, it is important that you keep in touch with them and keep them motivated. For example, you can keep them informed about the success of your projects or you can offer activities where they can make small contributions without having to spend a substantial amount of time.

An additional challenge is finding a good balance between offering activities but at the same time making participants themselves feel responsible for these projects. It is much better not to present participants with a completely planned event, but to actively involve them in shaping different activities.

And finally, it is crucial that everyone involved stays realistic with their goals and expectations. It is great to have big plans – in fact, you might say that you need to have big dreams if you want to bring about positive changes. But you have to realise where you can start with this change – and this might mean starting small. If your goals are too vast and too loosely defined, then both your project organisers and your participants are likely to become frustrated. Thus, you should start by setting yourself concrete, achievable goals. If your project proves to be successful and you find enough volunteers who would like to stay involved, you can still extend your activities later.



EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

To make Community Education successful, an evaluation of its activities is crucial. Ideally, both short- and long-term impacts should be measured to find out if projects have really met the needs of community members and have had a positive impact on the community.

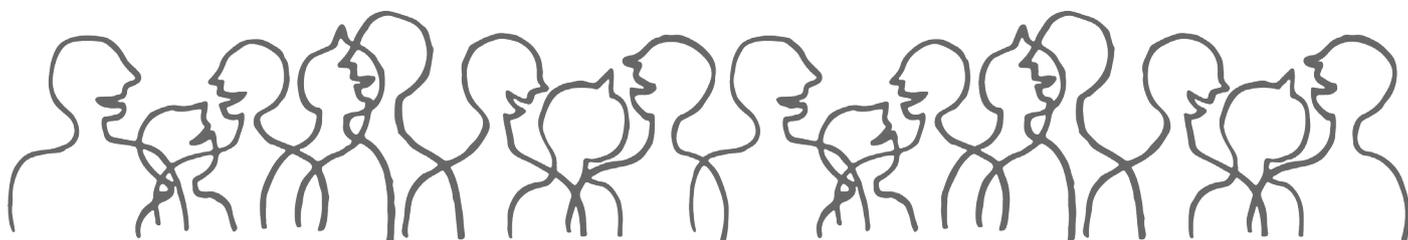
The best and easiest way to evaluate a project is by talking to people. If participants do not want to give personal feedback, you could use anonymous questionnaires, which can work either online or offline. In other situations, questionnaires might not be appropriate. For example, when you are working with children or young adults, they might be too formal as a method of evaluation, and when you are working with migrants, they might be problematic because of the language barrier.

Overall, it is good to ask for feedback frequently. This way, you can find out how participants became aware of the project, why they participate, if they talk about the project on social media, if there are any other activities they would like to attend etc. Also, it is important that all of the groups involved can give feedback, that is, both the providers and the participants of CE activities.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

CE has many benefits for learners: it allows them to make new experiences, to gather information about different topics, and to practice their interpersonal “soft skills”. The different projects give participants the opportunity to socialize, to have fun, and to make new friends across the community. More privileged community members can better understand the problems of marginalized groups, and these less privileged groups can hopefully feel and be more integrated in their community.

Finally, participating in Community Education can be highly motivating and rewarding because people from all backgrounds feel that they are able to do something to strengthen their community.



RESULTS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community Education can have very positive results. They may include:

- Community members who have developed new interests, skills, and competences that they truly value.
- Proactive and empowered community members who feel responsible for shaping their community on a social and political level.
- A better integration and empowerment of minorities.
- Open-minded communities with a positive view of multiculturalism, which means not just mere passive tolerance but real dialogue, cooperation, care, and friendships across cultural groups.
- Solutions to problems and tensions in the community have been found together.
- A greater awareness on the benefits of Community Education has developed in the community.

SOURCES

<https://www.aontas.com/community/community-education-network>

<http://innoveedu.org/trends>

<http://edglossary.org/community-based-learning/>

<http://www.communityeducation-eu.eu/>

<http://www.donegalvec.ie/documents/english/COMMUNITY-EDUCATION.pdf>

TYPES OF LEARNING

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/formal-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/recognitionofnon-formalandinformallearning-home.htm>



CHAPTER II

IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROJECT



COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

In implementing Community Education projects one needs to think of two main aspects, the need in the community and availability or possibility to secure the required funds.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As said in the first chapter, CE programmes and projects are rooted in unanswered needs of a community. Thus, it is quite logical that the planning of a CE project starts with the identification of a specific need or possibility in a community.

e.g. **Need identified through personal experience:** a mother is looking for activities for her 7 year old child in a specific neighbourhood and she does not find any

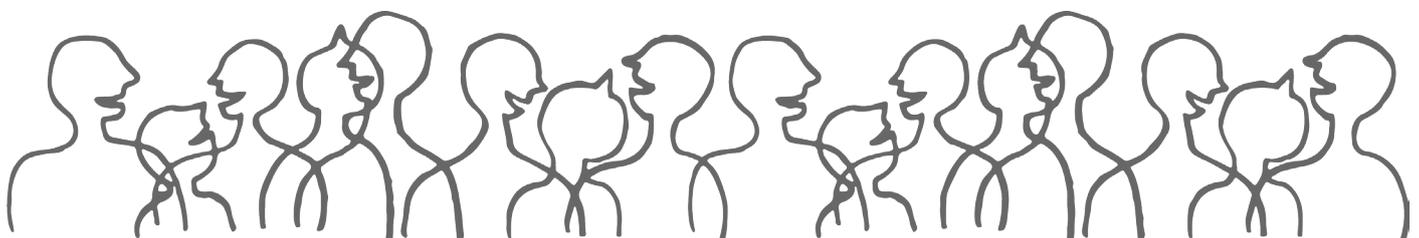
e.g. **Possibility identified through personal experience:** someone sees / hears that there is a lot of food thrown away in some restaurants, and it could be given to people in need

HOW DO WE IDENTIFY THE NEEDS OF A COMMUNITY?

Needs and possibilities can be identified in many ways:

- through **personal experiences** (because we notice the lack of something or, on the contrary, because we are inspired by a good example of a similar community)
- through **communication** with the members of the community (personal discussion, social media, emails, letters, surveys, etc.)
- derived from published **scientific research** about a specific community
- coming from a **vision / creativity** of members of a community

e.g. The “10-10-10 project” by GLL identified the need of new immigrants for practical, peer-to-peer language learning (and intercultural learning) in a relaxed setting.



Yet there are many CE projects that educate the community through their project design. For example, a restaurant offers their leftover food for a local NGO that distributes it among people in need. In this case, there are various participants of the community that learn different things:

- the restaurant learns how to be part of a society that shows solidarity and values recycling.
- the people who are in need learn about the specific segments of the society that are open and supportive.
- the volunteers of the organisation learn that, through grass roots projects they can fight social problems (e.g. poverty) and connect needs and resources.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

After identifying the need, it is important to identify stakeholders.

Stakeholders can be defined as those who are interested in, concerned about, affected by, have a vested interest in, or are involved in some way with the issue.

e.g. GLL examined which part of the population may be able to provide language mentoring for immigrants. They decided to work with young, German

volunteers, who have the linguistic skills and are open and committed to helping new immigrants.

Target group

- Whom are we targeting with our project?
- What are the characteristics of this group?

e.g. On the one hand, new immigrants were chosen because of the organisation mission, on the other hand, the volunteers were people who were interested in spending their time and sharing their skills, and who were able to commit to 10 sessions. In this example, both immigrants and volunteers are target groups representing different interest but with the same goal.



PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

What do you want to achieve? You need to have specific project goals and objectives which are SMART: It means, your goals and objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time bound.

The goals and objectives should have specific area of improvement or answer specific (established) needs. They have to be measurable in a sense that they are quantifiable or their progress can be measured. Attainable projects means the project is realistic, both in terms of its goals and available resources and existing constrains. The CE projects should be relevant to the organisations' objectives and the society. Your projects should be set within a specific time, a defined end or a deadline.

e.g. Practical, peer-to-peer language learning (and intercultural learning) in a relaxed setting, done in 10 sessions, noticeable process in the participants' ability to speak German. The project is relevant to the organisations' objective to integrate immigrants in German community through language proficiency. It is time bound as each activity contains 10 sessions and measurable by the ability of participants to converse in German.

METHOD TOWARDS PROJECT OBJECTIVES

After we have identified the need in the community, the next step is to identify possible answer(s) to the need. What methods are we using to address the need? Possible answers may be given from looking at good practices.

e.g. One hour exchange, weekly, participants bring a photo that they would like to talk about (based on a previous language mentor program)

RESOURCE ANALYSIS

After you have identified the needs and methods, you need to look at your resources. The things you need in order to accomplish your goals towards problem solving.

e.g. In the 10-10-10 resources includes volunteers, head office and community room of GLL, local youth centre (a meeting place); A flipchart, paper, application for funding at lagfa bayern e. V., organisation staff

It may start with finding the necessary funding options, but it can mean much more such as finding the proper meeting point, having volunteers etc.

Resource analysis is key in the success



of your project, and this is the point where the community element of CE plays an important role.

First of all, you need to define the community (or communities) that your specific issue relates to directly or indirectly. For example, citizens of the city where this problem appeared/citizens of the region/citizens of the country/international resources (who cares about this problem?)

Depending on the size of your project, you may need to spend more time at this stage. There are many ways of resource assessment depending on how you can communicate with the members of your community. If your community is active in social media such as Facebook, it might be enough to ask them there if they can help.

Resource analysis may be in form of identifying human resources available within the community for your project (for organisational activities). If you sit down with the members of your community for a guided conversation, you may understand the person's abilities, skills, a possibility to donate money, etc. It is important that you identify the motivation/needs/interests of the person (e.g. speaks English, needs income, but cannot articulate his/her needs etc.

The better you know what you want to achieve, the more successful your resource analysis may be. (e.g. if you can specify that you need someone to design stickers and are looking for a graphic designer, you have much better chances to find one than if you just promote your overall project objectives and that you need volunteers).

What are the basics of resources and project elements that most CE projects need:

- staff (may be volunteers)
- training and support for staff and volunteers
- professionals (e.g. teachers, artists)
- room/facilities
- refreshments
- advertisement, communication, dissemination
- monitoring (budget, reaching the objectives etc.)
- risk management/dealing with challenges
- documentation
- evaluation

Make sure you prepare for unexpected challenges (e.g. participants that are not eligible to participate/competition/volunteers dropping out) during the project and the need to provide professional support for your volunteers so that they may be in a better position to support the implementation of the project (i.e. problem solving, training, motivation).



ACTION PLAN

If you have done your resource analysis, you should go back to your original project plan and see if you have the necessary resources. It may be that you have more resources, which means, that you may extend the project. It may be that you have less resources (or other types of resources), and in that case you need to modify your project plan.

After you have done this, you can create an executable action plan.

At this final step you can design the timeline of the project, and you should be able to put down a name for each activity.

TIPS:

- Think about the sustainability of the project, in terms of competent staff/volunteers, funds and possible challenges. Have a backup plan in case of a change in circumstance such as dropping out of volunteers in the middle of the project implementation.
- Include activities that result in tangible content (for measuring the impact and for communication)
- Look at other organisations that already deal with a specific issue and decide if you can team up and/or if your project is not a duplication

- Create/join networks to know about other organisations' projects

e.g. GLL designed a training for volunteers, advertised the program, and provided continuous support, as well as evaluation, monitoring and risk management during the project.

Young volunteers between 18 and 25 meet/met in pairs (one German plus one refugee) once a week to talk about different topics that they are interested in. The sessions lasted roughly one hour and the topic was determined by the refugees: each session, they brought a picture related to something they would like to talk about. Each round of the project comprised at least ten meetings. There were fixed dates for the meetings to ensure presence of language pairs during the meetings.



PROJECT LAUNCH

After the project plan is finalised, you need to call together the people who will realise the project to make the necessary preparations.

When launching the project, especially with new initiatives, you should be aware that new initiatives may face some initial challenges. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider this phase as a “pilot” phase, during which you need to be flexible and concentrate on the feedback of the people involved, so that you can see what may be improved in the future.

Pilots can serve for communication and involving new people/new resources.

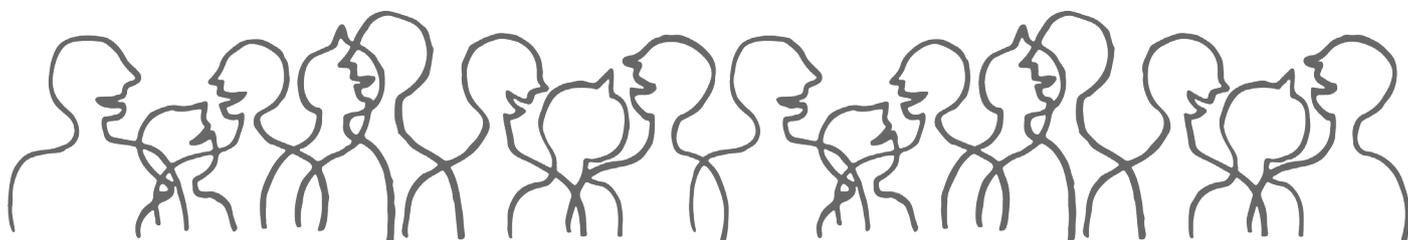
e.g. In the first phase GLL’s project was open for participants from the age of 14. This caused problems in commitment (participants dropped out) and raised legal issues (needed parental consent.) In the “second round” of the project, the minimum age limit was raised to 18 years to overcome the initial challenges such as the need for parental consent.

EVALUATION

After the first event has been realised, it is good to have an evaluation: an internal evaluation with your team and an external evaluation by people who are experts in the field. It is very important that you receive the feedback and evaluation of the target group (participants).

Evaluation is also an opportunity to get them involved in organising the project and the recreation of/development or improvement of the project for the future. The evaluations may show the needs, gaps and relevance of your projects content to them and their community. It is important to work with stakeholders who will know how to communicate etc.

e.g. After each session volunteers gave feedback about how the discussions went. After the 10 meetings, the volunteer responsible for the project talked to all the refugees (more or less individually, I believe) and asked them about their experiences.



PROJECT IMPROVEMENT RISK MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

After the evaluations, you can now go back and continue with the project. As the project develops, you need to evaluate – (re)design – implement continuously, which can mean just to know that everything is going well.

It is useful to include monitoring into your project design, which allows you to conduct a structured evaluation.

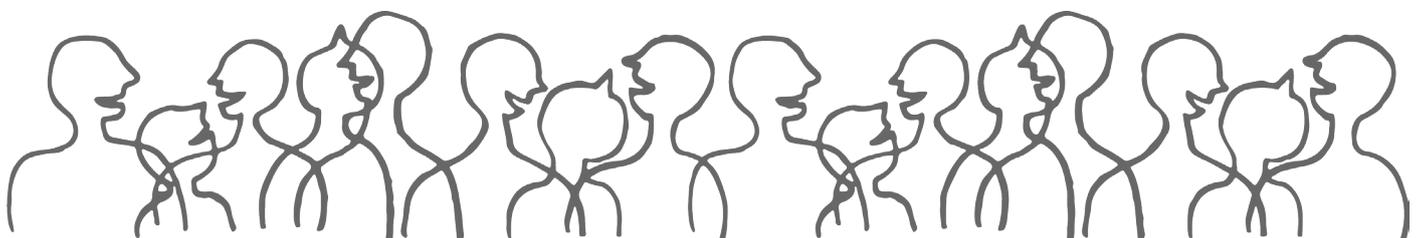
e.g. Monitoring was carried out by the GLL staff. As the challenges appeared, volunteers were supported and prepared to be able to act and react in the best possible way. One unexpected issue was the gender difference, as for some refugees a private discussion between a man and a woman meant the possible beginning of a romantic relationship, which they found either appealing or irritating/inhibiting. Therefore, matching of the sexes was one thing that had to be managed by GLL.

PROJECT CLOSURE

Ideally, after some time the problem will cease to exist and you can close your project (e.g. if the project was about collecting trash in a specific area).

If the problem is less probable to solve, you might need to increase your capacities, build partnerships with other organisations/individuals, raise awareness of the problem, and achieve policy change/social change that prevents the re-production/reoccurrence of the problem.

Community education projects may range from projects with no budget and based 100% on volunteer work up to larger scale projects involving different levels of society (e.g. the “Volunteering a bridge among ethnicities” project (RO) vs. the vegetarian Restaurant food leftover project (AT)).



FUNDING

CE projects may be funded through various modes. The most common way of funding is soft funding (non-returnable funding).

TYPES OF NON RETURNABLE FUNDING

- crowdfunding
- grant applications (EU applications, private foundations)
- membership fees, private donations
- public funding (national, regional, local)
- prize taxes (in form of tax reduction/ allocation)

Examples: - googleads
- amazonsmile
- techsoup

INCOME FROM SERVICES

Another important type of funding may be income from services.

Income from services includes:

- merchandising
- entrance fees
- social entrepreneurship (e.g. a bar/ restaurant that gives its profit to a good cause)

OTHER TYPES OF FUNDING

There are other types of funding for CE projects which includes in-kind contributions (volunteering, lending equipment, give away leftovers etc.)

INSPIRING AND USEFUL LINKS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

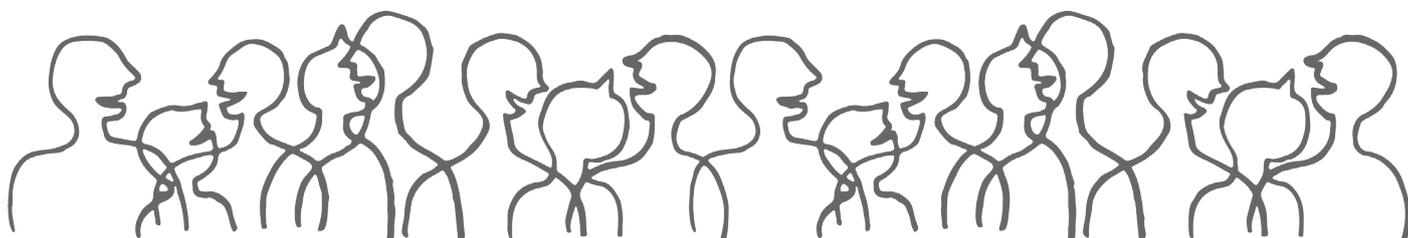
- <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/communities/Community-Education-Project.pdf>
- <https://drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/HIDTA-Implementation-Guide-3-18-16.pdf>
- <http://www.communityeducation-eu.eu/en/15.html>

INSPIRING AND USEFUL LINKS ON FUNDING

- <https://www.kickstarter.com/>
- https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes_en
- <https://www.welcomeurope.com/european-subsidies-beneficiary-Non+profits+organisations.html>
- <http://www.efc.be/>



CHAPTER III
THE SUCCESS FACTORS OF
COMMUNITY EDUCATION
PROGRAMMES AND COMMUNITY
EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS



WHAT IS A SUCCESSFUL CE PROJECT?

This question relates very much to setting the goal right. It is important to set specific goals effectively and be aware of what you want to achieve. Well-defined goals are thus an essential part of and a good way to a successful project. Below you can find crucial points in creating a successful project.

NEED BASE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Who is your target group? What are its needs? You should ask yourself these questions to be able to get to know the target group and hence address its specific needs. When thinking about a new project make, sure that the need in your community is topical and relevant.

e.g. 1: Volunteer language mentor programme - empowering refugees by giving them the opportunity to learn the language of the host country and to relate and talk to peers (Gemeinsam leben und lernen in Europa e.V.).

e.g. 2: Mom and child group – the idea came from the mothers themselves, addresses the needs for connecting to the community of an immigrant mother (Kuopion Setlementti Puijola ry).

PROJECT ACCESSIBILITY

Project has to be easily accessible for the participants/target group. It means, there should be no or little previous knowledge, references or certification required from the participants. In other words, involvement/participation should involve simple procedures. Cumbersome or bureaucratic/extremely formal entry procedures tend to limit access. The project has to be easily understandable to the target groups and to other participants.

LIVELY DIALOGUE ENGAGEMENT

Engagement very important for successful projects, because this is what encourages active participation, citizenship and thus strengthens the community. Lively dialogue is one of the most important aspect in engagement because it brings people together and creates the sense of community where people are aware of their right to participate and are more confident of their ability to do so. Engagement also extends civic skills, this means, the participants can be more aware and more effective citizens. CE projects should be designed to empower people and encourage them to get involved. Make the participants feel that they own the programme. This encourages active participation and lively dialogue.



e.g. 1: Hungary and its extraordinary life – Auróra invites well-known Hungarian experts to talk about current public issues in English to help immigrants understand what is going on and share their knowledge (MAROM Klub Egyesület).

e.g. 2: Dor Hadash (New Generation) – group of young Jews and non-Jews organises traditional community events (MAROM Klub Egyesület).

VOLUNTEERING

Voluntary work is a very important part of many NGO's because it improves the services provided and makes the organisation's operation easy. It is agreed that volunteering has a positive effect on people, in areas such as health and wellbeing, helping to reduce loneliness and as one of the community-led approaches that helps improve mental health.

Volunteers can be people of all ages – young or seniors. Volunteering, apart from benefiting the community, has a deeper and more important role to a person involved by contributing to personal development, and improving their perception and attitude towards the society. Furthermore, volunteering is a personal decision, an option that gives everyone a chance to have an impact on the society.

MAINTAINING PERSONAL CONTACT AND GOOD RELATIONS



Make sure you maintain personal contact with the volunteers working on your project. There are many reasons why people come to help somewhere. The most common reason being the relationship they build with other people. That is why maintaining individual contact is important.

It is also important that the programme coordinator expresses appreciation and creates a pleasant, trusting and friendly atmosphere that motivates volunteer involvement in the present project and encourages their participation in the future projects. It is vital to create a friendly, trusting and pleasant working atmosphere; this includes trusting volunteers by giving them responsibility in the managing and the execution of the programme/project.



An honest ‘thank you’ as a form of appreciation should be a norm and it can take various forms. For example:

- giving the volunteer a positive feedback
- organizing and inviting them to participate in organisation celebrations
- congratulating the volunteer on personal anniversaries or achievements
- inviting the volunteer to manage an event, project, organisation
- giving the opportunity to take initiative and take more responsibilities
- inviting volunteer to a following event
- take interest in volunteer’s feedback on a realized event, project
- giving the volunteer a small present (material gift, invitation to a concert, joint dinner)

In general the volunteer should know who his coordinator is and have his or her email/telephone contact. The coordinator should approach every volunteer individually, check the volunteer’s motivation, ideas and areas of interest in which he would like to volunteer and give something back to the community.

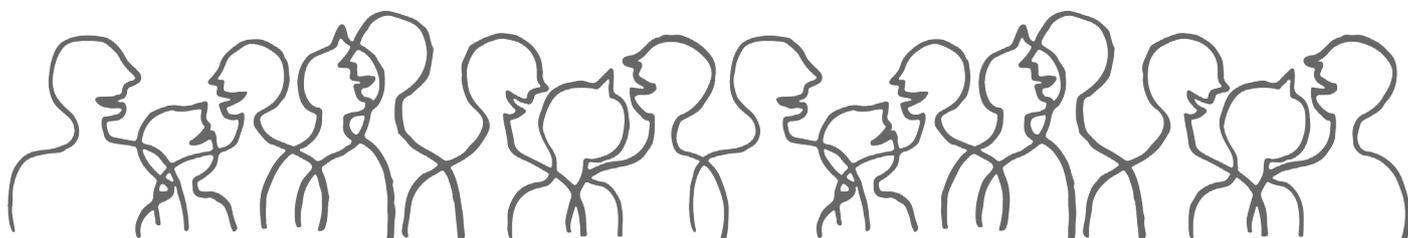
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

One criteria of success can be the number of participants involved in your project.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the project is also very important. “Looking at sustainability from an NGO point of view, means continuing to perform and deliver project benefits to the primary target group after the funding from a donor terminates. In other words, sustainability is to maintain and continue your efforts after the funding is over.” (Joshi).

Sustainability includes project’s organisation, finance, and programme: Have an idea of how and what will your organisation do in the long run. Long term vision, usage of data and facts is good for explaining to the donor about your goals and resources required to ensure a successful project. Look at various options through which you can get funding (e.g. local institutions, online fundraising, sale of products, in kind donations) and diversify your donor base.



PARTNERSHIPS

Develop collaboration with local partners. The partnership should be based on mutual benefit and good relations. Then you can expect further collaboration. Developing new partnerships makes your organization stable and helps you in taking your projects' mission ahead. It is also very useful to boost your already existing partnerships, support long-term and repeated collaboration.

ADAPTABILITY

A successful project should be adaptable throughout its implementation according to the needs of the stakeholders and target groups. Being in touch with your target groups and participants and include their initiatives shows your flexibility and ability to meet the participants' needs even when the project has already begun.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

You should ensure a safe environment throughout your project for the participants, this includes creating a pleasant atmosphere where participants feel comfortable, good and secure. Creating an open environment which encourages learning, critical reflection and challenge is more likely to result in high quality services and target group's satisfaction.

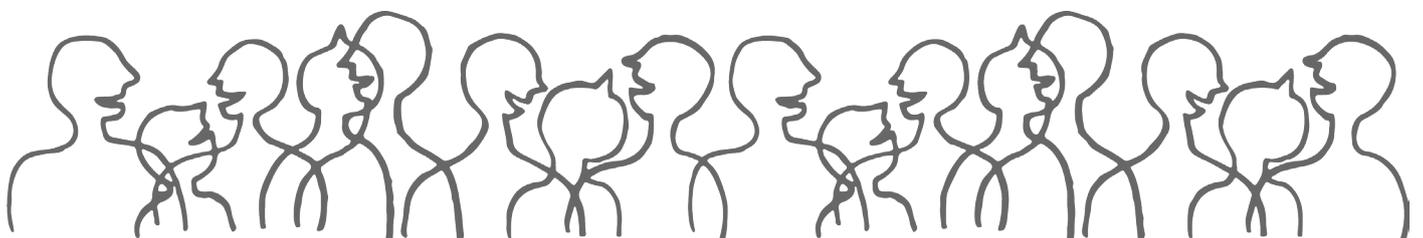
ENJOYABLE LEARNING

Besides safety, the project's overall environment should also be enjoyable for the participants. As mentioned in the first chapter, Community Education includes various types of learning as a completion to formal learning. Games, observation, shared activities, learning through experience or developing attitudes should be fun to appeal the volunteer.

PROMOTION

A very important part of a successful project and successful organisation in general is promotion. The name of your organisation, its logo, letterhead, envelopes, business cards, leaflets, booklets or webpage should be used for making you visible and distinctive. Graphic design is the essence of the organisation's visual identity and plays an important role in promotion.

Have in mind that there should be different promotion materials for different stakeholders – clients, participants, donors, the public, professional community. It is always useful to take photos at all your events and projects in order to use them as promotional materials for your webpages, Facebook or leaflets. These promotional materials can be, besides other things, used to attract new participants, clients or volunteers. Ideally the current participants promote the project through shared experience about the project and its activities.



PERSONNEL PROVISION AND RECRUITMENT

There are volunteers and employees working in NGOs. Personnel provision is an important part of organization's everyday life. It is divided into:

- Management (executive director)
- Professional category (program coordinator, accountant)
- Support category (administrative assistant)

NGOs need high quality people. They need both professionals and beginners the project activities. The ideal person for an NGO is the one who can lead himself/ herself and also the project team. At the same time the person can transfer experience to the beginners. A non-profit organization must constantly learn to be innovative in its service and topics "just as its staff".

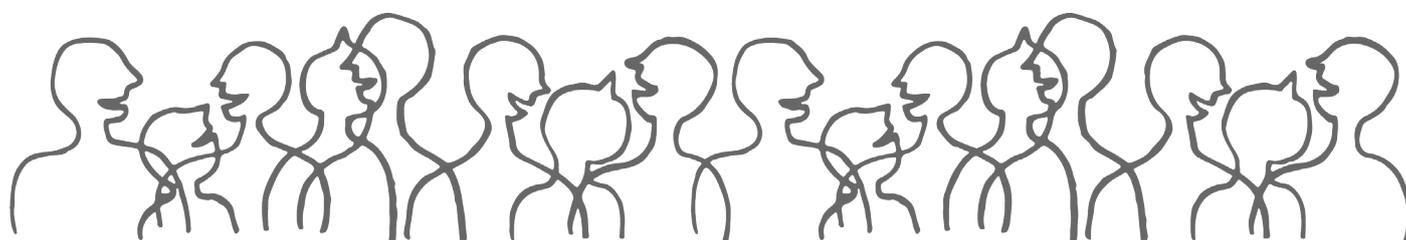
POLITICAL SUPPORT

Well documented project results can help you in getting support from a range of stakeholders and donors. A well thought communication strategy can avoid last minute rush of a donor search. Collaboration with political representatives should take place both

at local (district/region) and higher (national) levels for financial security, projects moral and material support and active collaboration on selected projects. What is important is to keep an active and open communication with the competent local authorities in order to gain political support. A successful project is well-known in the local community; it is appreciated and thus funded.

e.g.1: The project "Jedeme dál" – organised active Nordic walking course – free for seniors under the guidance of experienced instructors. The City district office is the guarantor who provides finance and walking sticks and TOTEM, z.s. is the organiser (Intergenerational and volunteer center TOTEM, z.s.).

e.g.2: New branches: The city of Pilsen has asked TOTEM to extend its know-how to other city districts in order to allow other groups of seniors access to activities that promote active aging and prevent solitude (Intergenerational and volunteer center TOTEM, z.s.).



INTERGENERATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL LEARNING

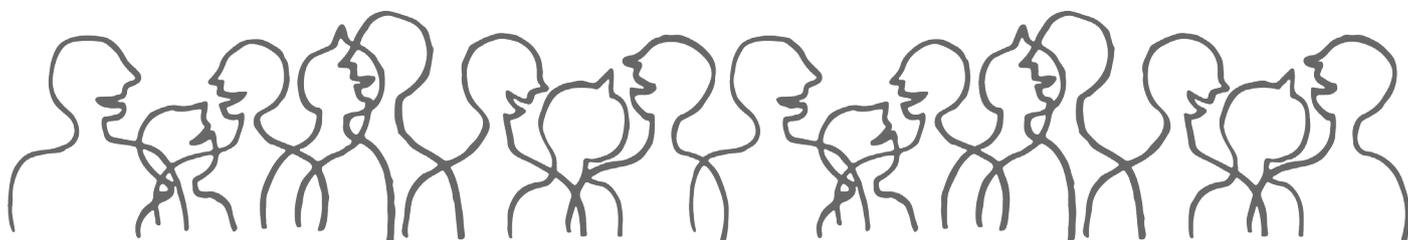
Intergenerational learning means that people of all ages can learn together and from each other. It has always been a feature of human communities, but unfortunately it has been losing ground in recent years. To bridge the divide between young people and older ones it is important to reconnect them once again by offering them common places and activities. For the mutual benefit of the community it is thus important to propose intergenerational activities within your organisation that can overcome stereotypes.

Here are some important considerations/tips for creating a successful intergenerational activity:

- Understand where intergenerational learning can make a major difference.
- To overcome age prejudices is good to ask: Does the activity really help to break down barriers between generations?
- Ensure there is mutual benefit for both young and old people.
- Activity should be interesting (not necessarily in the same way) and appropriate for everyone, regular and

long-term (several months), in order to be effective

- Understand the needs and motivations of potential participants.
- Seniors usually want to pass on their knowledge and skills. Young people tend to get involved in order to contribute to their communities. But it may be the opposite and they often exchange these predefined roles.
- Pay attention to the recruitment of the participants.
- It is good to know people's background, experiences and perceptions. Ensure confidentiality and find out their expectations regarding their involvement.
- Prepare the generations separately.
- Talk to them in order to find out their expectations and ways they might behave, establish clear rules such as 'respect one's ideas even when they are different from yours.
- Ensure the staff involved in intergenerational learning has the appropriate skills.
- Understand the activity – and that includes not only the staff in guiding roles, but also the other staff members.





Intercultural learning integrates and explores the rich tapestry of perspectives reflected in our diverse world. The different ideas and point of views are valued and explored. Intercultural learning goes beyond the boundaries of ability, age, gender, nationality, race or religion. The participants of intercultural learning experience and learn about diversity, solidarity, tolerance, inclusion, engagement etc. People with intercultural experiences tend to be more open-minded, creative, flexible, tolerant and help to fight stereotypes. To make intercultural learning both possible and effective, lecturers must facilitate the group's interactions respectful and challenging, creative and meaningful, engaged and transformative. Learners also need to train their ability to listen to each other in order to understand the other participants. In a safe environment any signs of intolerance should be treated with respect and care.

e.g.2: Through the intercultural clubs facilitated by the European volunteers, the multicultural rural communities around Cluj-Napoca are presented the idea that cultural difference can be beneficial and can be celebrated. This fosters communication and cooperation between people of different ethnicities and cultures (Centrul de Voluntariat Cluj-Napoca).

- Make the content and settings attractive to both older and younger participants.

- Intergenerational learning tends to work best outside of the `classrooms` and it is often based around specific projects such as intergenerational crafts, garden, community history etc.

- Recognise and validate activities.

- This is especially important for young people where it can be difficult to fit their intergenerational activities around their formal education commitments, but seniors also like to validate their newly gained competences.

e.g.1: Intergenerational urban garden: collaboration of seniors and preschool children. Shared care of the garden, program for children, possibility to grow and not to be alone, transfer of experience from age to children (Intergenerational and volunteer center TOTEM, z.s.).

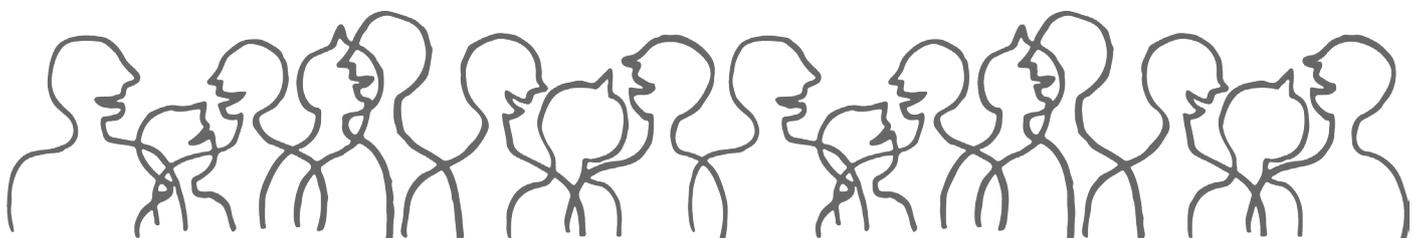


SOME OTHER SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Providing knowledge to a large number of participants
- Inspiring critical thinking
- Possibility of getting the participants out of their comfort zone in the safe context
- Improving the local social environment
- Project attracts new participants “by itself”
- Project is well known and appreciated, wins prizes or receives donations
- Project is easy to prepare and there are no experts required
- Project does not get boring – there are new topics every session
- Project changes the people involved – their skills, attitudes and knowledge
- Successful project results in tangible and beneficial change in the community and targets sustainable long term results

SOURCES

- <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/blog/8-top-tips-successful-intergenerational-learning>
- <https://www2.fundsforngos.org/featured/how-to-ensure-sustainability/>
- <http://ifsw.org/policies/effective-and-ethical-working-environments-for-social-work-the-responsibilities-of-employers-of-social-workers-3/>



CHAPTER IV

**IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEER-
LED CENTRES AS ACCESS INTO
AND PROVIDERS OF COMMUNITY
EDUCATION (CE). HOW TO BRING
VOLUNTEER-LED NGOS WITH LOCAL
CENTRES INTO MAINSTREAM? HOW
TO RECOGNISE THEIR VALUE?**



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE VOLUNTEERS?

“Volunteering is generally considered an altruistic activity where an individual or group provides services for no financial or social gain “to benefit another person, group, community or organization” (Wilson, John (2000).”Volunteering”. Annual Review of Sociology). Volunteering may have positive benefits for the volunteer as well as for the person or community served. Volunteers and volunteer work can have a direct impact on individual lives or on the community as a whole. While volunteering is mostly unpaid, volunteers can also gain in kind from the work they do.

One of the most important factors of volunteering is community education. Volunteers not only create awareness about the social and geo-political causes but also help bringing people together for a common cause. Volunteers are an integral part of a socially educated, aware and united community.

THREE DIMENSIONAL BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Apart from the social benefits of volunteering (see later in this chapter), there are various other benefits that can make a powerful impact on the world.

Individual benefits:

- Volunteering empowers the individual, helps them become more self-confident or rebuilds their confidence
- Increases the level of initiative, responsiveness and responsibility
- Encourages team-work
- Volunteering is unpaid, hence it inculcates self-motivation
- Volunteering helps in building individual networks and gaining new competencies
- Creates learning opportunities for the volunteer, both in personal and professional capacity
- These learning opportunities help the volunteers gain experience enhancing employability
- Emotional satisfaction of being helpful, achieving something meaningful or giving something back to the society



- Emotional benefits: eradication of loneliness, making friends, feeling of belonging somewhere or being a part of something useful

“Whatever community organization, whether it’s a women’s organization, or fighting for racial justice ... you will get satisfaction out of doing something to give back to the community that you never get in any other way.” — Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Benefits to public, private and NGOs/ third sector organisations:

The NGOs or other organisations that work with volunteers benefit from their services immensely, as volunteers help push the organisation’s cause. Most of the time third sector organisations with a tight budget have volunteers carry forward their objectives and goals.

- Volunteers generate additional human resources for the organisations
- Operational costs can be reduced significantly
- Easing the time management of projects
- Increase in the quality of services because of their skills and experience
- Volunteers help with expanding the organisation’s activities
- They strengthen the workforce and

create motivation amongst peers and workers alike

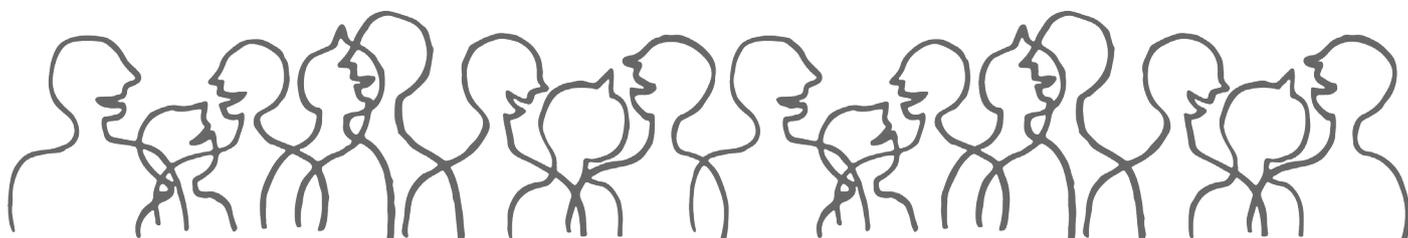
- Volunteers can become role models to the beneficiaries, resulting in a greater number of volunteers

Economic benefits:

One cannot negate the fact of volunteers lessening the financial burden of the government, society/community and third sectors/NGOs/organisations.

“Nearly 1 billion people throughout the world volunteer their time through public, non-profit, or for-profit organizations, or directly for friends or neighbours, in a typical year, making ‘Volunteerland,’ if it were a country, the second most populous country in the world, behind only China”. (Source: Measuring the economic value of volunteer work globally: concepts, estimates, and a roadmap to the future- Johns Hopkins University, USA)

Also, as per the studies done by Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society in 2011, in just 37 countries approximately 140 million people engaged in volunteer work in a typical year. If those 140 million volunteers comprised the population of a country, it would be the 9th largest country in the world. (Ref: Social Impact of Volunteerism).



- Volunteers' contribution is immense towards the global economy. The US economy itself accounted for 184 billion dollars' worth of volunteer work in 2015. (Ref: Corporation for National Community Service of America)
- Public as well as private organisations benefit economically; volunteers are cost-effective and efficient
- Government work and expenditure reduced considerably
- Volunteers make marketing far easier and cost-effective

viduals to form the backbones for their survival and existence. Governments, with all their goodwill and planning, many a times fall short of implementing a fool-proof plan, which is where the volunteers step in.

- A volunteer is a link between the community and the government/organisations
- They balance out the disparities between the local society/community and government
- They strengthen civil involvement to build a stable community

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING?

“The terms volunteering, volunteerism and voluntary activities refer to a wide range of activities ... undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor.” Source: UNGA 2002 (United Nation's General Assembly) (A/RES/56/38)

The world, with its multi-layered hierarchy, requires wide range of planning and implementation to make it a better place to live. The societies or communities that form these hierarchies have time and again needed free-willed indi-

Volunteers are a part of the community they live in. They know the ins and outs of the community, and are aware of the prevalent shortcomings and deep-rooted problems. Volunteer work often stems from societal needs, especially when people are generally aware of those needs but there is an overall lack of initiative from elsewhere.

A volunteer can:

- Raise awareness of social issues among the public / other volunteers
- Create better understanding of the important issues in the community
- Expand the variety of activities available in the community and help make things happen



- Help increase tolerance among the community members
- Increase awareness of social and human diversity
- Work as a link between the communities who have similar problems or issues

With the global migration scenarios changing at a rapid scale, working with migrant communities has become a very important factor in establishing a balanced community and an integrated migrant population. Volunteers who work with diverse cultures sometimes face many hurdles along the way, especially regarding language and culture. Despite such barriers, a number of volunteers help migrants learn and understand the society they have come to live in, address their issues and fears on an individual basis and help them integrate into the society at a much faster pace. The volunteers' help and support enhance the migrants' prospects in finding their own identity in the foreign land.

- Empowering the individual identity leads to a better social identity. This holds true for everyone.
- Migrant societies realise the importance of giving back to the society when they experience what the society is offering them.

Volunteers complement the social services and reduce their workload significantly. Mainstreaming of volunteer work also helps engaging the beneficiaries who are silent/unheard of or are otherwise “left out”.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERISM FROM A WIDER SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE ?

Volunteerism can contribute towards voices being heard and motivating participation, accountability and responsiveness in a community.

“Volunteerism, while universal, is multifaceted, and it can be organized and managed formally within structured organizations, especially CSOs, and also within governments and the private sector. It can also be run informally, and millions volunteer within informal structures and groups, outside of formally recognized institutions; it is often practised within the communities where people live and work and can be a life-long commitment.” - 2015 State of the World's Volunteerism Report - Transforming Governance

Volunteerism leads to individual responsibility. Volunteers are self-motivated people who bring strong will and positivity to the community. Volunteerism educates people about the joys of giving



and selfless acts in a materialistic world. Volunteerism could be born out of a specific need, but it unites people and strengthens the community.

- Active participation leads to more active citizens, resulting in a responsible community
- It is an educational means to make people aware of their surroundings
- Makes people less selfish and creates a more empathetic society
- Volunteerism showcases the power of solidarity; improvements that can be achieved without monetary involvement
- Doing work that authorities won't/can't get done: where there is no political will, there are volunteers
- Highlighting social injustice, corrective social justice

WHAT ARE VOLUNTEER LED CENTRES?

Volunteer work may be formal or informal. Volunteers may work as individuals for the benefit of a person, family or community or they can join any organisation or group to do volunteer work. These organisations provide volunteers

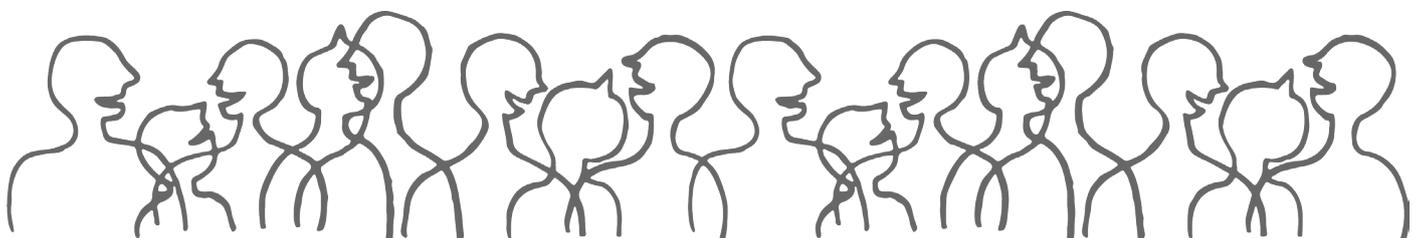
with channels to focus their time and energy in the right directions.

Many organisations rely heavily upon the services of the volunteers, irrespective of the fact that they do have paid employees. A volunteer-led organisation does not always mean that they are completely run by the volunteers, though there are several smaller associations, groups or organisations that are run only by volunteers.

Most of the time, the organisations or centres that focus on social work or community education in general have to work with little or no funding. Having volunteers is of paramount importance to these centres as the volunteers help them achieve their goals. Thus, it could be safely said that the volunteer-led centres provide a large part of their community services through volunteers.

HOW DO VOLUNTEER LED CENTRES BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY?

We can say that one of the biggest beneficiaries of voluntary services is the community or society. Volunteer driven campaigns have led many governments to adopt beneficial policies, e.g. several governments in Latin America have adopted indigenous rights policies after such campaigns.





Why do you need a centre?

- Every organisation works with different focus groups: volunteer centres integrate and connect
- Link between communities with similar causes and needs and authorities
- Broader outreach into the society
- Place where you can contribute towards an important cause in various ways
- Has room for new ideas, activities, services and development

Communities often depend on the goodwill of the people to support sustainable ideas, to encourage voluntary participation, to adapt to the ever-changing situations, and to help uplift the community. The centres bring societal needs to the forefront and educate people who might be very well aware of the existing problems but lacked the initiative to address the issues. Volunteer-led centres are the face and voice of the people building confidence in them. They pave

the way for educational work on how these societal needs are met.

Community centres are also a link between different networks and individuals (formal and informal networks that exist parallel in societies):

- Centres also provide personal benefits for the people living in the surrounding community (making friends, building skills etc.)
- These centres are partially open public spaces, and easy to access
- The centres get the work done for the people without involving the authorities. It is sometimes a more effective and efficient way of handling issues.

Through volunteer-led centres, individuals who may have no access to or who might otherwise be reluctant to attend formal education or training can find a chance to achieve education and training through CE.



HOW TO RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEER LED NGOS?

For over a century now, NGOs and third sector organisation have evolved and improved with the ever-growing needs of the world. Their role in community education and creating awareness as well as their contribution towards implementing governmental policies are appreciated by several governments around the globe. Governments are counting on the NGOs to take their policies to the grass-roots level and they encourage this work by giving incentives and awards to hard-working organisations. In return, more and more grassroots-level organisations are taking up government projects and are reaching the beneficiaries with the best human resource that they have: volunteers.

Despite all this, NGOs have not received the recognition they deserve. They still need to work very hard to prove their worth to the public as well as to the funding agencies and the government. They need to promote themselves and stand out in their field to be able to find themselves recognised.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland conducted a case study on complementarity of the NGO instruments. One of its conclusions was: “In order

not to blur the distinction between state and civil society, the NGOs’ right of initiative needs to be sustained.”

The study also recommended that: “New ways of promoting NGO-related complementarity should

be based on incentives that favour applications complying with complementarity criteria [...] A comprehensive study on the evolving NGO/CSO context should be initiated to supplement and update the Finnish NGO development co-operation civil society strategy. It should focus on government-NGO relations, including: the work environment related to human rights; the evolving nature of civil society; the inclusion of non-NGO sections of civil society in co-operation; and how the overall objective of a strong civil society is best accommodated.”

So, how is it possible to make these organisations more recognisable? A lot of it lies on the NGOs themselves and how they are perceived.

Organisations need to focus on being positive, enhance the visibility of their



projects and actions being undertaken as well as the results.

- Creating a good quality network; having the right partners
- Using events to promote: organising informational events to give updates and inviting the relevant people, policy makers as well as the general public
- Getting regular feedback and being flexible in approach
- Remaining friendly, yet professional
- Using statistics and success stories to create positive impression
- Making the impact visible to the community with pictures, videos, films, advertisements & exhibitions
- Giving awards to the activities, projects etc: showing the testimonies given to the NGOs

Since volunteers play a big role in these organisations, it is imperative that the impact factors include their contribution towards the cause. Intermittent (positive) feedback on completed volunteer work from the involved partners, stakeholders as well as the community will help boost the confidence of the volunteers and build a good rapport among them. These partners and stake-

holders may want to have the same volunteers in their own organisation.

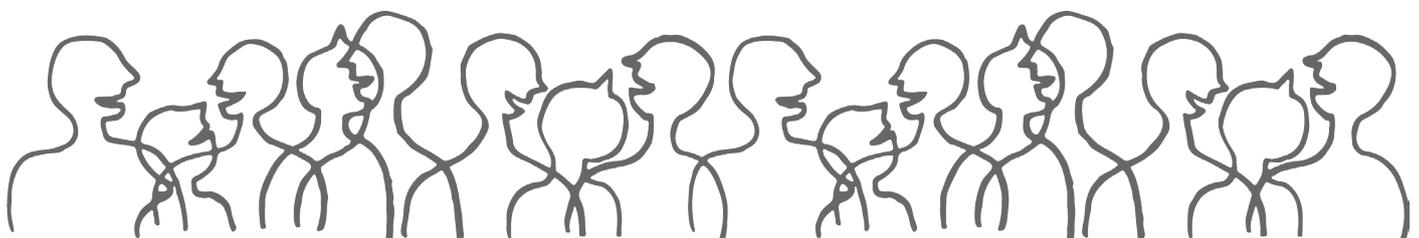
It is also important to exhibit the extent of commitment of the volunteers as well as how many volunteers the organisation can mobilise, if and when the need arises.



Volunteers are also the face of the NGOs. Volunteers could be long term or short term, depending upon the time and need. Every organisation needs all-weather volunteers who stay with the organisation through thick and thin.

Organisation's reputation depends on what they and their volunteers do:

- Right kind of volunteers are needed: not just the passive kind, but also the active and motivated ones
- Volunteer management is important to make them stay committed and work to the best of their abilities



HOW TO MAKE VOLUNTEER LED NGOS MAINSTREAM?

Even the big players face tough problems trying to mainstream. International human rights NGOs struggle to communicate through the global mainstream media, too. In the study by George Mason University the University of British Columbia, in any given year, 40% of the NGOs included in the study failed to appear in one news story and 25% failed to appear at all between 2010 and 2012. (Ref: May we have your attention please? Human Rights NGOs and global communication)

If that is the scenario, what can small-scale organisations do to get publicity and find their way to the mainstream? The answer is not that simple. It takes tremendous amounts of hard work and strategy...

Good marketing: improve and invest in marketing abilities and selling the activities

- Promoting the cause, projects and programs with any marketing tool that is available
- Social media and internet are big, powerful and wide-reaching. They

should be utilised optimally

- Along with social media, “good old style” oral, visual as well as written promotions and information will help the cause a lot. Usage of the word of mouth should be on the list.

Widen the focus towards other relevant stakeholders, not just the beneficiaries

- Networking with other social NGOs, companies, politicians...
- Becoming part of the active and recognised communities
- Getting invited to “hip” happenings and events, gaining visibility

Think and act more strategically

- Good PR with good strategy
- Strategies on how to reach out to the print and visual media
- What kind of media will reach the audience? Planning the approach



Lobbying

- Lobbying at all levels: social - political - business, local - national - international
- Showcasing the need for the organisation's services
- Making a brand name and maintaining the quality of services to reduce the necessity to prove their importance over and over again
- Working with the local businesses / authorities in order to make your services suitable for everyone
- Being a neutral platform that provides impartial services
- Lobbying for tax reductions to the firms that support volunteer work
- Lobbying to get the organisation's volunteer work recognised, e.g. through study credits in local universities and other educational institutions etc.

NGOs need to self-introspect from time to time on the image they are projecting. Organisations should focus on their approachability, helpfulness of their services, rethinking the projects and activities that have become redundant, quality of the organisation's voluntary work as well as improving and expanding their network.

Volunteers are the ambassadors of the organisational activities. The volunteer service needs to be respected, valued and appreciated by recognising their valuable work and the motivation that they bring. Volunteers should also be given responsibilities according to their abilities, skills and interests. A well-networked organisation, e.g. one connected with local educational institutes, businesses and authorities etc., has a big advantage in getting noticed. Such organisations not only get the volunteers that they need, but they also can refer their volunteers to several different places for skills development, internships etc. This mutual exchange creates an employed, healthy and mature community.

Being recognised is an uphill task for the NGOs and going mainstream is even tougher. The strongest survive, but the courageous triumph!

The following statement by the One-World.net in regards to applying for a grant holds true to the entire world, though referring to the American scenario. You can easily replace the word America with the word World!

“Today's news media and political structures do not engage or fully inform Americans on most issues of global significance. The same elite sources are quoted time and over again and way too much time is devoted to spin, drama,

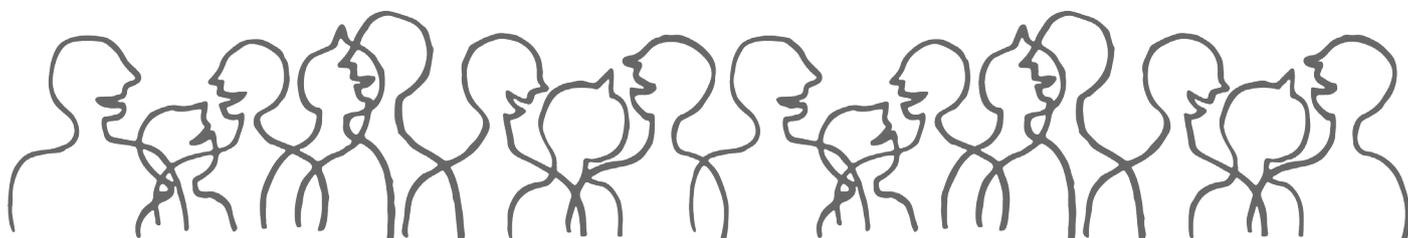


and sensationalism instead of the real issues that affect people around the world. Politicians largely focus on the issues and offer the platitudes that will get them re-elected, ignoring many topics and perspectives that impact millions of people worldwide. These political and media failings have turned off countless Americans to important global issues.” (Ref: Bringing NGO news into the mainstream: The case of OneWorld.net and Yahoo News)

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CHAPTER V
IMPACT OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION
PROGRAMMES/SERVICES/PROVIDERS AND
PROOF OF IT



DEFINITION AND KEY ELEMENTS

This chapter addresses the impact of community education and its particularities. It gives insight on measures which can be used when collecting data in order to have a clearer perspective on the impact created through community education.

Impact of community education refers to a change in the society, an effect above different dimensions of the society or above the individual. The change desired in the community is seen as a fulfillment of the vision. However, in order to reach the impact on a huge scale, it is necessary to start from the bottom of the hierarchy with a change upon attitudes, knowledge and skills.

For a better understanding of the concept, it is important to distinguish the associated terminology, such as: input, output and the correlation in between, and outcome. The input can be defined as the set of resources which a community education provider engages into a programme. The resources can be of any kind – from financial, material, informational to human (staff, volunteers, experts etc.). As long as they contribute to reaching the aim of the programme, these resources are considered inputs. The output is the result of

a programme. For example, the output of training on digital competences is the number of graduates in this field. Numbers are used when measuring the results, thus the outputs are specific and easy to be determined.

However, outputs are not enough for measuring the impact. What is important is the outcome. The outcome is very valuable and will definitely lead to a greater reputation for the CE provider.

The outcome is the change resulted due to the programme implemented. It is the effect produced upon individuals and society. Given the example mentioned above, the outcome of training on digital competences is the number of graduates who find jobs in this field. Identifying the outcomes might take more time and resources, but it is essential in tracking the impact generated.

Community education aims at a better world, and for this it is vital that CE makes impact on people's lives, and in time the impact is visible in the entire society. Now another question arises – how can a programme answer community needs in order to create a relevant impact?



PLANNING THE IMPACT

First of all, for a CE provider to create an impact, relevant for individuals and society, they must know the existing needs. The impact will be greater if the needs identified are real.

In order to make sure that the provided programmes are relevant for the community and they have the capacity to generate impact, before launching a community education programme, the organisation should conduct a needs assessment.

- When proceeding to the needs assessment, start by answering some questions:
- What issues have I identified until now within the community I am active in?
- What issues have others identified until now within the community we are all active in?
- What solutions have I thought about until now?
- What solutions have I not considered/thought about until now?
- In which ways addressing these issues is connected to my mission?

- What issues do I, as a community education provider, have the capacity to approach/address?

These questions will give a bit of a more clear idea upon what is/are the biggest issue(s) in the community and which are the ones that our organisation can address or try to respond to.

Depending on the size of the project, the parties involved in the needs assessment may vary a lot: people within the organisation you are engaged in (e.g. staff members, direct beneficiaries of current programmes etc.) and within the community itself (e.g. public representatives, various institutions and NGOs, active citizens etc.).

After collecting this data, the next step is to evaluate it and identify which are actually the necessary aspects to work/focus on. For example: a small rate of class attendance could be an indicator of a lack of interactive and appropriate pedagogical methods, a high rate of bullying between teenagers could reveal an absence of self-confidence or family background issues.

By taking this into consideration, it is ensured that the community education



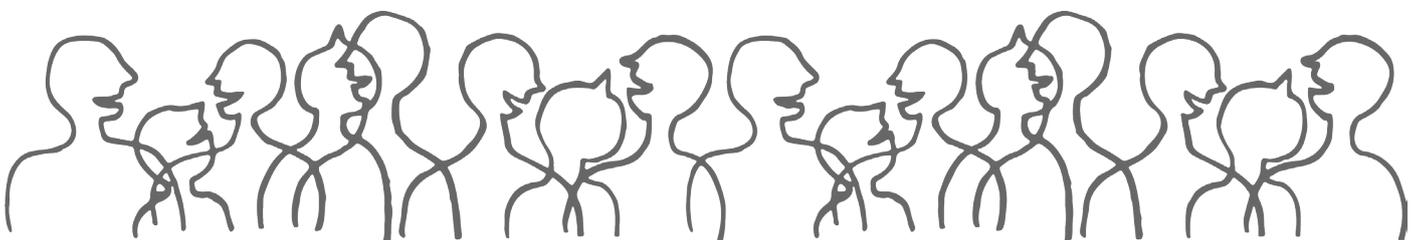


gets to have a greater impact as it addresses needs relevant for the community members, who in time will reveal a change in their attitudes, skills and knowledge and hence impact the community and its individuals.

As mentioned above, the individual impact goes hand in hand with the impact desired at a larger scale. Community education strikes to be relevant at the local level in order to positively influence the region. Thus in time (which could be even after generations) the impact is observed at a national level. Following the same pattern, which is spreading from local to regional and to national level, the impact can be generated on international level. Keep in mind that the long-term outcome is a sum of more short-term

outcomes, which are the proof that the programmes have been effectively managed on the quality of inputs engaged in the whole process.

This means a strong alignment of values, a more equitable lifestyle, equal opportunities and, after all, a strong worldwide community based on peace and understanding. But to succeed, CE providers cannot work alone. They need the involvement of other stakeholders, those who promoting the same values and who have the interest in creating the same impact and results. When planning the impact at a larger scale, the support of others has an important contribution. All types of cooperation and partnerships are influential and can be the triggers to a chain reaction spreading across the region, nation or world.



ANALYZING THE IMPACT

This process of impact analysis is connected with a series of procedures from statistics and marketing to face evaluation. Depending on the project's particularities and on the impact planned in the incipient stage, analysing the effects has a different grade of complexity and can be done based on two types of data:

- **Qualitative** – refers to the usage of linguistic materials, which are considered obvious statements of the impact upon the individual and on the society. For instance, testimonials - they reveal feelings, state of minds, changes on behavior etc. which cannot be expressed by numbers. However, there is a disadvantage: this method is subject, it evaluate impact based on subjects.
- **Quantitative** – points out the idea that numbers are relevant indicators for making general conclusions. For instance, the number of participants at a workshop on human-animal interaction, who after the workshop have implemented a project in the community following the same topic. The disadvantage consists in the fact that the generalisation is based only on numbers, without any personal insight.

The best way to measure the impact of community education is doing it both, qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative data will offer a general view, while the qualitative data will consolidate and deepen the analysis. This will allow access to objective information and also to subjective one. Putting together both perspectives will ensure a more realistic evaluation of the impact.

For ensuring a complete qualitative analysis, the CE provider should initiate face to face meetings of evaluation during the implementation of the program and upon its completion. An additional thing, but necessary, would be to make an evaluation session with the group or launch a feedback questionnaire so all the participants, initiators and stakeholders can express their opinion.

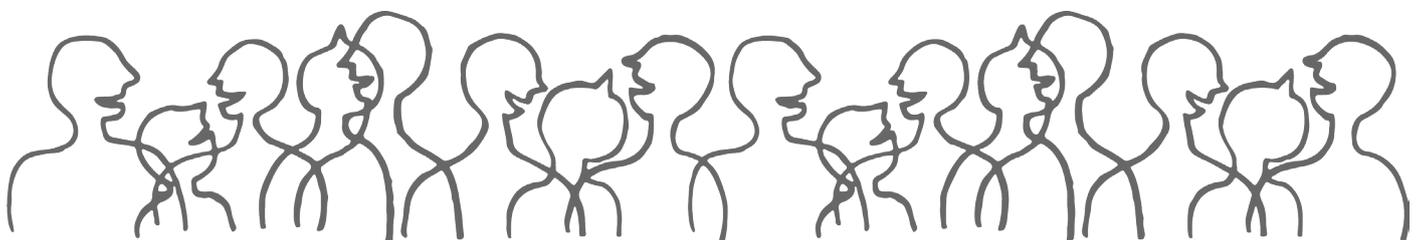
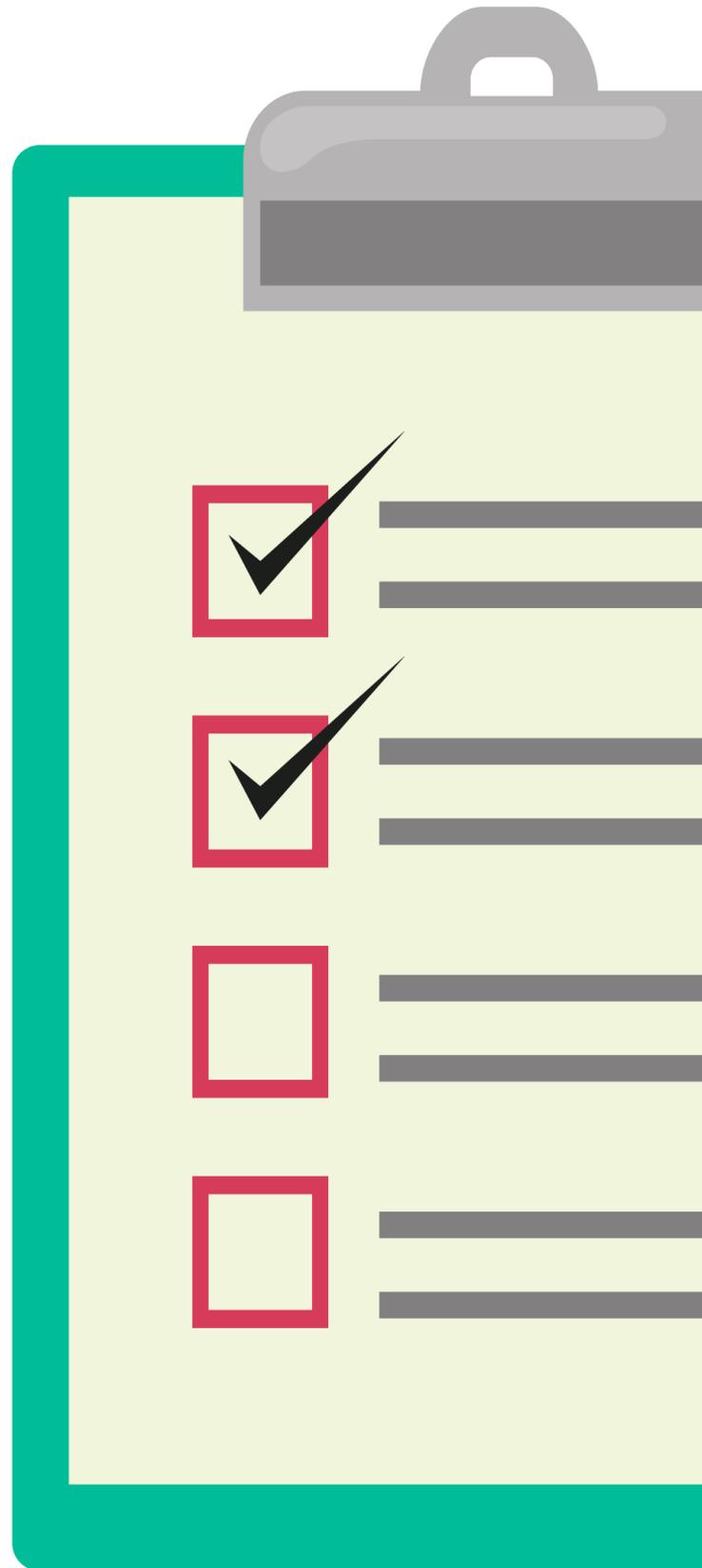
If possible, observing the beneficiaries during the whole phases of the programme would provide a relevant input. First, CE provider could collect information regarding the status before the implementation. This is mandatory to allow for comparative analysis of the progress in a later stage. This is followed by an observation at least once during the project. In the end the last evaluation is conducted, and the later



it is made the more the impact can be considered stronger.

The quantitative indicators reveal the improvements based on numbers. The bigger the pool of elements analysed, the stronger the conclusion. These indicators should take into account a larger period of time. For example, a teacher decides to change the methods used when teaching History. The impact of their initiative can be reflected on the number of students who have improved their knowledge (grades maybe). For this, the teacher should make a comparison between the grades of each student before and after the implementation of his idea.

To sum up, using both, qualitative and quantitative data, will allow a more realistic measurement with the positive consequence of obtaining the best view upon the impact of community education. Once the impact is measured, new initiatives can be initiated but with a stronger, relevant and adapted foundation.



IMPROVING THE IMPACT

The main reason for measuring the impact of community education programmes is the fact that more knowledge means better actions undertaken and better results achieved. Thus, the impact is improved in time due to the analysis did beforehand.

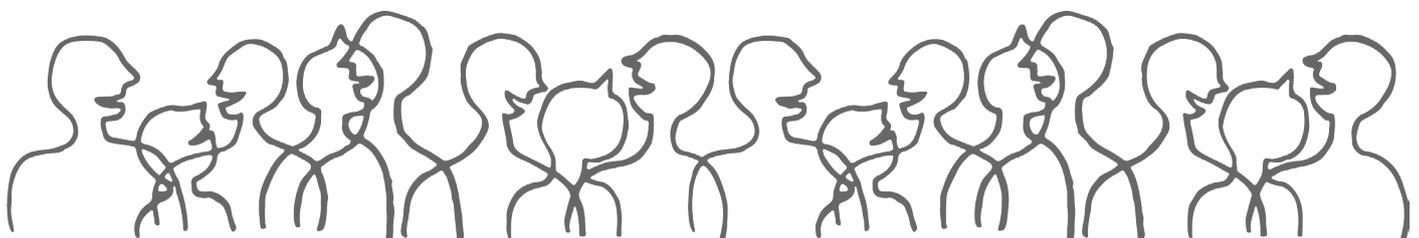
However, there are more additional reasons for community education impact to be measured:

- to monitor the project for future decisions – this should be done during the whole process of implementation in order to ensure that the activities stay in the needed parameters. Doing an active monitoring will provide a helpful input when taking further decisions. At the same time, the impact measured in past projects represents a strong tool of prevention – CE provider will know what to do to avoid previous mistakes;
- to see the progress – the impact created is an indicator for the progress of the project. If the impact is high, it means that the CE programme is going on a good path, following the impact plan or even going beyond it;
- to see the impact on long term by

measuring it periodically – collecting data concerning the progress of the project should be done in more stages of the project – before, during and after. This process should be repeated periodically during each programme development, in order to compare the same group but in totally different moments and contexts.

e.g.: 4 years in a row, the same group of 10 children was part of two different educational programme with the aim of raising their access to education. The data collected in the beginning, during and at the end of the first project is comparable with the one collected from the second project, the group of analysed elements stay the same but their competences have changes compared to the first CE programme that they benefited from;

- to prove the value of the project – this is relevant for two main categories:
 - sponsors, investors or donors are looking at results and at the impact of past programmes before taking the decision of investing in a future CE programme
 - citizens get confidence in the effec-

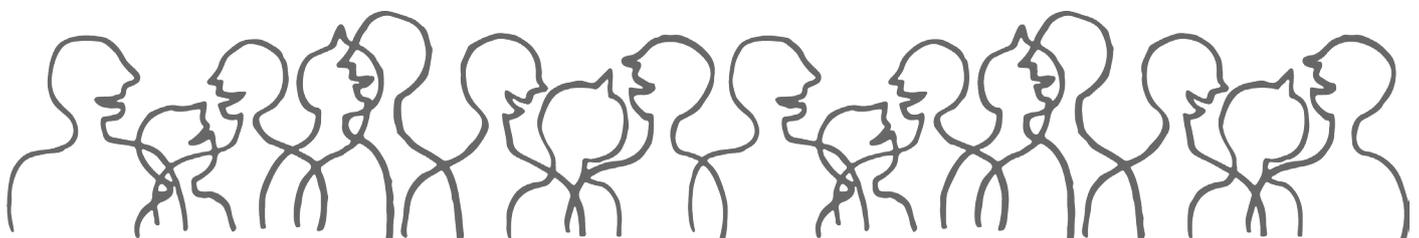


tiveness of a programme by seeing the impact of previous programmes similar or developed by the same entity (NGOs, public institution etc.)

- to raise awareness – even if people are part of the same community, their knowledge regarding the existing needs vary a lot. Thus, it is important to offer them specific examples based on data collected from previous programmes. This will facilitate the access to information and will ensure a better understanding on the topics;
- to develop/ improve best practices – showing the work done in the past can be inspiring to other entities from the same sector. On one hand, it can motivate them to take action and, on the other hand, it inspires them to do a better work, with better results and a stronger impact;
- to contribute to social research – unfortunately, the data found in this field has many issues (from lack of information to unsecure sources). Therefore, measuring the impact, collecting quantitative and qualitative data, is relevant for a wide category of consumers, some of them being researchers in the social field;
- to value the work of NGOs – the confidence in the NGO sector can

grow only by keep on showing the results, the impact and making new partnerships valuable for the community and for the purpose of community education;

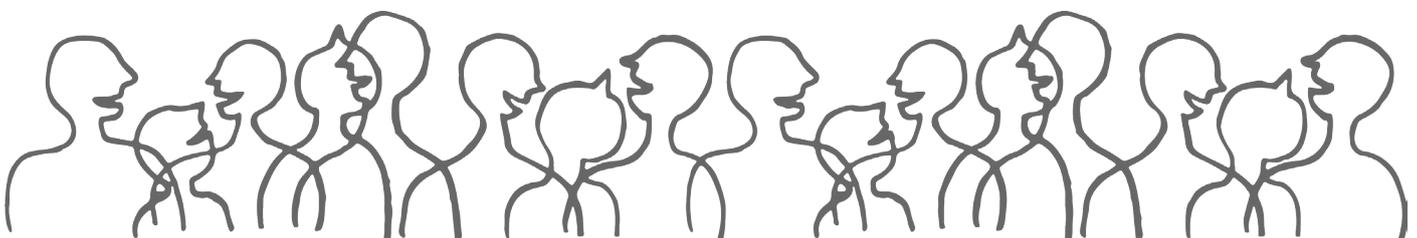
- to maintain and increase motivation – it refers to people directly involved as well as other. Firstly, by measuring the impact and identifying its position/status the entire community gets informed about positive changes happening at local, regional, national or even international level. This way, more people are motivated to join actions related to community education, to develop them or to support them in different ways. Secondly, the motivation of the CE providers is essential to be kept at a higher level since they are the ones to provide these programmes. Seeing the results and the impact of their work is a valuable tool in finding new resources and the inner motivation, and a push to continue;



- to assess the people involved – the involvement of each single person, coordinator, project manager or volunteer, is vital for the CE programme to take place. However, the work provided by them must be constantly evaluated. One indicator for the effectiveness of their work is the impact of the project they are all working on. Of course, there can be some other factors that influenced the progress of the project but it is still relevant to assess and self-assess capabilities, such as: resource management, time management, communication, flexibility, adaptation, initiative, dedication etc.;



- to value the work of volunteers – as any other party involved in the programme, the volunteers are also interested in the impact obtained. After all, this is why they get involved, to make a change. They should always be treated like a relevant piece in the puzzle. Their key role should be acknowledged and one of the ways to do it is by showing gratefulness for their contribution in creating that desired impact.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION DOES HAVE AN IMPACT

Here are some particular examples of community education programmes and the impact observed on individuals and society. These programmes have been collected from 5 NGOs from 5 different countries, who have been working on developing the content of this book based on their experience.

Food sharing is a programme that engages all categories of citizens with the aim of reducing food waste and helping the ones in need. This brings together people from different socio-economic background and shows them a new perspective of community involvement.

The impact created on different levels:

- individual: connecting people, preventing loneliness;
- society: tolerance, openness for diversity and inclusion, and ensuring more sustainable living.

Personal counseling is a programme developed for people who need guidance in different moments of their lives, but who for many reasons would not have access to it. The counseling meetings

create a safe space for beneficiaries to open up, to look for answers and to become more confident in their own strengths.

The impact created on different levels:

- individual: empowerment, self-confidence, proactivity;
- society: active citizenship, empathy, inclusion.

Educational workshops for people with special physical/mental conditions are organised as they are facing social and economic exclusion. These workshops are meant to provide them with a set of skills needed to getting a profession – mainly shop assistants or handmade crafters.

The impact created on different levels:

- individual: empowerment, self-confidence, life skills;
- society: active citizenship, empathy, inclusion.



Helping with homework through daily programmes is meant to give a hand to youth with a difficult socio-economic background, who are found at risk because of the conditions they live in. The support in learning is crucial as in most of the cases it is their only chance for remaining in the educational system. Without this help and care, they tend to abandon/drop out of school.

The impact created on different levels:

- individual: empowerment, motivation, education;
- society: active citizenship, employment.

Friend seeker is a project through which local citizens are put in contact with under-aged asylum seekers. Through this connection, the two youngsters are encouraged to develop an authentic friendship, both parties learning about diversity and going further than the limits of language or ethnicity.

The impact created on different levels:

- individual: guidance, openness, belongingness;
- society: active citizenship, integration.

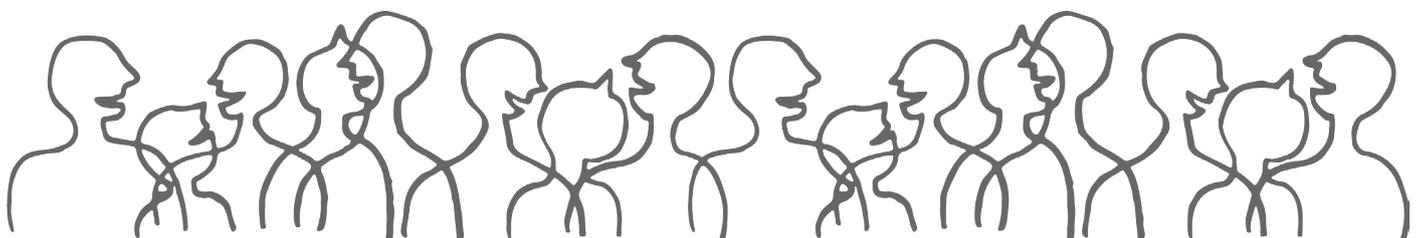
Summer camps for children with health issues is a programme designed so that the beneficiaries have the chance to

experience activities which normally they would not have access to. The programme involves a lot of outdoor activities which are adapted for children's safety and fun too.

The impact created on different levels:

- individual: happiness, self-confidence, positivism;
- society: active citizenship, inclusion.

All these, and many others, are possible with the help of the volunteers. They are a key element in community education programmes and a proof of their impact. Thanks to their involvement, more communities can benefit from the programmes or services offered. Through their own involvement the volunteers themselves benefit from community education, but from a different perspective – they take responsibility for the sake of the community having an impact on their own personalities too.



CHAPTER VI

**HOW TO INSPIRE NGOS TO USE CE,
TO LEARN FROM OUR FINDINGS AND
UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE
OF PR WORK, PROMOTION AND
DISSEMINATION OF CE ON LOCAL AND
EUROPEAN LEVEL**



According to the definition of Community Education (see chapter 1), civil engagement is the foundation of community education. CE is also needed for educating all members of a community in order to reach a better quality of life and a more cohesive society. In addition to individual initiatives, NGOs are among the most important providers of CE. Their CE programmes make an important and unique contribution to the education system, as they reach participants and target groups seldom enrolled in formal educational programmes and/or reached by formal education institutions. Usually NGOs are more successful in reaching participants who are not reached by professional educational institutes. This happens because usually there are no access barriers: anyone can participate, the learning environment is less formal, and the educational offers are based on the needs and the situation of the community.

Especially volunteer centres, neighbourhood centres and intercultural centres and other NGOs on local level reach a wide range of citizens in their community and are able to motivate them to participate in (volunteering) activities and free learning and training opportunities. In this way CE programmes improve not only the capacity of individuals and groups of all ages and backgrounds, but also the capacity and sustainability of communities.

We found out, that in many cases,

NGOs are not even aware that a lot of their work is CE. Because they are not aware of valuable contribution, they sometimes miss opportunities to market themselves as important education providers worthy of support.

Therefore we recommend NGOs to:

1. Find out, which of their projects and activities can be labeled as “CE programmes and activities”.
2. Consider the reasons, why and how their NGOs could benefit from CE.
3. Find out, what kind of inspiration is needed, so that they will start implementing CE programmes and projects within their own organization.
4. Identify ways to detect relevant findings and document them in an understandable and inspiring form
5. Develop ideas and strategies to promote their CE programmes and activities and disseminate their results and success factors, in order to inspire others to copy them. This way they are able to reach far more people benefiting from their good work.
6. Think about different formats and concepts of CE programmes and projects, and identify their needs, abilities, capacities and opportuni-



ties in order to start their own CE programmes and projects.

WHICH OF YOUR PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES CAN BE LABELED AS “CE PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES”?

As said in chapter one, CE is rooted in the idea that people can learn through, with, and from each other to create a “better world” through a better community. So any programme, project or activity that creates learning opportunities for all community members, can be labeled as a “CE programme or activity”. Usually they address a specific need or problem detected within the local community, and members of it (local citizens, organisations, or institutions).

Just have a look at our collection of good practices in this EBook (see chapter 7): even these few examples highlight the wide variety of learning opportunities through CE:

- In the Czech “Intergenerational urban garden” seniors, who usually have little contact with the young generation, meet kids regularly. The kids learn about garden work, which is not taught at school and most of them have no opportunity to practice otherwise.
- Roma face a lot of discrimination in Hungary. The “Neighbourhood Walking Tours” through the Roma district organized and guided by Roma, try to change the negative prejudices about the Roma in Hungary by giving participants the opportunity to see the community life through their eyes, hearing their side of the story, being able to communicate openly and hopefully overcome stereotypes and discriminating behaviour.
- The German project “Talk with me” makes it possible that young refugees meet and talk to young Germans. By meeting regularly the involved refugees improve their German language skills, understand the German (youth) culture and hopefully friendships will be formed.
- The Romanian project “EVSification” provides a qualified training to be active in the field of EVS volunteer management, in order to improve the work of and the services for international volunteers.
- The Austrian project “Dinner Together” tackles not only the problem of food waste, but also support the development of a “neighbourhood identity” in a deprived area, a place, where members of the community are welcome and meet each other.
- In Finland the “Language Café” or-



ganized by international volunteers, allows the visitors to get taster sessions of learning a different language and a bit about the different cultures of the migrants, immigrants and refugees living in the city.

WHY AND HOW COULD YOUR NGO BENEFIT FROM CE?

To convince others, but also everyone within your own organisation, to participate or to organise Community Education programmes and activities, you have to explain to them, how they could benefit from such programmes and activities.

Here are some benefits, we have experienced:

- You learn new things, which might help you to improve the situation in your own community.
- You will work in a more professional way
- You can create new or improve the partnerships with authorities and local institutions, as you will offer solutions on community level
- You might gain additional and/or improved human resources: participants in your programme or activity

might join you or volunteer for you, and/or participants of your own organisation gain new skills, competences or know-how

- CE might strengthen the identity of the organization
- You will involve citizens in participation and decision making process
- You might find new partners for cooperations and support
- By providing useful CE programmes and activities you will gain a new or improved reputation as “problem solver“ (image building!). You might be seen as an important stakeholder in Community Building.
- Participation in CE programmes might lead to more motivation among your staff and volunteers.
- You will activate (new) people to provide services for the community, especially people who are not reached easily by formal institutions.

To summarize this: NGOs can gain a lot of advantages by implementing Community Education in their programmes and activities.



HOW CAN YOUR NGO OR OTHER NGOS BE INSPIRED, SO THAT YOU WILL START IMPLEMENTING CE PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS WITHIN YOUR OWN ORGANIZATION?

Think of all the benefits which can arise from CE programmes and activities: access to more and free knowledge and information, better qualified and engaged and/or new volunteers, supporters and staff members, solutions to existing problems on community level, new networks, partners and cooperation, new services and opportunities and a better image in the community. That alone should inspire and motivate NGOs to start their own CE programme!

But before you start your own CE programme and activity there are some things, you could consider, which will raise motivation:

a) You need to be inspired and motivated yourself for implementing your CE programme and activity. If you are not inspired and motivated, you will not be able to inspire or motivate others. The more inspired and motivated you are, the easier it will be for you to motivate and inspire others and the general public, and to find supporters and sponsors. There is a nice quote

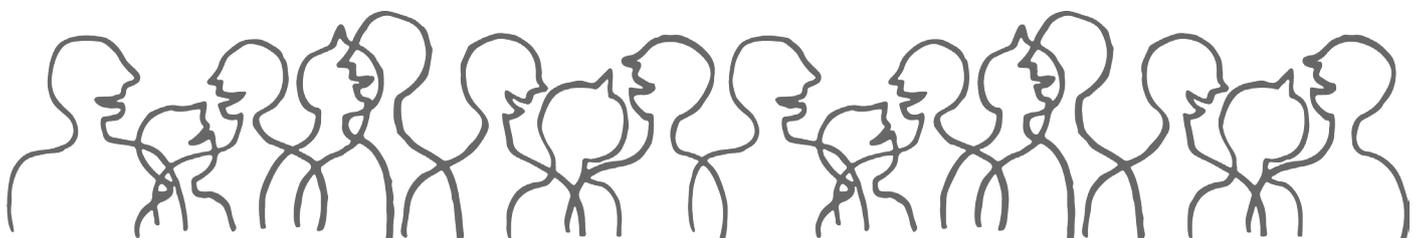
about this from Aurelius Augustinus: “What you want to ignite in others must first feel burning inside yourself.”

b) If you are highly motivated you will find new and innovative ways to realize your ideas. Motivation leads to innovation and vice versa.

c) Think of a problem or need in your own community, which can be addressed through CE. If your CE programme or activity helps directly to solve a problem locally and directly, then the motivation to participate will increase, and such high level of motivation will help you keep going.

d) You don't have to reinvent the wheel: Is there an existing CE programme or activity you like a lot and would like to have in your own community? You don't have to create something completely new, if good solutions already exist. Especially at the beginning it is a lot easier to copy something which worked well somewhere else and is already pilot-tested. This will save you time, resources and energy.

e) Look out for cooperations on European level as well: not only in your region or your country, people have wonderful and great CE programmes and activities. You can find other NGOs working in a similar field like you, who already have good practices that you can copy. For example the partners in



this VOICE project have inspired each other, and we have been copying projects and programmes from our partners. It is very inspirational to work on European level and to get a taste of what the EU could be like.

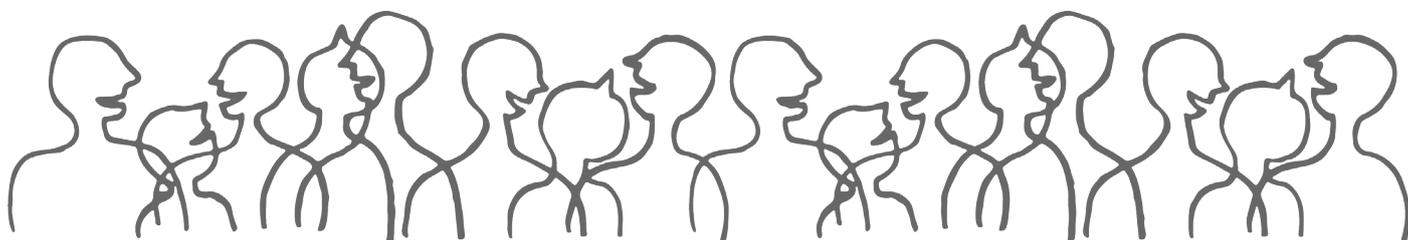
HOW TO DETECT RELEVANT FINDINGS AND DOCUMENT THEM IN AN UNDERSTANDABLE AND INSPIRING FORM?

Keep your eyes and ears open: if more and more people are giving positive feedback to your CE programmes and activities, if the information about them is spread a lot by word-of-mouth and personal recommendations, if people and the media are talking about it, if the participation rate is increasing, if other organisations address you and ask for cooperation, if your programmes and activities are copied: then you know your programme and activities are successful.

In order to find out, why they are successful, ask participants, trainers, involved staff and partners regularly: What did you like about it? What did you learn and how do you use this new knowledge? What is the benefit? Use the same questions/questionnaire and record the answers in a structured way. And if you have the

answer it is important to record your findings in a way, that others can easily copy or adapt to the programme or activity. Write it as a recipe: first list down all the ingredients one needs, the way to implement it and recommendations as well as warnings in order to make it a success. Collect quotes and comments by various participants, trainers, partners, staff members: this will make the description more authentic, trustworthy and more interesting to read.

Never forget to take good quality pictures and videos during your CE programmes and activities: a picture can say a thousand times more than words: visualize your project! Try to make it also look fun, use the method of gamification: this motivates and inspires people to attend or copy the activities. Add informations on other related resources and references and give contact details for further information.



HOW CAN YOU PROMOTE YOUR CE WORK AND DISSEMINATE THE RESULTS AND SUCCESS FACTORS OF YOUR CE PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS?

NGOs must operate and be managed in the public interest. They must communicate their goals and objectives in order to a) build an image, b) maintain visibility, credibility, accountability and growth, c) raise funds and support, d) find volunteers, staff, participants and beneficiaries. People need to know that your NGO exist, what you are doing, for whom you are doing it, and why you are doing it. Therefore PR and promotion work as well as networking and dissemination activities clearly play a vital role in the work of NGOs.

In order to be successful in communications, NGOs must:

a) build an image first: What does my organization stand for? What is our identity? What is our mission? What are our leading principles? Why are we doing CE? And why are we experts in CE?

b) be clear about the objectives of, as well as the core messages and informations about their CE work

c) identify their target groups: whom do I want to participate in my CE programmes and activities, and who could support me, informing and activating them?

d) understand how internal and external communication works

e) know and choose the suitable ways and methods of communication

f) network

g) should disseminate the results and success factors of the CE work, so that their CE works has a much wider impact.

Unfortunately the various target groups have different communication and information channels and methods. In chapter 6.6. and its subchapters we will also give you some ideas on how to improve your image, your internal and external communication work, and how to use PR work, marketing and promotion measures, networking events and dissemination activities more effectively.

IMAGE BUILDING

For an NGO, visibility is essential. Only those who are present in public and whose concerns are understood and supported by a large number of people have a chance to create an image and thus achieve long-term success. This



means NGOs have to build an image: What does my organization stand for? What is our identity? What is our mission? What are our leading principles? Image building is also essential for internal and external communication, so that communication is coherent.

Often NGOs have to cultivate not only one image, but also different ones depending on their core activities. For example: Why are we doing CE? And why are we experts in CE?

An NGO has to transport at least four coherent images:

- The first image is for the target group: The target group you have in mind must feel addressed and understood so that they are willing to participate or cooperate. Here the special needs in communication have to be taken into account. An NGO that is committed to seniors for example, must consider other aspects than one that is committed to young people. (for example: gymnastics programs have to be adapted to the physical condition...)
- The second image is for supporters, sponsors and possible customers: They must be directly informed through various channels about what is happening with their investments in NGOs and thus in society. Annual

reports, publications, minutes, visits, sponsoring events etc. are part of the maintenance of the relationship with the NGO's financial backers. It is very important to never forget to mention the sponsors and supporters, whether at public appearances or on mailings.

- The third image is for employees: It is not important whether they are employees, interns or volunteers. Only those who can identify with the goals of the NGO and feel that they are in good hands can work effectively and motivated in the long term. Here it is important to know what the working atmosphere is like, whether employees receive sufficient feedback, whether they are aware of any disadvantages and, if not, whether they can talk about them and actively take measures to minimise inequalities and disadvantages. Internal communication is important and employees are valued. Former employees also take an image with them and the more satisfied employees are, the fewer problems the NGO will have in attracting new employees.
- The fourth image is perhaps the most general: it's the NGO's public image, meaning the image for the general public: This image is mainly cultivated through face-to-face encounters



and appearances in various media. Classic media such as print media, radio and television, but also Internet media such as a good website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube, blogs and podcasts are the channels through which the public gains an image of the NGO.

However, an image of an NGO must be coherent and holistic. Authenticity is essential. On all levels (vision, attitude and behavior of leaders & staff, type of activities, messages and information given, etc.) an NGO must act coherent and authentic. Only then the 4 different facets of an image can intertwine. If the external image and the internal image do not fit together, this will sooner or later become a problem or lead to failure or misunderstandings. The solution is either to remedy the deficits or if necessary change the image.

Example:

Faced with the refugee crisis in their city of Passau, the German partner “Gemeinsam leben & lernen in Europa” (GLL) started a lot of CE programmes and activities for refugees and voluntary refugee workers. Because of its good work in the field, a lot of press coverage and through it winning some integration award, GLL got an image of being a “refugee organization”, and less people used the other CE pro-

grammes (e.g. intergenerational learning programmes, youth engagement, European exchange programmes).

What can an NGO do, if something like this happens? First, reflect whether this is the direction the NGO wants to go. If yes, invest more time and energy carrying on in this direction. If no, think how you can improve the promotion of the other CE programmes or invent new ones, how to reach the other intended target groups and your internal and external communication strategies. Involve your leaders, staff, volunteers, members, and visitors in that process, and identify their needs, wishes and ideas (e.g. through face-to-face talks, surveys, feedback meetings etc.). If you have done that, then address your different target groups more precisely and adapt your public image accordingly.

YOUR CORE MESSAGES AND INFORMATIONS ABOUT YOUR CE WORK

But in order to make this a success all these different people need to know your mission statements and understand the objectives of your NGOs. They all should speak with one voice: understanding and describing your mission and guiding principles, the current activities, knowing how the organization works, so that the same messages get across. So each organization should



have a written and well-known mission statement, which is short and concise and clearly communicates the essence of how they envision their NGO. It should be formulated like an elevator pitch: Each volunteer, member, etc. should be able to hold nearly the same brief, persuasive speech for 20-30 seconds that sparks interest in what your organization does.

DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING YOUR TARGET GROUPS

To identify the right PR and promotion strategy, and to promote your CE offers and work successfully, you need to identify your target group first and be clear what you need them for: Whom do I want to participate in my CE programmes and activities and who could support me, informing and activating them?

So your primary target groups are the (potential) participants of your CE programmes and activities. You should be able to clearly define your participants and know your potential audience: Do you want to address young, middle-aged or elderly people? What kind of education background should they have? Do you want to reach disadvantaged people and in what kind of disadvantaged group do you have in mind (unemployed, people with mental or physical disabilities,

migrants or refugees, school dropouts, and others). Should they have certain skills, competences, interests or needs? Should they come from your local community or can they come from different places as well? The more precisely you define about your envisioned participants, the better you can adapt your communication, promotion and marketing strategies!

Your secondary target groups are people, who could support you in promotion and marketing, but also in the dissemination of your good work and results. Our advice is to look first within your own organization: this is the easiest way to find good supporters for your course. Involve your volunteers and staff members, board members, members and member organization in the acquisition process. But also family members, friends and colleagues can support you. But of course look also outside your organization: Who could support me?

Here are some examples, you might find helpful:

- a) other NGOs, community centres, who involve volunteers in their activities or being volunteer/intercultural/neighbourhood centres on local, regional, national and EU level
- b) funders of CE programs, volunteer



trainings and multipliers (e.g. companies, foundations, legislative bodies and policy makers, city or municipality council members, members of parliament, MEPs) on local, regional and national level,

c) volunteers, CE practitioners and volunteer coordinators on local, regional and national level

d) general public on local/regional/national level

e) umbrella organisations on local, regional, national and EU level

f) (adult) education providers (school, vocational schools and training providers, (adult) education providers, universities

They all can help you, to spread the news about your offers and results. This way you might find more participants but also inspire more people to copy your CE programmes and activities. This way you'll reach far more people who will benefit from your good work.

But of course it is not always easy to identify, what kind of multiplier you'll need and have on local level and what kind of instruments and tools of communication would be best. We have learned, it is best:

- To find out first about your local po-

litical and social structure: which are the most important organisations, institutions and persons active in the field you want to work in, and how to get in contact with them?

- Information is important! Read local newspapers, instagram and facebook postings, be aware of rumours,
- Detect the people, who might and will support your course
- Have good connections with local politicians and decision makers, if possible on personal level
- Involve and invite local authorities and “relevant“ people to your events
- Invite members of all parties, and be careful not to be connected too closely with only one political party. Being too closely linked to one party, might lead to the risk of other parties not supporting your organization or course just because they don't want to support a “competing” other party
- Be aware of the changes of politicians, local leaders after elections
- Network with other organisations active on local level, and start with small scale cooperations and small joint activities for starters.



- And of course visit the events of other organisations: this shows your interest and respect for their activities, but these events can also lead to new networking opportunities for you.
- Be a networking hub: collect information and contact details about all relevant actors in your region, have a database and spread these informations if needed. If you help others or spread useful information and contact details, people will remember you in a positive way.

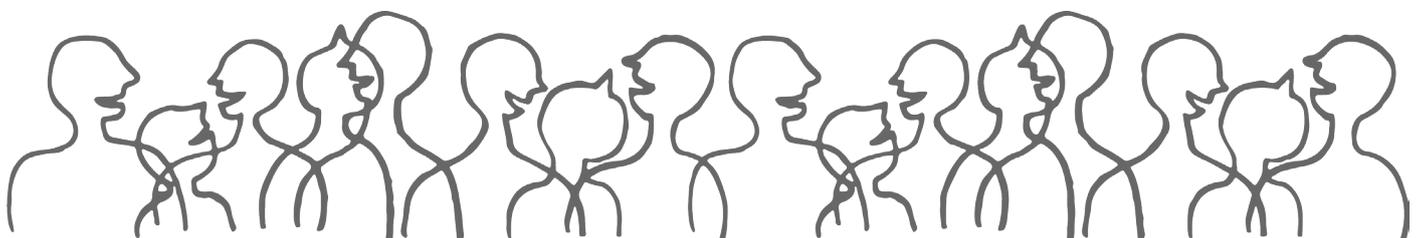
UNDERSTANDING AND ORGANIZING EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

In order to reach their goals and objectives, every organization is required to maintain a relation with other organisations, institutions, stakeholders and the general public and to organize “External communication”. External communication means exchanging (formal or non-formal) information and messages with other organisations, officials, clients, decision makers, companies or the general public outside your own organization, as well as interacting with them.

The objectives of external communication are to facilitate cooperation with groups and individuals, and to present a favourable image of your organization, of your services and products to poten-

tial and actual client/customers of your services and products. But you also want to reach out to society and show the impact and benefits activities, e.g. by addressing and providing possible solutions to fundamental societal challenges.

Especially when you are setting up a project in community education, it is important to inform and promote project and its result/success stories before, during, and after implementing it. “Communication on projects is a strategically planned process that starts at the outset of the action and continues throughout its entire lifetime, aimed at promoting the action and its results. It requires strategic and targeted measures for communicating about (i) the action and (ii) its results to a multitude of audiences, including the media and the public and possibly engaging in a two-way exchange.” (Source: EC Research & Innovation Participant Portal Glossary/Reference Terms).



SUITABLE WAYS METHODS AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

To reach the audience you want, you need to know and choose the suitable ways and methods of communication. But this is not an easy task! Usually your target audiences are multiple audiences beyond the project's own community, including the media and the general public. So therefore a variety of channels may be suitable for external communication in order to capture the attention of your (potential) audience. And a proper mix of PR tools can help NGOs ensuring that all their target groups are reached effectively.

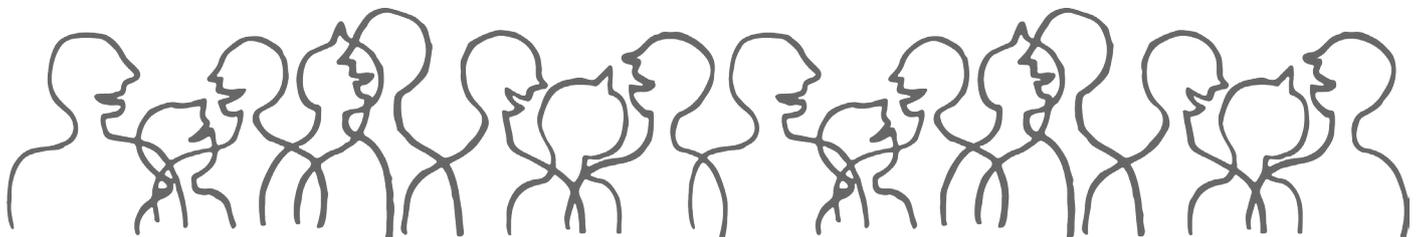
Here are some ideas for external communication measures:

- Face-to-face meetings,
- Give your volunteers a voice (e.g. at conference, as quotes on website and in publications. Usually this works very well, and the information is usually more authentic and trustworthy)
- Press work and public relations work for print or broadcast media (press releases, interviews, press conferences)
- Internet (own websites, information hypelinked with other websites) and social media (Facebook, Instagram,

Youtube, Blogs, podcasts)

- Information and/or promotion campaigns
- Newsletters and (E)mailing
- Advertising (e.g. on volunteer platforms)
- Presentations and production of information material (e.g. leaflets, posters, rollups)
- Networking activities
- Live events and conferences
- And never underestimate the power of “word-of-mouth propaganda”: within your NGO your volunteers, staff members, board, and the users of your programmes and activities are the best ambassadors of your course: All of them will and should tell about the organisation at every opportunity, promote it and motivate new members and volunteers to participate.

This means you have to not only adapt the information to the way and language of your target audience, but you also have to choose the right channel for communication. If you want to reach various target groups you have to use many communication channels at the same time.



NETWORKING

NGOs and organisations that rely on volunteers often face a shortage of resources. Therefore it is important to have good network to compensate the lack of paid staff, funding and other resources.

The meaning of “networking” might not be completely clear, even if we use the term regularly in our daily lives. To put it simply, networking means “establishing contacts, and maintaining and using them.” Those contacts can be friends, acquaintances, business partners or other organisations.

The strength of networks are, that they usually are

- innovative and multifunctional (“market of possibilities”)
- have decentralised structures and a flat hierarchy follow the principle “together you can achieve more than alone”
- allow better access to knowledge and information through network partners
- fast to establish but also to terminate, because there is no or little bureaucracy to be considered

But of course networks are not always perfect solutions and have their weaknesses, as they

- have no fixed structures
- are not a legal entity (in most cases)
- are not easy to coordinate
- have no binding arrangements regarding tasks, roles, input and output
- often lack professional coordination, and insufficient coordination of network partners can lead to multiplication of work or contradictory opinions being represented in the name of the network
- the balance between taking and giving can be difficult to manage, especially if you have networking partners, who just take and give little or nothing.

Here you’ll find some information on how to establish these contacts:

a) Collecting information and contact details are essential in networking

The key persons in an NGO should always be well informed. Information is essential because it provides the basis for decisions. NGOs should know:



- how exactly their target groups are structured and by which means and ways they can best be reached.
- who could and would support their own concerns and how to contact them (collect all relevant contact details!)
- who the local politicians are and for which departments they are responsible
- which posts and responsibilities were assigned to new politicians after elections
- which authorities and offices are relevant for their own work and which officials and employees are known there
- what is happening daily by reading regional, national and international news (from print media, internet, conversations...).
- which programmes political parties follow

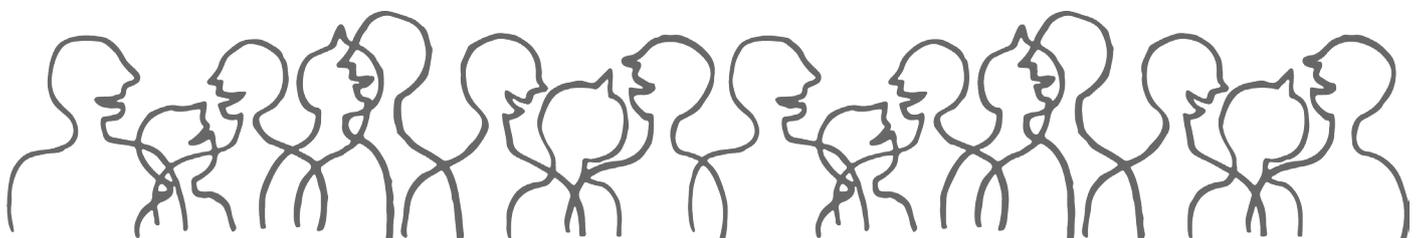
In order to manage all relevant data, every NGO needs a database, it can be either a simple excel list or a professional digital data base. No matter what tool you use, make sure all staff members and volunteers use the same and that it is updated regularly. You need to

pay attention to data protection regulations: collect data in a way that it meets the standards of data protection rules. And accept and respect that nobody is obliged to put his family and personal connections at the service of an NGO! Accept boundaries of your volunteers, staff, and their families, friends and colleagues.

b) Knowing your own local and individual networks

An NGO is first and foremost located in a specific local environment and has to deal with the local community. So it is most important to know your local community well and to do networking. But how can you do it?

When it comes to networking personal contacts are crucial. Right after our birth we grow up in various networks (family networks, neighbourhood networks, school networks etc.) that influence our social and professional life. But we also set up our own personal networks (friends, colleagues, interest based networks, digital networks etc.) and our professional networks (colleagues, clients or costumers, connections to other companies, organisations, stakeholders etc.). But also the organization or company we work for is part of networks or sets up networks. It is important to keep in mind, that one person is not only active in one net-



work, but generally in several. Contacts of one network can be of use for someone in or for another network, as well.

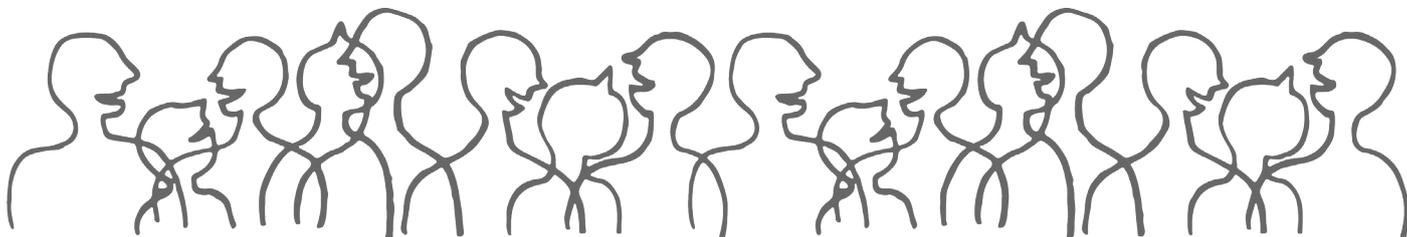
So we are connected in a very comprehensive way, and sometimes we underestimate how many resources we have access to (useful information and contacts, material and infrastructure of others we can use, mental and physical support of people, communication and dissemination opportunities etc.). What you always have to remember, at the end, we are connected to PEOPLE, who hopefully know and trust you and therefore support you if needed or rely on your support.

c) How can networks be formed and expanded?

- identify common interests first: what would be the benefits for anyone joining the the network
- establish a concrete cause or aim (e.g. a joint project idea or the necessity to bundle resources due to lack in funding and support)
- develop an interesting platform (idea) or create a framework/opportunity for a platform
- have common basic-intentions: common formulation of goals while simultaneously protect the autonomy

of the individual

- identify, address and obtain network partners/members
 - Who has the resources/competences to support my goal?
 - What could motivate my partners to participate?
 - Which platform do I have to offer in order to realize an effective network?
 - Who might be an interesting/useful partner for the network or has many contacts?
- people are just as important as organisations and institution, sometimes even more important
- establish trust between the partners
- create a sense of unity and a sense of belonging
- respect the different competences/knowledge of the partners
- accept that participation of partners in the network is voluntary
- be open for new partners and contacts
- accept that a network is a “loose”



connection and shouldn't have formal hierarchies. A network is a temporary arrangement of responsibilities and duties, even if some networks work well for a long period of time.

- find a mode for your collaboration: definition of tasks and competences, decide rules, acknowledgement, etc.
 - close and loose relations have to be managed in an adequate way
 - acknowledge and utilise the skills and experience of members or partners involved
 - continuity and reliability is important
 - clarification of mutual expectations is also important
 - an exchange: all partners in the network should profit from the participation in the network
 - plan small events and invite the desired people/ NGOs/ companies/ stakeholders
 - speak about your CE programme and activities to as many different people as possible – but in a nice way. Don't push yourself on people, respect boundaries.
 - attend other events and meetings
- organized by other organisations and institutions, especially in the field of your CE programmes and activities
 - attend political meetings, and be present at local political events. If possible, ask if you can showcase your CE programmes and activities or at least give some short information or presentation about it.
 - search for multipliers and representatives of the targeted audience, and try to make them disseminating your CE programmes and activities.
 - use networks, but also – more importantly contribute to networks (e.g. disseminating useful infos and contacts, provide resources like material, space, catering etc.)
 - avoid typical mistakes and problems of networking, like
 - o unclear objective and goal
 - o different understanding of the mission and objective of the network
 - o unclear measurements of the outputs and results
 - o unequal distribution of work
 - o individual members exploiting



the network but not contributing

- o changing representation of individual organisations and changing of personnel

- o lengthy discussion

- o more work and contribution necessary than network partners are willing and able to give

- o difficulties in finding joint dates (e.g. for meetings)

- But be prepared as well: have always your business card with you and a leaflet with short information about your organization or CE programme/project, which you can give to people, you have met and might be interested.

Another advice for successful networking is: Give, give, give. Maintaining your network connections is important and needs effort! Sometimes your contribution will not pay off directly, but in the end you will receive. So be patient, the work which is initially invested in network maintenance, is worthwhile in the longer term, as your personal and professional network connections will be stronger. And strong network connections will save resources, spread your own ideas more quickly, solutions can be found more easily and efficiently

through direct contacts and short communication paths.

d) Networking on European level

But of course networking is not only important on local level. If an NGO has set itself the goal of also being active at National and European level, it needs to develop strategies to expand their existing local and personal networks.

The involved partners of this project benefited a lot on working together on a European level: we learnt a lot from one another, found additional funding for our activities on local level, got inspired by others and are copying now some of their activities and projects. So we want to promote networking and cooperation on European level as well. But how can you do this and get connected with other NGOs working in your field? Here are some recommendations of activities, which worked for us:

- Visit networking events and conference at European level. Check out with your national authorities: sometimes they provide programmes and funding for attending European conferences and events.
- Join a transnational project as partner organisation: The European Commission provides European databases like the Electronic Platform for



Adult Learning in Europe EPALE (<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/partner-search>), Funding & tender opportunities - Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA) <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search>

- Contact the partner organization of this project
- Contact umbrella organisation in your field, who have EU connections, and ask for their support
- Find and use existing networks by searching the internet and using your personal network
- Join European Umbrella organisations like Volonteuropa (<https://volonteuropa.eu/>)
- Use the programme European Solidarity Corps, and work with volunteers from all across Europe. They will not only promote you (hopefully) in the future, but might be your future cooperation partners or connect you with the right partner organization in their country. It is a good way to start international cooperation.

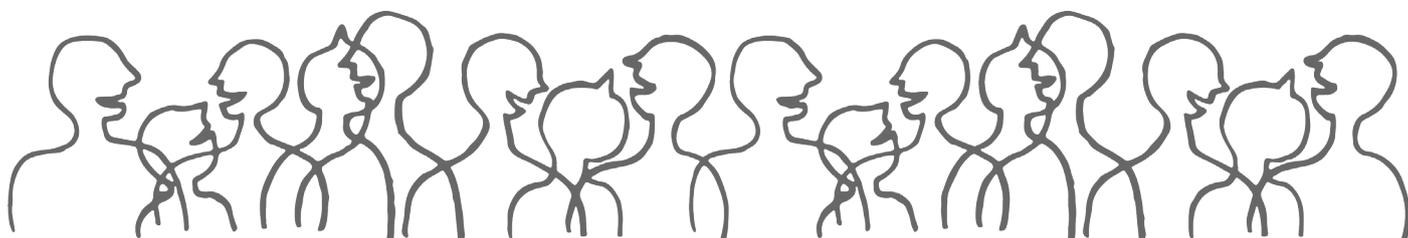
DISSEMINATION

In order to increase the impact of your CE work, NGOs should disseminate their results and success factors among potential users. After the project, others should be able to use and take up your project results, thus maximising the impact of research and findings. So the objective should be to transfer knowledge and results to others at the end of a project in a way, that they will be inspired to use, copy and implement the results. This is called dissemination. Dissemination is defined as the “public disclosure of the results by any appropriate means (other than resulting from protecting or exploiting the results), including by scientific publications in any medium.”

(Source: https://www.iprhelppdesk.eu/sites/default/files/EU-IPR-Brochure-Boosting-Impact-C-D-E_0.pdf)

What results are worth disseminating?

Of course good and transferable CE practice examples are always a result others will understand easily and find inspirational. A good practice example can often illustrate better, what your CE programme or activities are about. To make it more attractive to potential users and multipliers, describe it in a simple language, add pictures, films and quotations of users of your CE work.



In addition, good practice examples are like ambassadors of an NGO and can be presented accordingly.

Other results in the field of CE can be: curricula, handbook on the implementation of certain CE programmes and activities, research report, films, videos, learning and teaching material, descriptions of activities, ... These results can be shared:

- by own staff, members and volunteers
- at internal team meetings
- in workshops
- in newsletters
- in proposals
- in final reports
- on online platforms
- at Youtube, social and traditional media

Which kinds of platform, media channels, programs etc. are useful for the dissemination of CE projects/programs?

Results obtained become more valuable if they can be made available to the general public. Most funding programmes require communication and dissemination of projects and results. But also for

NGOs that finance themselves differently, it is advantageous to disseminate their projects and results on different platforms and through different channels. In this way, not only can their relevant knowledge be used by the community, but the image and legitimacy of the NGOs can also be strengthened.

Dissemination can take place via:

- Traditional media like local or national TV programmes, local radio channels or newspapers and magazines
- Flyers
- Newsletter
- Social Media
- Use of networks, databases,
- The promotion of participants, your volunteers, and partners
- EU platforms on education and on EU website
- National authorities



WHAT DIFFERENT FORMATS AND CONCEPTS OF CE PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS EXISTS? WHAT KIND OF ABILITIES CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES DO WE NEED IN ORDER TO START OUR OWN CE PROGRAMME AND PROJECT?

As said in chapter 6.1. CE programmes and projects come in all shapes and formats, tackling all kind of different topics which might be important for your community.

We wrote this EBook with the intention to inspire and help other NGOs and volunteer led organisations to start or improve their own CE programme or project.

So check out Chapter 7 with our collection of good practices, and hopefully you will find a CE programme you will like to copy.

From our experience, what you need to start a CE programme or activity is:

- the ability to identify real needs or benefits for your local community and
- the willingness for life-long learning

- resources: staff or volunteers, money, infrastructure, material
- dedicated staff and teachers/trainers, who really know what they are talking about
- flexibility and openness, so that you are able to adapt your programme or activity to the current needs of your audience and users
- someone with good organizational skills, to set up the framework for your CE work
- someone within your organization who is good at PR and promotion work
- a good network within the local community in order to reach your potential users and audience

And all we can say at the end:

Stop waiting, thinking, watching & wondering. Start doing.





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