CREATING PROSPECTS IN PERIPHERIES

COUNTRY REPORTS AND TOOL BOX

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INTRODUCTION

What are peripheries?

The word periphery means an outside part of something, a hinterland. Thus, when we think of a peripheral region, we imagine a territory that lies outside a core region. We define one by contrasting it with the other. Because we distinguish between the core and the periphery, they must be different. Indeed, being the 'engine of growth', the core should also provide benefits for the peripheries. However, in practice, the effect does not reach peripheral areas, which is why they are often nicknamed as places 'left behind'.

While all regions, even those in the core, come with their own place specific spectrum of challenges, the core challenges of Lack of Participation, Infrastructural Decline, Population Loss and Brain Drain are almost omnipresent in peripheries and often take

the form of a vicious circle as they multiply each other. There are three types of inner peripheries depending on what challenges are predominant locally
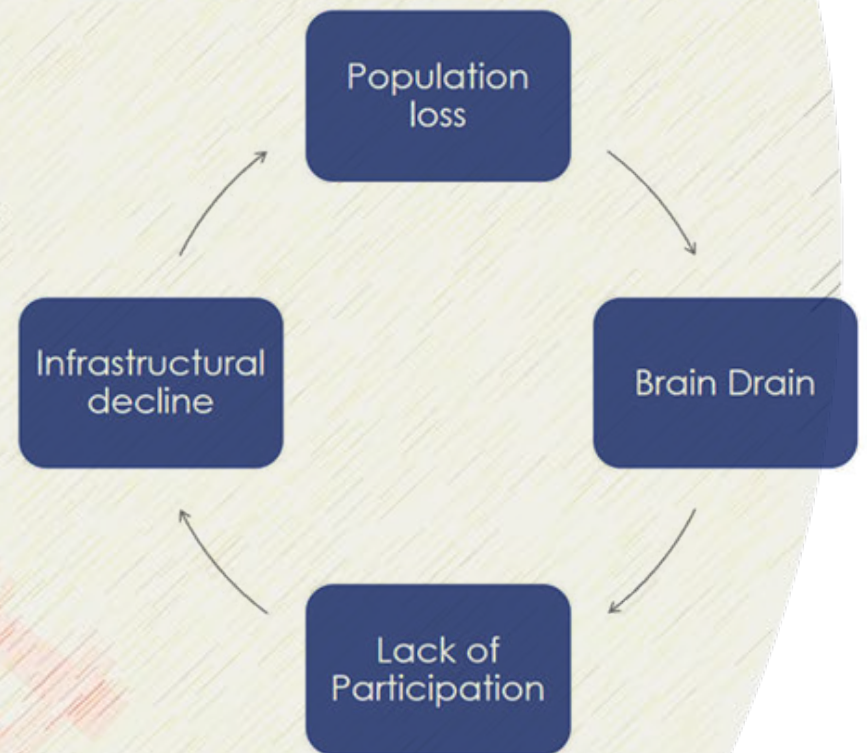
Vicious Circle of Challenges in Peripheries

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
Economy	**Wellbeing**	**Community**
The main weakness lies in infrastructure connecting the periphery with neighbouring business centres.	Residents have restricted access to services (e.g. social and care services), due to region's low population or cost cutting policies.	Local actors do not work together and their networks are poor, e.g. because of complicated local power relations.

Types of Peripheries

Type 1 and Type 2 are typically rural or mountain areas. Type 3 can often be found in more urban areas. Peripheral regions mapped by the PIP project represent all three types. Our regions are introduced in the next section.

OUR REGIONS: CHALLENGES

Peripheral regions face several interconnected challenges. If one of these challenges worsens, it affects the others, causing a vicious cycle effect. For instance, when a region offers too few services, residents may decide to move to a region with better services. This out-migration then leads to the loss of tax revenue and new downsizing measures. Local authorities are thus forced to cut down services even more, impacting more people and driving them out of the region.

While attempts are made to improve the position of peripheries, these efforts may backfire, causing a negative 'pump effect'. In other words, an investment that was meant to improve the periphery's position, actually weakens it. For example, while a new road shortens travel time between the periphery and more economically vibrant centres, it also invites potentially stronger competitors from these centres. Therefore, peripheries need policies that also aim at developing local capital, such as skills, networks, business opportunities and so on. Investing in infrastructure alone is not enough.

Samsø

What makes Samsø an interesting periphery is the paradoxical nature of its public image. On the one hand, it is pictured as a progressive paradise with green initiatives, yet it still suffers from the normal prejudices that other peripheral regions also encounter. It is often showcased as a cure for peripheries to follow yet remains bounded by the constraints that living in a periphery often entails.

Lieksa

Challenges in North Karelian Lieksa are typical for an isolated region. Many young people leave the town to start higher education or pursue more diverse employment opportunities. Because of long distances, daily commuting is not an option. The average age of residents is rising, which creates demand for specialised care services. As in any small place, belonging can take extreme forms: from a close knit community to loneliness.

Vorpommern

Western-Pommerania is a typical periphery that has had continuous out-migration for a long time. Special to this region are the history of the German Reunification and its transborder character. While the Reunification has aggravated the economic decline, unemployment and depopulation, the border community overlap comes with opportunities of repopulation. East- West migration could revive local infrastructure, but the new population set up requires tackling xenophobia and cultural gaps.

Larissa

In Larissa, there is a lack of job opportunities, education providers, as well as cultural and social activities targeted for young people. In the region there are no youth centers or specialized activities for young people. This is especially unique for a large city like Larissa with a large amount of young people.

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Sardinia

In Sardinia rural areas are way less developed than cities, and this is also reflected by the unequal distribution of business activities, which account for 30% in Sassari and 32% in Cagliari. This affects demography, as population migrates to cities in Sardinia (or to other regions and Countries) to find a job. Searching for jobs is not an easy task in any case, as unemployment is a problem that affects 2/3 of population. Revitalizing rural areas by increasing business activities and creating jobs, represents the opportunity to cope with above mentioned issues.

Czestochowa

Our region has typical challenges such as depopulation (ageing of society) and social inclusion of people, including immigrants from other countries. Our unique challenge is an untapped potential for multidirectional development, as stakeholders don't cooperate with each other.

The Guadalhorce Valley

The Guadalhorce Valley is a region with a privileged location in the province of Malaga. Being close to the capital and the coast, the region has valuable natural resources such as fertile land for agriculture, favorable climate and unbeatable natural settings for the development of sustainable tourism. However, this situation of privileged proximity also harms us by making many young people feel more attracted to living in nearby cities, where they find more job opportunities. Therefore, our peripheral region continues to depopulate, suffers from brain drain and a lack of diversity culture, as well as lacks youth and innovative entrepreneurship initiatives.

OUR REGIONS: UTOPIAS

Typically, we juxtapose peripheries against core territories. These two places often seem like negative others – for example, peripheries offer limited employment prospects, whereas cities offer more diverse career opportunities. As peripheral regions face numerous challenges, one should not forget that they also have unique assets. To paraphrase one of the residents from the PIP regions, 'a periphery is a state of mind'. Therefore, a 'bright future' for a periphery does not mean turning it into a city. A smart development plan must preserve the assets that peripheries already have, such as a sense of belonging in a place, proximity to nature, peacefulness, and a sense of safety for one's family.

For peripheral communities, a 'bright future' means connecting with other regions to boost local potential. It means using the full potential of digital technologies and becoming an arena of social innovation. It also means a close-knit community of local actors who support each other's activities.
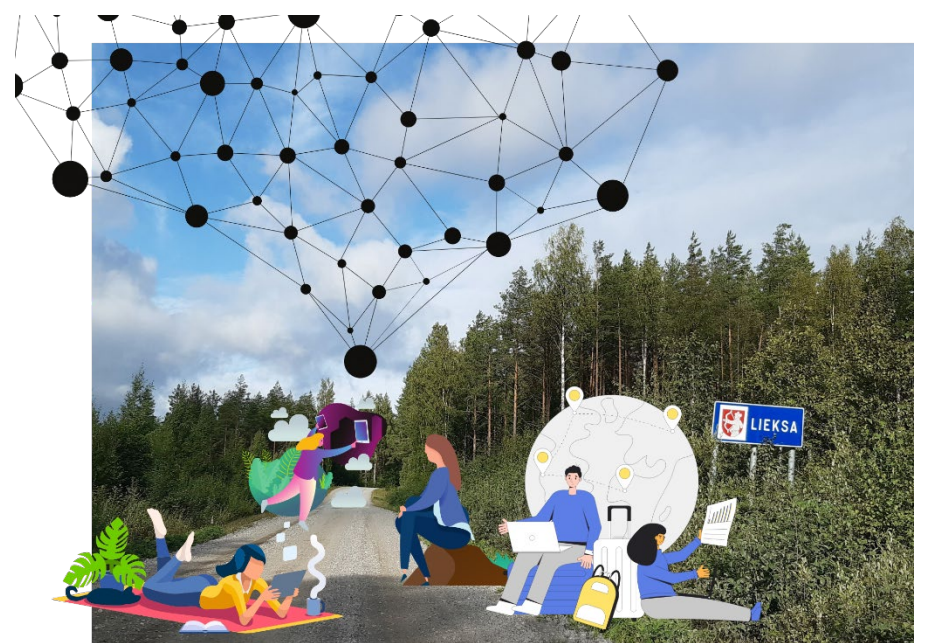
Samsø

For Samsø, the best direction for the future appears to be to unlocking the potential of the ambition and drive youth in the region can provide, as well as using the islands nature and community spirit to an advantage. For us this lies in sustainable entrepreneurship. This would be a place where individuals and businesses come together to form networks, share knowledge to create new opportunities for growth, all whilst sticking to the principles that makes Samsø unique. By understanding what the island has to offer, as well as what possibilities there are to create new and exciting opportunities, Samsø can address some of the issues it faces as a periphery. The toolkit can serve a purpose to help achieve this through a combination of methods, where networks can be formed, goals can be set, and knowledge can be exchanged to truly work towards the goal of Samsø as a utopia.

Lieksa

When the corona crisis hit, many city dwellers in Finland decided to wait it out in their summer cottages in rural and remote places. Thanks to the growing popularity of remote work, small towns like Lieksa could attract those who live in the city only because of their job. As matters of wellbeing become more important for the society, "sleepy" towns promise a life-work balance. With smart-shrinking policies, small towns can manage their resources in a more sustainable way, without compromising their residents' wellbeing.

Vorpommern

The region has embraced bi-linguality as a way of life. Not only is the border not an obstacle in daily life, but the divide between newly arrived settlers from Poland or other regions in Germany are accepted as an organic component of the local population. Although it has been a difficult process of letting go of old habits of scapegoating and East German Isolationist history, villages are now coined by multicultural associations, businesses and even public institutions like bi-lingual schools and kindergartens. The new generation of job starters has many more options in the region as not only businesses are thriving, but the employment market on both sides of the border is open to them now.

Larissa

In the next five to ten years, Larissa could be transformed to a youthful city with employment opportunities in the field of agriculture, as well as social opportunities for young people. Moreover, Larissa could be a multicultural center of the central Greece through initiatives that promote inclusiveness.

Sardinia

Rural areas are revitalized as more agritourisms, high quality enogastronomic enterprises arise, and there is a more structured, unitary tourism governance. The latter will enable locals alongside tourists to make use of regional natural, architectural and cultural sites, which will be easier to reach thanks to more efficient intra-regional connections.

The role of the toolkit may be that of rising the locals' awareness about environmental, architectural and cultural capabilities of Sardinia. In the next 10 years, more people, specifically local youngsters alongside emigrated youngsters, will be empowered to envision ways to valorize hidden peripheral

areas, and to say their opinions on how to make these changes by conversing with Sardinian decision makers at all levels of governance.

Czestochowa

Possible direction is just to give our region chance to adopt all challenges and face them as one. It needs to involve all stakeholders in phase of planning of development. Each stakeholder as local authorities, universities, entrepreneurs, associations, society of elderly people and society of young people need to address their needs and future vision of our region. It's very important no to margin anyone and present our region as homeland of everyone, and with resources and methods involved in this Toolkit make everyone look in the same direction of development. Then it's necessary to do trainings and workshops in to keep people engaged and to think about their personal development in identified area of needs. It's possible to achieve it using this toolkit.

Guadalhorce Valley

The measures to prevent the depopulation of rural areas and to enhance the value of peripheral areas have especially influenced the young generations in the Guadalhorce Valley, who value the positive aspects of being from rural areas and are aware of the potential of their territory.

This has led to the generation of youth movements, entrepreneurial initiatives in the territory that respond to social and environmental challenges, which allows more and more young people to see their work and personal future in the region, especially taking advantage of the territory's natural resources. When we stay in the territory, and people develop a sense of growth and mentalities open, there is a more diverse cultural offer, more services are offered and we also have more clout to demand necessary services and infrastructure from public administration and policy makers.

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OUR REGIONS: SOLUTIONS

Samsø

Despite its small population and size, Samsø has managed to become world-renowned for its efforts, methods, and results when it comes to energy sustainability and transformation. This was achieved through Samsø winning a competition which saw them be granted state sponsorship to achieve the goal of becoming a green energy island. Thanks to a genius bottom- up approach, in 2007 Samsø's inhabitants were able to declare their island 100% energy self-sufficient. In order for this to take place Samsø has used the island itself to work towards the issues it faces. Further, the island is characterized by having a very strong community and entrepreneurial spirit and it would appear that exists is a lot of informal bonds, which can facilitate opportunities and capacity building amidst private, public and civil spaces on the island. The main facilitator of courses and offers on the island is the Samsø Energy Academy. It is a project-based organization focused on the consequences of climate change and acts as a physical gathering place concerning subjects such as: education and research, including courses and exhibitions about energy, climate change, and sustainable resources. Clearly for the island the nature and community serve as the best tools for future development.

Lieksa

Lieksa is a peaceful community, located among forests and natural lakes. Although the town is small, the community is active and organizes activities for residents of all ages. The town is compact: it has all necessary basic services at hand. Being a safe place, Lieksa attracts families who want to raise their children away from noise, traffic and other city problems. Residents believe that the local nature and wildlife is one of the community's greatest assets. Apart from serving the locals, natural attractions could attract tourists and help boost the local economy. In fact, Lieksa already houses one of the most famous landmarks in North Karelia – The Koli National Park and a tourist resort. According to the locals, surrounding nature is the town's biggest untapped resource. Climate is also a local resource. Cold snowy winters can attract enthusiasts of winter sports and extreme tourism, while mild summers can be alluring to those who do not do well in scorching heat.

Vorpommern

Vorpommern's biggest resource are the people. As an upside of a long history of outmigration, the current population has maintained or developed a strong bond with their home area. While this bond also creates closed communities that are hostile towards outsiders from Poland or other regions in Germany, the dedication to the region offers a high incentive for co-creation of the communities. Economically, the Polish immigration offers big opportunities, as many middle-class Poles are moving to the German part due to substantially lower house prices. This population has the potential to drive the local economy and revive the village communities through their high-level needs for local services and institutions. Polish speaking or bi-lingual services and institutions would have the highest chance of attracting the funds of both these newcomers and the next generation of locals. As for

natural resources, the typically flat landscape frames the everyday experiences of the rural population. Here many engage in outside activities like running, hiking, riding or hunting. Natural reserves have been established to use the depopulation to an advantage for nature. The coast of the Baltic Sea offers many touristic opportunities that create seasonal economic infusions that could be invested on building infrastructure for tourists and locals alike.

Larissa

The region of Larisa is benefited from the climate and the geographical location, as it is located in the centre of Greece and is basically an agricultural area. A fact that could be really helpful for the increase of the number of young people who are working in the field of agriculture.

Sardinia

Sardinia has several places of environmental and cultural value that may enhance its attractiveness for tourism. Based on a study conducted by scholars from the University of Sassari, the touristic competitiveness of the region can be improved (1). The island has many untouched green areas and natural pastures, although the protected surface is lower than the national average. The environmental heritage consists of 3 national parks, several regional parks, protected marine areas and a plethora of coastal areas.

As far as cultural capital is concerned, 21% of small and very small enterprises are artisan enterprises. Sardinia has potential for developing food and wine tourism, as it is ranked below the national average. Quality restaurants and touristic farms are scarce. This leaves Sardinia with margins of

improvement by converting conventional catering to recognized, how quality catering.

Finally, by comparing the spread of relevant cultural goods with the number of museums and similar institutions, there is an evident room for improvement. Although Sardinia houses 5% of Italian cultural sites (mostly ethnographic and archeologic), these resources are seriously underused. Nevertheless, several „borghi" (architecturally relevant villages) spread throughout the Island are certified within a national net of recognition, leaving hope that with a coordinated strategy these destinations may attract tourists.

Czestochowa

The biggest issue is lack of cooperation within region. Educational entities as schools and universities don't answers for need of entrepreneurs and young people after education look for workplace outside our region. Also entrepreneurs need to clarify their needs, update them periodically and send to education. Second challenge is lack of cooperation of Czestochowa city and local communities in peripheries. It should be cooperation not only for infrastructure development as roads and sanitary reservoirs, but also in human capital development, recreation and workplaces. The third biggest

challenge is social inclusion and integration of people. As our society is ageing, many immigrants have come to work and live in our region. Their integration can be a opportunity for region's development but also is the challenge to do it.

The Guadalhorce Valley

Despite the fact that ecological agriculture and social innovation could be the main engine of development, the Guadalhorce Valley continues to have many limitations in terms of administrative barriers, the lack of basic infrastructure (care services, hotel offer, internet and new technologies, etc.) and communications and the few resources of public transport.

This leads to fewer job opportunities in the territory, which leads to both structural and seasonal unemployment, which is why young people go away looking for better jobs, a wider cultural offer and more freedom in their lifestyles (brain drain). This has repercussions on the perceived value of rural areas and their resources, the lack of vision of opportunities in the territory, an individualistic style of thought and the abandonment of the infrastructure and basic services that every population needs for its development.
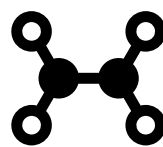
TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

This is a transnational report under the Erasmus+ KA2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices - Strategic Partnerships for adult education project 'Prospects in the Peripheries" (KA204-A3EA6043). In this transnational report, we will give a short, broad and comparative overview of the findings of our collective research into challenges of the peripheries across the seven participating countries of this project.

The seven participating countries are Denmark, Germany, Spain, Italy, Finland, Poland and Greece. The regions that in each of these countries were explored are (ordered in accordance with the country list) Samsø, Vorpommern, Malaga, Sardinia, Lieksa, Czestochowa and Larissa.

In each of these regions, in accordance with the project aim, we have carried out thorough desktop research, questionnaires, interviews, observational studies and much, much more.

Defining the Peripheries

Peripheries are a peculiar concept. Throughout our work, we spent a lot of time debating back and forth about how to best define peripheral regions which is a key term for our research. However, as we walk the fine line between activism and research, we

decided upon an agreement that would allow each region to define such terminology in accordance with their own unique and relevant characteristics in relation to the defining local properties.

Although, in its totality, a general assessment was decided upon that includes, as we see it, the peripheries as a social, economic, demographic and geographic region of a country that have experienced a set of common problems. A set of problems that are characterized by social, economic and demographic decline, inequality and imbalance – and geographical isolation.

In the following sections, we will highlight some of the key similarities and differences between the various regions. In particular,

this comparison will look into these differentiations on a social and economic level.

Commonalities

A tendency is that these regions are characterised by declining social and economic activity among uneven and imbalanced demographic pyramids. An important element to understand in this context is how all of the below mentioned challenges all function in an intertwined web of causation. Each strengthening the other, and each being strengthened by the other.

Key words that have been shared in our common cross-country breakdown-sessions were as follows:

Brain Drain – Being one of the most detrimental challenges to the peripheries, almost every single region that we investigated was experiencing brain drain and in particularly youth migration to a high degree. This can be defined as those that are highly educated leaving the peripheral region in search of better opportunity and thus this knowledge is not maintained.

Over aging – As a natural consequence and reinforcer of the abovementioned brain drain and youth migration, almost all of the regions of investigations also experienced an uneven and even reverse demographic pyramid characterised by an increasing number of elders with fewer adults and even fewer youth. In many cases, the areas were in population decline or stagnation. Unable to achieve the ever-important levels of growth.

Inequality of industry – Another key element and commonality in-between our seven peripheral areas of research was the consistent level of inequality between various

industries of production in the areas. Often the regions were reliant on industries, such as and primarily agriculture and less so either a declining manufacturing-business or tourism for a majority of their employment. This lack of diversity in the economic biodiversity has many consequences, but in particularly noteworthy, it leaves the citizens with fewer and fewer employment paths and increases the areas reliance on import of goods and services from other parts of the country or the world.

Post/De-industrialization – This inequality of industry is also every much a sign and symptom of how most of these areas are feeling the effects of the de and post industrialization process that have occurred in their regions, and the loss of factories, manufacturing jobs, etc. that it has led to.

Undiversified workforce and lack of access to education – This inequality of industry is also manifested in an un-diverse workforce and the lack of access to a broad set of educational opportunities in the areas. In most of the areas, wanting to join a high school or a university requires the youth and adults to migrate to larger cities and regions, as higher levels of education in particular remains unattainable. This does not only apply to an academic career, but also to many practical industries.

Lack of cultural and digital infrastructure – The lack of cultural and digital infrastructure is another commonality between the various regions of investigation. In almost all of the regions, access to various cultural activities and internet are not always widely available.

Lack of infrastructure – Similarly, the access to traditional infrastructure follows, as most of the regions also remain isolated. This is also expressed in the lack of proper infrastructural

funding from public hand in all of our investigated regions.

Differences

The differentiations that came up between our various regions were primarily due to a variety of different historical properties of the individual regions. As with the commonalities, in this section, we will run through a short review of the most essential differences in challenges. As follows:

Seasonal inequality – One characteristic that was not present in all of the areas was the role of tourism, and its role on the seasonal inequity of the region. In some regions, all of the seasons were quite similar, while in others the economy was booming in the summers, whilst being almost entirely closed and shrunk.

Social Cohesion – Another element that in manifested itself in a great variety of ways was the level of social cohesion. In some regions, there was a very strong social cohesion due to the more relational nature of social connections in the area, while other regions had a very debated and heated division between two or more social groupings in the area.

Isolationism – Similarly, the degree to which the areas had a strong sense of isolationism was entirely different from some regions to others. Some regions preferred to stay separated and apart from the larger social group of the nation, while others very much defined their core identity as that of the nation. In some regions, this isolationism also expressed itself in the form of racism and xenophobia.

Lack of Participation – The essence of the public and private engagement amongst citizens in the various regions also differed quite significantly. In some regions, there was an extremely strong sense of engagement and participation amongst the peripheral citizens, while other regions were faced with apathy and neglect of their political institutions.

Geographical and Geopolitical Location – Lastly, a key differentiation between the regions relates to their geographical and geopolitical location. Some regions were islands, some were border regions and while others just isolated by their distance to the capital and major cities.

How all of these commonalities and differences played a role in determining the nature of the challenges that each region faced as a peripheral region is described in depth in the national reports, which can be read through the following sections.

Preamble

Walking into Samsø we had little idea about what to expect. Looking back at that early, cold, foggy September morning, we truly did not realize the magnitude of what we were sailing into when we boarded the boat from Kalundborg to Ballen, Samsø.

Up to our arrival in Samsø, we had conducted your usual online research, which had led us to a very specific set of discourses surrounding the Island: Sustainability, nature, and tourism across the island. When speaking to several friends, colleagues, and family from other areas of Denmark, the language spoken surrounding Samsø was eerily similar; that it was famous for its green initiatives, tourism, and had beautiful nature. However, another narrative also came up: Namely the idea that Samsø firstly was very countryside and not a great place for young adults to live. Secondly, we also encountered, what by now seems like another typical stereotype, the idea that

racism and nationalism are more prone in peripheral regions like Samsø. Armed with all of these prejudices, our internet-information, and an open mind, we were unsure how we as individuals and as an organization would be received. Particularly considering that two of our three-person research-team had Indian roots.

Little did we know what beauty, love, and community we would be swept into after stepping off the ferry and into the wonderland of Samsø.

Samsø 'The Renewable Energy Island'

'Samsø and the sea around the island invites you to a wonderful combination of deep relaxation in calm surroundings and wonderful holiday activities'

In Denmark, the examination does indeed not take the form of a singular investigation into

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one peripheral region, but rather into an array of peculiar, peripheral, geographical phenomena – the Islands of Denmark. In the practice of this report, this is manifested by the study of one island, Samsø. With a population of mere 3,684 citizens and 114 km2 of landmass, the island is isolated by more than 20 kilometers of ocean on all sides from the nearest mainland.

Despite its small population and size, Samsø has managed to become world-renowned for its efforts, methods, and results when it comes to energy sustainability and transformation. A project that was established, in part, to deal with the challenges faced as a peripheral area. The story goes that Samsø's local government participated in a national competition to become the Danish Energy Island. In 1997, in a close race, Samsø was appointed Denmark's Renewable Energy Island. they won the competition ahead of their nearest rival Bornholm, which granted them a state sponsorship to achieve the goal of becoming a green energy island. With this goal in eye, the island developed a plan on how to move forward. Thanks to a genius bottom-up approach, in 2007, Samsø's inhabitants were able to declare their island 100% energy self-sufficient based on wind, solar and biomass energy.

However, regardless, Samsø, as an island, is facing particular challenges that are important to understand for the depth of the project. As presented in the report, Samsø is, like most other peripheral areas, facing socio-economic challenges in the form of an unsustainable demographic distribution, a high number of retirees, loss of jobs, and unemployment.

Samsø in Numbers

The demographic of Samsø can be said, as previously mentioned, to consist of a relatively small population with around 3,684 inhabitants, with the spread between Male and Female being relatively equal (49.9% Female/ 50.1% Male). Surprisingly, Samsø's population consists of 8.1% foreigners, this statistic was highlighted throughout many of our interviews. Our interviewees were keen to inform us that Samsø hosts many foreigners and in particular, is host to a large number of refugees on the island. It is on this basis that the community of Samsø is presented, something that will be highlighted throughout the report.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (YEAR 2018)	
Inhabitants (N.)	3,684
Families (N.)	1,977
Males (%)	49.9
Females (%)	50.1
Foreigners (%)	8.1
Average age (years)	51.1
Average annual variation (2014/2018)	-0.33

The final statistic concerning Samsø is age, the average age in years is stated as being 51.1. Largely, this feeds into the issues that surround the core of this project, such as fewer working-age people in the economy. Walking around Samsø it was hard to not notice the lack of young adults on the island, the tourist season having ended, Samsø was to return to relative normality. The few young adults we did see, often stated they were leaving the island, two young adults working in a restaurant stated how they were to go

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back to their respective place of residence outside of Samsø as the tourist season has ended. The issue of young adults migrating to other areas will be discussed in depth in the following sections.

Why Samsø?

It is all of these elements that forms Samsø as the perfect, and most peculiar case-study for our journey to examine the prospects in the peripheries.

More than anything, what makes Samsø an interesting object of investigation is the paradoxical nature of its public image. On the one hand, it is a progressive paradise with green initiatives, yet it still suffers from prejudices and the real issues that most other peripheral regions also encounter. It is often showcased as a "cure" for peripheries to follow, yet still remains under the influence of the exact same issues.

Ultimately, Samsø allows us to investigate the nuances of what it means to unlock the potential of the periphery, while still facing the common issues that peripheries usually face, and as such, have loads of potential still to be unlocked.

Existing Opportunities and Training

From our knowledge, interviews and desk research, there are few initiatives and trainings working with young adults specifically. However, in general, the island is characterized by having a very strong community and entrepreneurial spirit. This came thoroughly through in our interviews. As such, it also seems very likely that there exists a lot of informal bonds, opportunities and capacity building amidst and in-between

private, public and civil spaces on the island, as was also present in almost all of our interviews and observations.

In a civic/private eye, the main facilitator of courses and offers on the island is the Samsø Energy Academy. It is a project-based organization focused on the consequences of climate change. The Energy Academy is a physical gathering and meeting place for all kinds of people who are interested in community development. Put simply, its organizational goal is to convey knowledge about holistic cooperative processes. It hosts meetings and gatherings concerning subjects such as education and research, including courses, meetings, seminars, and exhibitions about energy, climate change, and sustainable resources. The Samsø Energy & Environmental Office, the Samsø Energy Agency, and the Samsø Energy Service are also based at Samsø Energy Academy. Their activities include energy efficiency advice for companies and homeowners, tours – including tours for specific trades and industries – and workshops and seminars (Samsø Energi Academy, 2020).

The municipality also offers a selection of trainings, paid internships, and conversations with social workers for the unemployed. Additionally, the municipality also runs an online database for the local companies, where they can offer employment that is partly funded by the municipality. Lastly, the municipality also offers a mentorship program for vulnerable youth under 30.

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Challenges for Youth Demographic

Methods and Interviewees

With a few selected interviews pre-planned through established connections, we approached Samsø with a relatively open mind as to who we would interview. We thought this the best approach, so as to discuss with a wide variety of individuals. We spoke with any individual who was willing to discuss with us who fit the demographic and aims of this project. Our demographic was relatively wide in this regard, speaking to people of all ages between 14 - 60 years old. This ranged from restaurant staff, to staff working in supermarkets, individuals who had returned to Samsø to start a fresh life on the island and we conducted a workshop in a school. The school workshop consisted of asking the students a series of questions such as: who can see themselves staying in Samsø when they are older? The students would then move from one side (yes) to the other (no), depending on their answer. As for the interviews conducted by chance, we opted for an open-ended approach, this produced interviews that were far more relaxed and conversation like. Often, a conversation would start casually and as the conversation progressed, questions directed more towards this project were asked. We found this the best approach, so as to get a real sense of how that person felt. The interviews that were planned were conducted slightly more formal, with one person interviewing and the other taking written notes.

Employment

A clear issue that arose from discussions with interviewees surrounding migration from Samsø was employment. Unemployment affects young people everywhere, in urban areas this is normally due to the competitive nature of the job market. However, with a peripheral region such as Samsø young people are also faced with additional barriers, such as spatial isolation and the lack of existing opportunities for employment. This lack of opportunity for both education and employment leads towards outmigration to bigger cities throughout Denmark, thus contributing towards an imbalance throughout Samsø's demographic.

Samsø given its location and history has struggled to sustain youth employment, taken from our interviews we have identified three areas for challenges towards employment.

Post-industrial Era

An interesting observation highlighted throughout interviews was the shift in job opportunities during the industrial revolution. It was noted by one interviewee that the farming industry was dying and that hands were not needed anymore. The slaughterhouses and dairy farms were beginning to shut. A particularly interesting take from our interviewee was that during this time this was seen as a threat due to centralisation, the juice was taken out of the peripheries. Our interviewee stated how this can lead to a 'brain drain', as people were becoming more likely to migrate elsewhere and be drawn to where they were educated. Over the past several years, Samsø has attempted to be rejuvenated with grants becoming available to help create new job markets such as environmental sustainability. However, it is yet to be proven how sustainable these measures are, especially when attracting young people to stay on the island. This is not surprising, given the lack of higher education and job opportunities that do not pertain to agriculture, carpentry,

nursing etc. During one of our interviews it was described how at a class reunion, out of 75 students in that year, only 7 individuals were still living on the island, despite the fact that many of the living away from the island would like to move back. The reasons for not moving back to the island were due to the difficulties in finding work, it was stated as being almost impossible, if you do get a job it is only for 5-6 months, it is very hard to find full time employment.

Seasonal Work

The last comment from one of our interviewees highlights another issue that Samsø faces: seasonal employment. Due to its natural beauty, consisting of crystal blue waters, beaches and colourful landscape, Samsø has become an island infamous for attracting individuals for vacation during the summer months. This has led to a booming tourism industry; however, this only adds to the increasing challenges that Samsø faces. It is a given that tourism provides a strong source of employment opportunities on the island, yet as stated, the tourism industry lasts for over half a year. This means that for half a year there are strong opportunities for work but for the other half of the year these opportunities dwindle. Two interviewees who were both young adults working in a local restaurant had arrived in Samsø to work for the summer, both of these individuals loved the island, but both stated that they would leave the island once the tourist season was over. Another issue Samsø faces due to the tourism industry is exploitation, as the island is an avid tourist destination, individuals will arrive on the island for the summer months to create industries for work, but then take the economic gains away from the island once the season is over. This in turn means that the economic gains made from the tourism industry are often not put back into the economy of Samsø. Besides the job opportunities created by tourism, these options are still limited to working in restaurants, bike tours etc. The job market still does not cater for those wishing to work outside of those practical areas.

Voluntary Work

Another key insight that Samsø faces in regard to employment is that of voluntary work. According to our interviewees a lot of work is mainly run on a voluntary basis on Samsø, it was suggested that if you were to put the economy on voluntary work they would be equally as big. The Cinema, football coaching among other cultural activities is all run by volunteers, this leaves a big gap in paid employment as jobs that can potentially be used for paid employment are not. One of our interviewees suggested that if the voluntary system on the island is turned into economic employment, it would allow for a big number of jobs that are missing (as highlighted above) to be filled by young adults on the island.

It is clear that some of the main factors which affect young people through the ongoing process of employment are the restricted opportunities that affect those living in peripheral regions. There is a clear lack of training and education when it comes to the wider selection of employment fields that lie outside practical areas. Furthermore, it was repeatedly stated that if you do manage to find work, often you would be required to work two jobs to sustain yourself and your family. The sustainability of work is made all the more difficult by young people mainly being able to find jobs in the temporary seasonal field, perhaps leading to migration away from the island in search of better, more sustainable opportunities. Further, we have seen firsthand how young people can be

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stigmatised for wanting to stay and work on the island. During one of our school workshops, those that stated they wanted to stay on the island were ridiculed for this, this could hypothetically lead to a scenario whereby that child would want to move away from the island because of the stigma attached to staying on the island.

Three levels of Economic Inequality

Another and complementary perspective of the economic challenges that Samsø face can be identified as three levels of inequality that in many ways summarizes the foundational issues described in the previous sections

Industry Inequality

As previously mentioned, particularly in our post-industrial era, Samsø has a great inequality and disparity when it comes to a variety of industries. It is primarily dependent on agriculture and tourism, whereas both social and cultural activities, as described in the sections below, as well as other industries are lacking behind.

As a natural consequence of law diversity of industry, employment also becomes difficult and intricate to acquire. This is again also a consistent theme in our interviews, as previously mentioned. To find employment, particularly as a young adult, you have to fit into certain industries and acquire a very specific, certain set of skills.

Seasonal Inequality

All of the key elements of this section have been covered in the previous section on seasonal work. Please refer to this section for further explanation.

Demographic Inequality

Similarly, this section has also been widely covered in the introduction under the section "Samsø in Numbers".

Conclusively, the combination of these three levels of inequalities in conjunction with other nuances and factors, such as educational offers on the island, does well to cover one aspect of the fundamental challenges Samsø faces.

Social life & Cultural offers

From our short stay in Samsø, it was clear that there were not many activities for one to delve into, this was further exacerbated when researching activities online. This issue was highlighted by numerous interviewees, with one interviewee stating that a lot of issues on the island stem from not having little things to do on the island, such as not having a swimming pool. The interviewee goes on to state that this is often the problem with peripheral regions, young adults will often want to move to experience the city and have more activities and things to do. During the school workshops conducted this lack of social and cultural activities was also highlighted. The children in the school were clear to state that they felt there was not much to do on the island for a young adult and that this was a drive of migration to the city. The tourist season also plays a part in affecting social activities on the island, in winter where everything shuts, there are even less activities for young adults to partake in.

However, the community spirit, something that we noticed can be felt from the island, with a warm sense of connectivity welcoming us from the moment we set foot on the island can provide some positives. Often brought up in interviews was how when you are young,

the island feels small, but this means that you get to know people in a different way because of the closeness between residents. This allows for people to feel safe, something that is a noticeably different feeling than perhaps people feel in the city. This 'closeness' and 'safeness' can be said to attract people back to the island of Samsø. However, this can only be increased with more social and cultural activities for the younger generations to partake in.

Future development and perspectives

We feel it is important to note that from our time spent on Samsø, there were many positives for future development and perspectives, it is far from all being doom and gloom. There were many people that had we spoke to, that had moved to Samsø and managed to make use of the land and environment to sustain themselves and their families.

We would say one of the main ways that stood out for future development, taken from past experience with our interviewees is through innovation and exploitation through gaps in the market. One interviewee stated how when farming became less profitable, he taught himself how to become more self-sufficient, to not rely on the big industrial companies that were taking over the island. It was through this that he learned he was better at communicating, this combined with his past experience of farming led him to figure out how to produce energy for cheaper, in order to stop being so reliant on imported fuel. Our interviewee was clear to state that the key for employment on the island is to create a circular economy, in this case energy was sold to the island, which then in turn gets put into the economy to create a chain of consumption.

The example given was that a farmer can use the energy produced on the island to produce his vegetation, which can then be sold to people on the island. It was clear that a crucial aspect for future development on the island as our interviewee stated is local creativity in order to give people hope.

Other success stories were highlighted throughout interviews: as stated a lot of work on the island is voluntary and that some issues could be solved if this was turned into economic employment. We were told a story whereby individuals did just this. Several individuals realised that there was slow internet on the island but that it could be improved if internet was transmitted from Aarhus. They went to each house to get them to agree that this would be beneficial (the community spirit, once again highlighted). Once everyone agreed, broadband was offered to 100% of the houses on the island. This opportunity started as voluntary which became a full-time paying job and has now been bought by a commercial company. This is a great example of sustainable work turning into employment.

It was noted in one interview that in order to come up with something alternative, we have to take time to develop projects that can be co-created that can use excess time and energy in a good way. For this interviewee showing is important and in order to do this there could be study courses that work with real problems - such as real projects that work on sustainable energy, farming etc. This according to our interviewee would not only innovate but bring out possible untapped potential from the youth living on the island.

It seems that from our interviews in order to innovate, first one must identify the problem, one interviewee gave the example of dependency on oil, then try to find a solution

to this problem. What was interesting about this interview was the interviewee stating how the solution should be part of the community, if it is worked on collectively then everyone is benefited.

Our interviewee used a fantastic analogy to demonstrate how problems can be identified: Don't look at the needle, look at what is inside the injection. He went on to state how the municipalities want to build a bridge through Samsø to connect the island by land. He stated that there was a bigger problem than the bridge and that is to think how the island can be sustained so people want to live here and not want to use Samsø simply as a place simply to move through to get somewhere else. He further stated that the issue could be seen as an issue of transportation. It is this innovative way of thinking outside the box that may provide thought for young adults on Samsø to think of innovative ways to start an idea that they are passionate about, lead to full time employment and benefit the community on the island.

During our trip to Samsø and through the conversations we were having there seemed to be hope for young individuals to make a sustainable life on the island. One thing that may make this even easier is the ferry to Aarhus, already built this ferry will take you the centre of the second biggest city in Denmark in roughly one hour. Currently there are only two ferries a day to Aarhus that ports are still an hour away from the city, this makes it difficult to commute for work. However, with the fast ferry now being implemented, people may have the option to live on Samsø but work or study in Aarhus. One interviewee stated that the hope is that people will realise they can stay here for cheaper, and that leaving home at 15 is very young (this often happens due to the lack of higher education on

the island). People could travel to say Aarhus and study there, we have created a travel service. It was confirmed to us during a school workshop that the children there also thought that being 15 and moving away from home was too young.

We would say that the future is very bright for Samsø, there appears to be more and more opportunities opening up for young individuals. Walking into Samsø we felt that there would be little opportunity for young individuals to flourish but we are leaving with optimism that with the right tools in place there is the possibility for development.

Success stories of collaborations between organizations and peripheral citizens

Samsø Energiakademi

In 1997 Samsø, won a national competition and became Denmark's Renewable Energy Island. The challenge: To be 100% energy self-sufficient within 10 years. The island succeeded and by 2007 the island was self-sufficient due to a combination of windmills, biomass district heating plants and improvements on transportation and energy conservation. This was particularly achieved by the methods of the Søren Hermansen that with his inventive methods of community involvement and empowerment started the movement and the energiakademi.

The community of Samsø is still working on going from "best practice" to "next practice" in

sustainable development. The island has therefore agreed on the common goal, that that coal, oil or gas used for energy and transportation gradually will be phased out towards 2030. Furthermore, every transportation to the island will be powered by renewable energy and substantial savings on heat and energy should be made. In 2007 Samsø Energy Academy opened its doors to the public and functions as a center and exhibition hall for renewable energy and energy saving schemes. The Academy arranges exhibitions, workshops and corporate events, for 5000 visitors from all over the world.

https://energiakademiet.dk/en/

Green Solution House

Hotel GSH, Green Solution House is a hotel with conference facilities that is bringing sustainability to the hotel and conference business. It is a 4-star hotel with environmental labeling Green Key, based on Cradle2Cradle principles and Active House principles that seeks to exchange and share knowledge with local and global communities to inspire a sustainable and circular future. GHS works to redefine the industry with 75 ideas that are supposed to demonstrate how green solutions can work in practice together with a circular business model where they reinvest their profit in testing new solutions for their buildings and landscape. b

https://c2c-buildings.net/projects/green-solution-house/

BOFA

BOFA Is a public organization that works to move the Island of Bornholm trash-free by 2032.

In BOFA's vision of the future, the citizens of Bornholm will sort all their waste into different fractions, easy to collect and use in new resource loops. Metal, plastics, glass, paper, and cardboard are widely recycled, and new waste fractions such as fishing nets and insulation materials will be added to the sorting and recycling system. Meanwhile, organic waste will be converted into energy together with green garden and park waste, while the nutrient-rich residue from the energy extraction is used as fertilizer in fields, parks and gardens, writes BOFA. In this circular economy, the inhabitants will reuse everything from furniture to children's clothing and make use of sharing economy services—for instance lending, renting, or bartering goods through the internet or peer communities. In elementary schools' children will be educated as "resource heroes" with practical lessons in waste, resources, the environment, and nature. And a university research centre on models of green transition and the circular economy will be established on Bornholm.

https://bofa.dk/

VORPOMMERN

Western-Pommerania (German:" Vorpommern) is the Eastern Part of Federal State "Mecklenburg-Western-Pommerania". Located on the border to Poland, it issues associated with periphery all over Europe today. At the same time, it is a typical German periphery as many of its' challenges are a result of demographical processes that started with reunifaction 30 years ago and lead to the development of structurally weakened regions in the east of Germany. As a result, economically, socially and culturally impoverished regions are located all over Germany, but peripheral regions in the east are affected by far more - in numbers and severity. The severity is based in the multi-level deprivation comprised of territorial reforms, dismantling and relocation of the already few industrial operations to the West and mass-exodus of young, educated and qualified citizens.

Shadows of reunification in Western-Pomerania

At the starting point of reunification in 1990 the region was already coined by a central role of agriculture: 85 % of communities in all of Mecklenburg – Western-Pomerania had relied on farming and ranching for 50% of employment [1]. Also trends to demographic-sociological disproportions later associated with restructuring activity during re-unification such as surplus of men and older citizens caused by a disproportional leaving of women and youngsters already started before reunification in the late 1980s.

The female- and young faced exodus from the region was, however, itensified by reunification processes, leaving behind a weak local economy with few intellectual and financial resources for future development. Results in Western-Pommerania's seem especially dire in national comparison, due to its peripheral geographic position and weak economical starting point.

Why Vorpommern?

Together with a few municipialities in Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western-Pommerania has for the past few year been at the center of attention of EU and nationally funded projects to revive civil society in East-German peripheries. Besides specific challenges of these places, the reason for ongoing monetary support here, can be found in the election successes of the right-wing party "Alternative für Deutschland" (English: Alternative for Germany). It caught stakeholders in the political and cultural centres in West and East Germany by surprise and triggered increased attention to long neglected outcomes of reunification and structural decline.

One common factor to the AFD strongholds is the combination of demographic decline with the political response of reducing public institutions. Territorial reforms diminished not only jobs in public adminitrations, but also weakened democratic participation opportunities by merging municipialities and thus their local parliaments from 30 after reunification in 1990, to 18 in 1994 to a meager 8 since 2011 [2]. Participation opportunities have become fewer and fewer with political, social and cultural institutions vanishing over large areas of the region. Many citizens retreated further into the private sphere as practiced in the former GDR, a tendency that further aggravates the

situation. The presence of polish citizens as cross-border commuters as well as temporary and permanent residents is often met with racism and scapegoating. Shared activities of migrants and natives remain the exception. Besides the AFD other right-wing extremists like NPD (German National Party) and Kameradschaften (eng.: comradships) are also thriving.

In all a vicious circle typical for peripheries population is eivdent in Western-Pommerania. Population loss, infrastructural decline, brain drain, lack of participation and right-wing extremism are interdependent and keep accelerationg each other (see Figure 1).
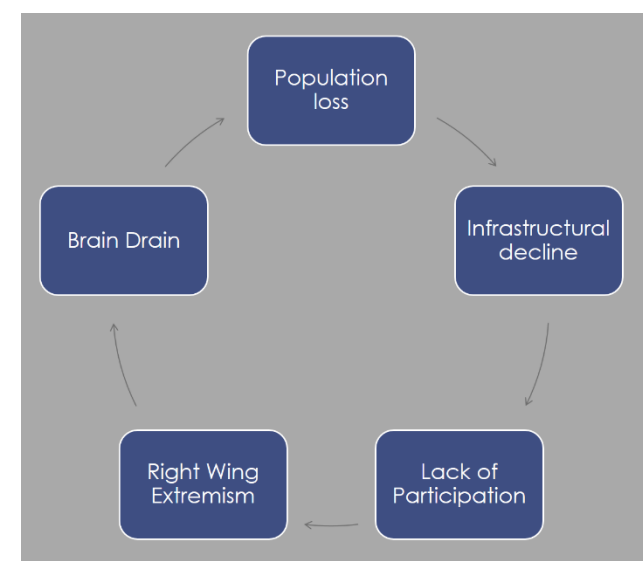
Figure 1. Vicious circle of prospect loss in Western-Pommerania

The fact that Western-Pommerania has, been a testing ground for many public and third sector projects to develop strategies and methods to overcome challenges of the East-German peripheries, makes it the ideal region to evaluate methods of capacity building in peripheries to make them accessible for communities tackling similar situations all over Europe and the world. The main issues addressed by exisiting capacity building and training opportunites are Infrastructural decline, Brain Drain as well as Xenophobia

and Lack of Participation. Below find some exemplatory projects considered for our research.

Geographic and demographic details

Geography and Transport

Located in the north eastern corner of Germany Western-Pommerania is peripheral by geographic and demographic parameters. As a border region it additionally battles with issues of Xenophobia, while also economically benefiting from the vicinity of a metropolitan and all over more prosperous region in Poland. Western-Pommerania lies between the two metropolitan regions of the German capital Berlin and the Polish Szczecin. Szeczin is reachable by car in less than an hour from most places in Western-Pommerania, while Berlin is 2 hours away. However, the train service to Berlin is far more regular with hourly trains, than the connection to Poland, which runs only a few times a day. Within the region frequent Public Transport has become unsustainable for the rural areas so cars are a must have in Western-Pommerania.

Demography

Driven by economic decline, mass exodus has minimised the population of the Federal stateby 16% from 1,9 million to 1,6 million inhabtabts since 1990 leading to the current low population density of 69 inhabitants per km². Further losses of about 80,000 inhabitants are projected from 2017 to 2040.

Western-Pommerania is the economically less thriving part of the already peripheral Federal State "Mecklenburg-Western-Pommerania". While the West of the state falls within the average unemployment rate of currently around 5 to 6 %, the chosen border region has unemployment rates between 9 and 10 % [3]. Moreover, qualification and education rates dwindle: The region has one of the highest rates of school dropouts with 9.2% compared to 6% average across all German states

Existing capacity building and training opportunities

To tackle these persistent issues state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern receives around 2.3 billion euros from the diverse funds of the European Union between 2014 and 2020. Some of the measures financed by these funds are described in the following:

Infrastructural decline

The project "MoDem" strengthens and develops democratic civil society involvement in structurally weak rural areas through political education. What do MoDem support new networks and helps to reactivate existing potential for the implementation of local and regional projects. MoDem aims at a sustainable structural development of civil society commitment. More information: https://www.modem-arbeitundleben.de/

Running low on Education and Qualification: Brain Drain

From 2004 to 2019 the project "School plus" (German title: "Schule plus") has promoted key competences to improve the entry conditions for vocational training and studies.

Using the methodology of project learning, they enabled pupils from the age of 11 to develop complex projects, plan and implement them. School plus also made educational and knowledge resources available to schools, particularly through cooperation with out-of-school specialists and learning locations. More information:

https://www.raa-mv.de/de/content/schule-plus-mehr-aus-der-schule-machen

Xenophobia and Lack of Participation

Analysing lack of participation and right-wing forces as two sides of the same medallion the federal programme "Strengthening democracy and tolerance together!" (German: "Demokratie und Toleranz gemeinsam stärken!" aims to build up key qualifications of tolerance, humanity and democratic orientation, the structures in the field of democracy and tolerance as well as the willingness to engage in civil society.

For these purposes "regional cultural centres" have been build up all over the state. They function as an interface between state and non-state actors in the region engaging in counselling, training and giving expertise's to increase participation.

Perspektywa (Polish for perspective) is a project that engages the migrant and non-migrant population jointly in the co-creation of the border region of Western-Pommerania. It has been small scale for 15 years but has recently been extended. More information: https://www.perspektywa.de/

The project "Jump" offers support for individuals, who want to exit right wing organisations. In addition, they offer consultations and trainings for relatives and friends of these individuals. More information: http://www.jump-mv.de/

Peripheral challenges

The main issues of Western-Pommerania that we identified in the desk research were confirmed in our interviews and focus group. Here is what we found out from our informants on the effect of these issues on their daily lives:

Number of Informants	Vorpommern		Total
Gender	male	female	
Interviews with Citizens	1	1	2
Expert Interviewees	2	1	3
Group Interviewees	4	3	7

Age Range	29 - 77		**29 - 77**
Total Gender	7	5	
Total	**13**		**13**

Table 1. Informants questioned in the region of Western-Pommerania.

Infrastructural decline

In East Germany the demographic shrinkage is most visible in the regions through the absence of cultural, social and political infrastructure. Client based businesses in rural areas struggled to be profitable and often close down, leaving towns and villages without essential shopping facilities and other local amenities including necessities such as post offices and medical practices. Social gathering places such as cafés and bars as well as cultural services like theatres, cinemas and libraries are also affected.

The thinning of services has been aggravated in Vorpommern through a territorial reform that has merged several municipalities and thus diminished local institutions such as citizen offices, agencies and public authorities and hospitals.

Local Institutions and Amenities

Schools are a major issue for the citizens. Public schools are spread very thinly, leading to long daily trips for children. In cases, where schools in the neighbouring federal region are closer, the administration involved in enrolling children there instead is tedious to impossible to handle. Some of our informants were motivated by these shortcomings to revive a local school, that had been closed in the structural reforms.

For health services, the informants can make do with the thin network as they are used to it and have their regular doctors. Newcomers from urban neighbourhoods in Poland or Germany only use local services in emergencies and continue to use their doctors in the sending region and combine the visits with social and cultural opportunities.

The lack of commercial services is tackled by our informants through regular smaller trips to regional centres and sporadic larger shopping trips to Berlin or Szczecin.

Cultural services

Some of our participants used their savings or overhead funds to travel long distances for cultural events and services. Others would only use cultural services located more than 30 kilometres away very rarely, i.e., once a year or less. Only a newcomer from Poland would use the cultural services of both Polish and German cities in a 100 km radius regularly, i.e., at least once a month.

The newcomers from metropolitan areas miss the multitude of sport offers in the city but value the benefits of rurality for outdoor sports such as running, trekking and swimming. Also, local sports facilities, e.g. from closed down schools are available for people to start their own sports groups, but these often fail due to unreliable participation or leadership. Higher earners in the sample created their own sport opportunities by building up a horse stable.

Brain Drain and Employment prospects

High rates of young people without a high school degree (9,2%) and cancelations of trainee contracts (33%) as well as declining rates of young people in tertiary education (24% compared to 33% German average) have been an issue in the region. The long running exodus of highly qualified individuals has eroded the country and many rather lowly educated families remain. The German

education system is known for maintaining these class differences. Furthermore, capable young people still leave for central cities such as Berlin to acquire further education and often remain there. As a result, intellectual as well as financial resources are drained from the region.

One of our informants breaks with this tendency. Although he left to study, he chose a subject related to East-German challenges and returned, and now works in participation projects in Western-Pommerania. In his singular case the extra funding pumped into project work in the area bound his resources and potential locally, although rather by chance. Originally, he had planned to see the world after graduating in early 2020 but was restricted to the region by the Corona sanctions on international travel.

Parents reported brain drain effects, in that their (more educationally successful) children left the region to start their first jobs, while others directed their education at one of the few large employers in the region. Many here aim for jobs with public offices such as the law enforcement or administration. The latter has been an important labour market in the region due to the border positioning. Knowledge of the Polish language and culture is a qualifying factor for the border or transnational cooperation related jobs as most of the domestic German population is not able to speak it at a high level, despite frequent border crossings.

Another large employer in the neighbouring Brandenburg is a refinery plant in Schwedt. In the north of the region, on the Baltic sea, tourism is a major sector.

Put into context by our informants the lack of employers targeting highly qualified personnel appears to be a major cause for less

tertiary education levels in Western-Pommerania. The less qualified seem to be the ones that find satisfactory employment in the region, while highly educated and qualified relocate. Projects such as "Schule plus" that aim at increasing the number of successful high school degrees, will not sustainably prevent low education levels as long as suitable employment is not created for high school achievers will keep leaving for opportunities elsewhere.

The adult participants seemed to be consolidated with the lack of employment possibilities. Many of them had ventured outside the region for work earlier in their life but returned due to family links or unsuccessful adaptation to environments outside the region. Due to the rural character of the region, self-sustaining from the land around their houses is an option for the citizens, who have been long-established with their families in the region.

Lack of Participation

In the past 30 years many public and social institutions, cultural and political associations, trade unions, educational organisations and also church institutions have disappeared from this region. These are essential for social cohesion as they conveyed a sense of belonging.

Territorial reforms weakened democratic participation opportunities by merging municipalities and thus their local parliaments from 30 after reunification in 1990, to 12 in 1994 to a meager 6 since 2011 [1]. Participation opportunities have become fewer and fewer with political, social and cultural institutions vanishing over large areas of the region. Many citizens retreated further into the private sphere as practiced in

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the former GDR, this tendency aggravates the situation.

Re-engaging the inhabitants in associations and co-creation of this region has been particularly hard. While many people in peripheral eastern Germany have been frustrated by the reunification process and answered subsequent devaluation of their biographies with retreat into the private sphere, the people of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania are stereotypically known as the least talkative Germans. Accordingly motivating the population to get involved and speak up about the developments of their towns, villages and neighbourhoods has been one of the main challenges since 1990.

Our interviewees were all participating highly in their communities through associations, by taking part in projects such as citizen papers or by taking over formal roles such as major. They utter the wish for more inhabitants to do so and criticize the lack of open mindedness in most of their fellow citizens. The readiness to take on active roles in the community appears very unbalanced with few taking on a lot of responsibility for the development of their region, while others vanish from the public sphere and limit themselves to work and home life. Participants describe how one role follows the other for them. Getting more people to join in is an aim some of our informants now follow by creating a higher variety for participatory formats, i.e., by starting a local citizens paper.

Projects addressing participation are MoDem, that aims to strengthen and develop democratic civil society involvement in structurally weak rural areas through political education and Perspektywa (Polish for perspective), that enables average citizens through a mixture of capacity building and low level participation opportunities to co-design their living environment.

The experts from the latter project witness that many projects financed to create participation are directed at German elites, i.e., by supporting art and higher culture. Instead Perspektywa enables average citizens through a mixture of capacity building and low-level participation opportunities to co-design their living environment. As the region exists across geographic and cultural borders engaging the Polish and German population jointly needs is in the centre of their sustainable participation endeavours according to several interviewed stakeholders and citizens.

Xenophobia and Right-Wing Organisations

Xenophobia towards East Germans in West Germany or by West German employers and colleagues were named as reasons to return to the region by some of our informants despite less employment opportunities. The prejudices against East Germans are still but were especially prevalent right after the reunification. Negative experience right after 1990 still seem to coin the attitude and discourses of many that have remained here or returned after some time in the West. The negative image of the West is linked to assigning the guilt for the economic downturn in the region after 1990 to reunification efforts, that relocated most of the industry to West-Germany.

The disillusionment of Eastern Germany has led to the strengthening of right-wing organisations such as comradeships and political parties including but not limited to AFD (Engl.: Alternative for Germany). Once involved in such organisations, especially young men isolate themselves from non-right-

wing contacts including their families and friends. The rising share of Polish citizens as cross-border commuters as well as temporary and permanent residents is often met with racism and scapegoating. Shared activities of migrants and natives remain the exception. Since 2015 politically motivated crimes in the form of right-wing violence have increased dramatically in this region.

Racism and right-wing activities seem to be a tabu and were rarely addressed by our interviewees. When racially motivated crimes against Polish such as damaging cars with Polish licence plates was brought up in a group interview, this was denied by others, who seemed concerned with the image of the region as right-wing. Experts from programmes supporting the exit from right-wing organisations report this covering behaviour as typical among their clientel. To us sympathies for the AFD were only admitted in one-to-one interviews and rather indirectly.

Openly discussed was an insider-outsider paradigm, that appears to categorize the inhabitants in the region by old timers, that have been living here with their families since before reunification. The Polish that settled here as well as newcomers form other German regions are met with scepticism. The divide is strenghtened for former city dwellers from the Polish city of Szczecin or the German capital Berlin as these are perceived as foreign bodies to the rural region. The newcomers

themselves report of having trouble adjusting to the rural lifestyle with contacts based on vicinity rather than matching interests and personalities.

So, besides the contrast between Polish and German backgrounds our participants witness a stark contrast between rural and urban backgrounds. Polish citizens moving from the metropolitan area of Szczecin to a village or town in Vorpommern are viewed as double outsiders and also experience double adaptation difficulties from Polish city to German village.

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VALLE DEL GUADALHORCE

The region of Valle del Guadalhorce is located in the interior area of Málaga province and it bridges the countryside and the Costa del Sol. After the Guadalhorce River merging with its major tributary, Río Grande, it creates the richest of the soils of Málaga. This results in a fertile area for crops and people to live in. Farmhouses and hamlets are spread across the mountains. Between the mountains you can find the seven towns of Alhaurín el Grande, Almogía, Álora, Cártama, Coín, Pizarra y Valle de Abdalajís.

The area of the region is 805.56 Km².

The geographical environment alternates the valley area, where the river flows, dominated by citrus orchards.

The other most characteristic element is the mountains, which mark the places of settlements (towns). We highlight the Sierra de Alhaurín, Sierra de Cártama, Sierra del Santo in Pizarra and especially in Álora: Sierra del Hacho, Sierra de la Huma and on the top of the Valley, the Natural Park Desfiladero de los Gaitanes, next to the swamp of Chorro, where the Caminito del Rey is located.

Demography

About 139.915 people live in these regions. It is worth noticing that these towns closer to Málaga capital have been experiencing an increase of inhabitants over the last few years whereas the villages further from the capital city have experienced the opposite, a process of DEPOPULATION which is one of the main challenges in the political agenda of our local and regional policy-makers.

Population density (Hab / Km²) 173.69

Population (01/01/2018) 139,915 (70,204 men - 69,711 women)

Foreign population (01/01/2018) 15,075 (10.8%)

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Population per Town of the region:

	Total	Evolution in the last Years
Cártama	25.758	⬆
Coín	21.716	⬆
Alhaurín El Grande	24.123	⬇
Álora	12.951	⬇
Pizarra	9.151	⬆
Almogía	3.770	⬇
Valle de Abdalajís	2.568	⬇

Source: National Statistics Institute (INE). Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Territory 2013 Andalusia (IECA).

Zonification of the Region:

As you can see, we have three different "zones" which are also treated different in the policies of development.

Green zone: those three towns bigger, closer to the main city of Málaga and with better communication. Only one of them loses population in the last three years, "Alhaurín el Grande" and the studies point out that the main reason is the lack of public transport connecting the town with other towns and cities and the need of young people to go to live in Málaga to study.

Then we find the Yellow Zone, those towns, which have an intermediate population. Pizarra is the only "small-medium" town that gains population in the last years. Studies says that this is due to the political changes in the town, the policies to attract young people (big offer of leisure and cultural activities) and the affordable prices of the real-estate market.

Lastly, we have the "red zone", two towns very uncommunicated, with bad roads and lack of

opportunities for young people. They lose population every year.

This "zonification" is essential in other to plan studies and policies according to the different situation of each part of the region.

Reason for the selection of this peripheral region

We selected this peripheral region, the district of the Guadalhorce Valley, because we have been born here, we have studied in other bigger cities but we have been always linked to our region thanks to the youth work done by the Rural Development Group of the Guadalhorce Valley.

Through Erasmus + programme, we have learnt to appreciate our region, our natural resources, the life quality in a rural area and our culture.

Young people who believe that we need to "fly" out of our region to learn, to open our minds and to grow form our association, but then it is also necessary to come back to the roots, to contribute with our expertise to the sustainable development of our region.

Therefore, we created our Association with it seats in one of the towns of the region, Álora, instead of having the seat in the main city centre of Málaga and we are committed with the challenges of our region, especially for those young people with fewer opportunities.

We have always noticed the lack of opportunities that this rural area offers compared to larger urban centres such as nearby Malaga. When they reach the age of majority, most young people are forced to move to Malaga or other large urban centres in the country, such as Barcelona and especially Madrid. They go out because of the lack of opportunities of studies and training,

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but also because once they have studied, they do not find job opportunities in our territory, especially for qualified jobs.

Furthermore, we noticed that in our villages several people with disability who are disadvantaged in reaching the opportunities offered in Malaga; moreover, the villages are unable to offer adequate help to families, causing a social exclusion of this fragile collective.

Lastly, our small communities do not have the charm of attracting so many international people, outside of passing tourists, as big cities of the coast of Málaga can do. Thus, limiting the opportunities for comparison, to know other points of view and other cultures, which can be useful to enrich the social structure of these small communities.

We are also seeing that the district of Guadalhorce Valley is experiencing two distinct realities. The villages closest to Malaga and the coast are rapidly overpopulating, those further away are emptying and marginalizing.

The work of IMAGINA is to give opportunities to young people to participate in European programmes and to provide attention to people with disabilities, to create an international community of volunteers in this small village that we host through the European voluntary projects and to connect these three realities with the volunteering in local project.

Challenges of the peripheral region

Short description of methods and interviewees

The methods used for the diagnosis have been based on the following types of interviews:

- Online survey with open questions (20)

- Telephone survey with open questions (4)

- Individual personal surveys with open questions (10) (methodology of life stories including questions related to the topic using the interview script designed with the project).

- Discussion group (1) with young people (9 young people).

- Discussion group (1) with associations and entities of the territory (4).

- Individual interviews with companies, entities, associations of the territory (8).

The people interviewed have been:

- -Young people between 18 and 30 years old from different municipalities of the territory.

- -People representing significant entities in the territory such as:

- Pizarra City Council.

- Álora City Council.

- Nature Farm Josefa Mancebo (entrepreneurship).

- Regulatory Council of Aloreña Olives (association for the development).

- Valle del Guadalhorce Rural Development Group.

- Guadalhorce Ecológico Coop

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- Guadalhorce Ecológico Association

- Gronkode- dry toilet (entrepreneurship in the environmental field).

Employment

Employment in the Guadalhorce Valley region is mainly related to the primary and services sectors. In the services sector we find mainly jobs related to tourism and hospitality sectors. The participatory process carried out shows that the employment opportunities in the region are mainly for unskilled employment, with precarious working conditions. Qualified employment is usually the traditional one, with no special support for innovation and entrepreneurship.

This conclusion is supported by the following opinions / statements expressed during the interviews / focus groups:

• Lack of qualified employment opportunities.

The qualified jobs that exist are usually related to traditional fields (architecture, law, and banking) but there are no more innovative jobs, which could boost industry oriented to new technologies, renewable energies or that open opportunities for sustainable social innovation.

• It is stated, "There is no job linked exactly with the degree that one studied", but you can use your skills and knowledge to apply it to a job necessary in the region and that is qualified. In short, "create your job" based on the skills and qualifications acquired.

• If you get a qualified job in the region, the standard of living is high, since the cost of living is low (lower price of housing, leisure, food), environmental and social quality is high.

• An opportunity is seen in the development of smart working (especially promoted during the covid-19 crisis; the crisis could be an opportunity to be resilient and reinvent oneself).

• There are many opportunities for unskilled employment, with poor conditions: legal salaries are not respected, fewer hours are ensured than those worked, and all this generates very precarious jobs.

• There are obstacles to entrepreneurship:

- Administrative obstacles.

- Lack of adequate advice and guidance, who understand individual situations and do not drown the entrepreneur in complicated terms, documentation and forms that ordinary people do not understand.

- Little financial support for entrepreneurship from the beginning (there are subsidies for entrepreneurship that are awarded a posteriori, not everyone has the economic possibilities of making the initial investment that is needed).

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- Inadequate public transport, poor state of roads and paths.

- Very traditional mentality, lack of mental openness to be able to develop ventures in more innovative areas that promote a different culture.

Social life

The social environment of the region stands out for the tranquillity and closeness of the people, being one of the main attractions to "return" to the villages of origin in adult life, especially when it is oriented towards creating a family and raising children. However, there is a need for greater social openness to different non-majority or traditional life options. There is also the need of a greater offer of alternative leisure. These needs are the main reasons why young people want to go outside the region to meet different people and grow personally in their teen and young age.

The following statements collected during the diagnostic process in interviews and focus groups support this conclusion:

- The surroundings of the Guadalhorce Valley attract socially because of the tranquillity, the proximity of the people of the town, the feeling of feeling welcomed. Especially these values play a crucial role in adulthood, when people consider starting a family and having children, seeing themselves as a more suitable and safer environment for parenting compared to a big city.

- In the younger ages, the need to go out to meet other people and mentalities stands out. The feeling of "not fitting in" stands out when:

- -The person has broader interests: music, fashion, cinema, arts, lgtbi community.

- -Young people who go abroad and come back with a more open mentality, feel that they "do not fit in" with their traditional circle of friends who have not left town and who continue to have a more traditional mentality.

- The difference in "profiles" of friends stands out, between lifelong friendships, not chosen, who are loved because of the long history that unites us, and friends chosen throughout life (studies, hobbies, experiences vital) with whom you have the most in common.

- A certain hostility is perceived on the part of people from Malaga or other bigger cities who come to live or to create an enterprise in the region, especially in the countryside. These foreign entrepreneurs feel a certain distrust on the part of neighbours, problems around borders of the land, the use of common water, "rights of way", etc.

- Lack of leisure options other than just bars/pubs. There is a lack of leisure options related to culture, sports, the environment, cultural hobbies.

It stands out that when you meet people in these areas, it is usually different people too, with whom you fit in more and do different things that give them new experiences that fill you and make them grow as a person.

Cultural offers

The cultural openness of the region is limited, and the cultural offer is mainly related to traditional sectors (Easter, flamenco, nightlife, etc.). With the exception of some municipality where the work of the consistory in carrying out various activities which stands out (Pizarra Town). In general, both the youth and the adult population have the need for a greater cultural education oriented to diversity. The proximity of Malaga capital usually give access to a bigger offer of alternative culture. The following statements collected during the diagnostic process in interviews and focus groups support this conclusion:

- Culture is closely related to traditions (Brotherhoods, brotherhoods, Holy Week, flamenco) and there is a lack of a more varied, different, alternative cultural offer.

- Lack of cultural offer that is not related only to leisure in bars and restaurants.

- Cultural openness is quite low in the population.

- The proximity of Malaga capital stands out in order to find a broader cultural offer.

- Institutional support for local artists (painting, music, etc.) is lacking.

- Cultural opinion varies by municipality. In Pizarra, the population considers in general that there is a lot of different cultural offer (tapas route, craft beer festival, concerts, comic book room, etc.) and that every weekend there were different things to do. In other towns such as Álora, the population considers that the City Council's proposals do not fit with the young population and that the options that get assistance are only the majority (flamenco, Easter). In Alhaurín, it is considered that the facilities for cultural offerings are highly politicized and relate only to tradition or to entities that have the "favour" of the City Council.

- In general, it is agreed that there is a lack of cultural options that open the mind, that introduce alternative culture and open to new options.

Others

• Emphasizes the "cyclical" movement throughout life. People go abroad in their youth to study, seek better job opportunities, and return in adulthood, seeking tranquillity and a safe environment for raising children.

• Stresses the need to introduce innovative elements in popular culture, to satisfy the needs of youth.

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• Emphasizes the need for better public transport, so as not to depend on the car. This is an especial need during teen age when youngsters depend on their parents to move from a town to other places.

• Emphasizes the need to support entrepreneurship, advice and career guidance.

• The problem of job insecurity in unskilled jobs stands out.

Future development and perspectives

The future of the Guadalhorce Valley is hopeful and oriented towards progressive development, in relation to the different development opportunities that are been developed in the area.

The possibility of growth and job creation around the area of the "Caminito del Rey Territory" is highlighted, which offers development opportunities for companies oriented to rural tourism and active tourism, as an alternative to sun and beach tourism on the Costa del Sol.

In addition, there are development opportunities in the industrial sector oriented to agriculture, with the enhancement of local products with designation of origin (Aloreña olives, Malaga cheeses, Huevo de Toro tomato) that could lead to a rejuvenation of the sector and a commitment to innovation in the agro-industrial sector.

The opinion of the population is that within a few years the region will have gained population, due to the privileged place in which it is located, near the capital and the coast and with some of its well-connected towns. It is expected that the development will

be proportional to the ease of communications and public transport with the capital other municipalities. This leads us to think that there will continue to be zoning in the development levels, with the most isolated municipalities (Almogía and Valle de Abdalajís) being the most affected.

However, the development of the region also depends on the return of the youth to develop their adult life and be able to find quality jobs in the territory. In order for this return to be possible, development and openness needs related to the quality of social and cultural life (greater cultural and alternative leisure offer, cultural education, enhancement of alternative models, etc.) and also the need to support entrepreneurship and innovation through better advisory services, closer to the population and its reality.

The statements that support these conclusions have been:

- In the future (within 10 years or so) there may be more different models, derived from people who have gone abroad and then return to town, but workshops on self-esteem, new models, different job options and entrepreneurship from the education (workshops in educational centers and with youth).

- More public transport is needed so that development is real and there are no mobility problems in adolescence and youth.

- Possibilities for economic growth and job opportunities are seen in the Guadalhorce Valley, but perhaps especially in terms of

unskilled jobs (construction, hospitality sector, etc.).

- Rural areas have more possibilities of adaptation and resilience to changes (eg covid pandemic) so if the current trend continues, there will be more people who want to return to live in quieter places and close to nature.

- Agricultural employment will continue to be unvalued, dedicating itself to the "field" does not give benefits, you can only "maintain expenses" but not have profits unless you combine it with another activity (eg outsourcing of agriculture, environmental education activities, etc. .).

Existing opportunities for capacity building and training in the peripheral region (particularly in the fields of entrepreneurship and employability)

The existing opportunities for capacity development and training, especially oriented towards entrepreneurship and employability, are oriented to two different areas.

The first of them has to do with the development needs in the field of infrastructures / services that allow the development of entrepreneurship and employability in the area, and these would be:

- -More availability of public transport, connection between population centers and between towns with the capital.

- -Entrepreneurship advice, courses on innovative entrepreneurial models (options to create a company, tax advice and necessary documentation).

- -Economic aid to entrepreneurship, bureaucratic facilitation of the processes to undertake, support in the processes of requesting / justifying the aid so that they are really accessible.

- -Training on innovative and alternative entrepreneurship, models of different entrepreneurs for young people.

- The second of them has to do with training / educational needs that allow both permanence in peripheral areas of the population and the creation of job opportunities in it:

- -Cultural education, opening to a broader and alternative cultural offer.

- -Training on local resources and development possibilities: employability from local resources (agriculture, agro-industry, tourism, ...).

- -Training for innovative entrepreneurship and future employment, especially aimed at educational workshops for youth and adolescents.

- -Need for youth motor groups, with ideas to develop in the town and that are supported by the municipalities.

- -More diverse cultural and creative activities, to promote a broader culture.

- -Promotion of sport as a healthy leisure alternative. Senterismo, youth sports groups.

- -Knowledge about the Caminito del Rey and entrepreneurship options.

- -Support for young entrepreneurship from 0.

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- -Support and enhancement of differences: people with functional diversity, non-majority sexual orientation, etc.

- -Promotion of talented young people, support from local institutions.

Success stories of collaborations between organizations and peripheral citizens

Gronkode + GDR Valle del Guadalhorce: Erasmus + Project "Ecobuilding for Future"

The collaboration between these entities arises from the moment when a young architect (Miguel García) from Cártama (one of the municipalities of the region of the Guadalhorce Valley) proposed to the Rural Development Group of the Guadalhorce's Valley (a non-profit association whose goal is to promote the development of the region through LEADER funds from the EU) the realization of a training course within the framework of Erasmus + programme about bio-construction, more specifically on the building of a dry toilet, which does not use water, but the technique of composting and reuse of wastes as compost.

The idea was presented by the youth workers of the GDR Valle del Guadalhorce (Ana Hevilla, Laura Aguilar and María José Subires) to a call for Erasmus + grants to carry out a training course for youth workers. The project was approved and the training was carried out

over a week, in which 30 young people from more than 10 countries met in Malaga to learn about construction techniques with reused materials and about the operation of a dry toilet.

The project was a success and it lead to the creation of two jobs for local young people: another young architect (Francisco Romero) and an environmental educator (Adrián Escudero).

The three of them created the small company GRONKODE, which is currently still in full growth and professionally engaged in the construction of dry toilets.

Today they are opting for the Junior Prize for Companies award organized by the Malaga City Council through the Municipal Institute for Training and Employment (IMFE) and Diario Sur.

http://www.canalmalaga.es/premio-junior-para-empresas-2020?fbclid=IwAR3KrT8Oye3Zq0wwKXi3gw2rgLJGug0KXJIuitLH-CwTl9YDPD0JKner9_0

With this example of cooperation between a rural development group (association), local youth and European mobility programs, we can learn how essential Erasmus + is for youth, allowing training, open-mindedness and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

Likewise, we highlight the importance of the youth work in rural areas, which allows advising young people and testing innovative ideas that can lead to the creation of jobs and innovative youth entrepreneurship.

Aula de la Naturaleza Josefa Mancebo-Artequeando Emprende Rural

The Nature Classroom is a school-farm located in Cerralba which receives visits from children to carry out outdoor environmental education activities.

The awareness about social inclusion of its promoter (Marisé Sánchez Mancebo) lead to the collaboration with the group of people with disabilities ARTEQUEANDO, since she lend her farm for the creation of an entrepreneurial initiative with a Social Chicken Coop.

The project of the Social Chicken Coop is an innovative idea that also seeks the labor inclusion of a group with fewer opportunities, such as people with disabilities from rural areas.

The company will operate in such a way that people who want to contribute to the project can "sponsor" or "adopt" a hen (which will be cared for by people with disabilities in occupational therapy workshops). In return, the adopters will be offered an approximate number of eggs per month. The objective of sponsorship is not to "sell" the eggs, but to support a social project based on an agricultural and food activity.

The collaboration between the Aula de la Naturaleza and the Artequeando group consists of:

- -The nature classroom gives up its space where a chicken coop has already been built, which means a shared use of a space and savings in materials for the Artequeando group.

- -The Artequeando group contributes to increasing the number of chickens in the School Farm, as well as contributing to the cost of animal feed and maintenance of the space.

- -Inclusion is promoted through the active model of people with disabilities, which the girls and boys who visit the farm will see in a standardized way.

- -The Artequeando group contributes to the visibility of the Nature Classroom, modernizing its promotion on social networks that reach an older and younger audience.

- -The Nature Classroom advises the Artequeando group in its first steps in the field of entrepreneurship, contributing its experience and know-how in the field of outsourcing livestock and agriculture for educational and recreational use.

From the collaboration between the Aula de la Naturaleza and the Artequeando group we can draw the conclusion of the importance of collaboration between third sector associations (social innovation and attention to citizens), since in this way "production" costs are saved , the visibility of projects is increased and entrepreneurial initiatives are fed back, allowing newer initiatives to lean on existing ones to be able to face the beginnings, while younger enterprises favor the visibility and modernization of companies with more progress.

https://www.asociacionimagina.com/menu/40/Artequeando%20Emprende%20Rural

Cooperativa Guadalhorce Ecológico

The Guadalhorce Ecológico Cooperative was established in 2011 and is made up of farmers from the region who grow organically and later come together to market their products.

The cooperative arises precisely from the cooperation between farmers in the region and various public institutions and associations for development such as the Diputación de Málaga, the Valle del Guadalhorce Rural Development Group, the Guadalhorce Ecológico Association and the town councils of the region. All these institutions come together to carry out training for farmers on organic farming (advice how to certify farms as organic, training on how to grow organic, natural pest control, etc.) and on how to create an entity associative to support each other.

During the time that the Guadalhorce Ecológico Cooperative has been operating, many more farmers from the region have joined and a business model has been developed that consists of:

- -Physical Store of local, seasonal and organic products.

- -Service of home delivery of ecological baskets with the products of the season (subscription).

- -Specific order delivery service.

Likewise, from the cooperation work between the different entities, the Guadalhorce Ecológico Association arose in 2008, which is in charge of raising awareness about the importance of consuming local, proximity products, in short marketing and ecological channels.

In addition, the association carries out important work by creating the Network of ECOLOGICAL MARKETS that are carried out in different localities both on the coast and in the interior.

http://www.guadalhorceecologico.org

From the cooperation between all these entities, public and private, associations and cooperatives, agricultural producers and consumers, we can conclude the importance of joining forces to achieve an impact on the change of consumption habits of a region, as well as to support the viability of retail production and respectful of our environment.

Final remarks

The Guadalhorce Valley region shows great dynamism being a peripheral region. The proximity to Malaga city and the big cities of the coast, as well as the richness of its soils for agriculture and the tourist attraction of the region due to its natural and historical-cultural heritage, are all reasons that lead to opportunities for growth, job opportunities and settlement of the population.

However, there are some elements that still mean that residents of this region have fewer opportunities and resources compared to the urban areas, which still leads many of these people to move to larger cities.

One of the main elements that stands out as a "brake" for development is the lack of public transport (flexible hours, affordable prices, stops in each suburb and accessibility for

people with reduced mobility), which prevents mobility between towns and the capital but also between the neighbourhoods of each town and the centre of the locality.

The other element is the lack of openness towards alternative culture, alternative leisure activities, different meeting spaces and different models for youth (innovative entrepreneurship, sexual diversity, cultural and musical openness, etc.).

Job opportunities exist, both for skilled work and unskilled jobs, but there is a lack of decent working conditions (contract for all the hours really worked, dignity of wages, etc.) and training in innovation to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during studies in different jobs oriented to the development needs of the territory

The training and development opportunities are therefore aimed at promoting awareness aobut the value of the resources of the territory, the development of opportunities around the use of natural resources, natural tourist attractions and local products. Also about training in innovative entrepreneurship, incorporation of digital tools for entrepreneurship, services of advice to start new entrepreneurial projects and aid to entrepreneurship that start from the reality of the territory and of the people.

This means for many people and groups of the Guadalhorce Valley the need to facilitate

bureaucratic processes and to support entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized companies through more advisory services that allow a better understanding of the aid processes, subsidies , accreditations for quality labels and application of innovation to business models.

Finally, we must emphasize that the differences between the areas of the region are still very important and that therefore, the reality of towns such as Almogía or Valle de Abdalajís, or neighborhoods in other towns such as El Chorro, Cerralba, Sierra de Gibralgalia , etc. It is not the same reality as that of larger and better communicated municipalities such as Cártama, Alhaurín or Coín.

Therefore, we conclude on the need to pay attention to the local reality of people, to promote a process of empowerment and development that starts with the population and that focuses on meeting local needs and enhancing the strengths of each community, to achieve a real, innovative and close development that entails the permanence and / or return of the population to rural and peripheral areas, which can result in a higher quality of life (better environmental conditions, satisfaction with the proximity to people and towns, cultural wealth, tranquility) and sustainable development.

RURAL SARDINIA

The rural area that we are going to analyse in this desk research is the whole Sardinian Region as almost all territory could be considered as Rural Area. Excluding the touristic places of the coasts and the main cities (Sassari, Cagliari, Olbia, Oristano, and Nuoro), the remaining Sardinian backgrounding areas could be considered as rural, with similar issues and challenges related to marginalization. Even excluding urbanized and touristic places it's important to mention that some issues and rural obstacles are reflected in the whole island, cities and urbanized areas as well.

Geography

Sardinia is the second-largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, after Sicily, and one of the 20 regions of Italy. It is located west of the Italian Peninsula, north of Tunisia and immediately south of the French island of Corsica. It is one of the five Italian regions that have been granted some degree of domestic autonomy by special statute. Its official name is Regione Autonoma della Sardegna (Sardinian: Regione Autònoma de Sardigna; English: "Autonomous Region of Sardinia"). It is divided into four provinces and a metropolitan city. The capital of the region of Sardinia and its largest city is Cagliari. Sardinia's indigenous language and the other minority languages spoken on the island (Sassarese, Gallurese, Algherese Catalan and Ligurian Tabarchino) are officially recognized by the regional law as having "equal dignity" with Italian.

Demography

The Sardinian population is getting older in the last years, natality index is decreasing, and youth are moving away after the studies. This situation is reflected better in numbers: in

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Sardinia at the end of 2019 were resident 1.639.591 with an average age of 46,3 years, in 2000 the average age was 40,1 yr. Most of the population is over middle age plus is not equally distributed in the 24.100 km² of the island. The main concentration of people is in the urban area of Cagliari with a density of 346 inhabitants per km², followed by Sassari province with 64 inhabitants per km², then South Sardinia with 54 inhabitants per km² and Nuoro 37 inhabitants per km². 22.8 % of the population is over 65 years old and 11.2% is lower than 14 years old. Comparing Sardinia to a similar island as Sicily we can state the inhabitants in Sicily are almost 3 times more, 5 mln against 1.6 mln, and the density is double in Sicily, 196 inhabitants per against the 68.8 of Sardinia.

Why rural Sardinia?

We have chosen Sardinia because the whole island is facing issues related to marginalization. The island is in the middle of the sea at the same distance from Italy, Spain, Africa and France (not considering Corsica), and there is not an efficient plan to ensure the achievability of the island during the whole year. The issue related to flights' and ferries' tickets cost in the last years has been in the middle of the political debate because, from the central government, a clear guideline to ensure to Sardinian residents and foreign sustainable prices does not exist. Travel costs issue is easily linkable with transportation costs issue as all products flow from and to the island is through ferries. The transportation cost represents already an obstacle for who is doing business on the island, plus the main ferry companies are private and they follow market logic to establish ticket prices for tourists, residents, and the logistics companies almost in the same way.

Working on this analysis could be useful to consider all the Region to make a focus on issues related to entrepreneurial and business realities, despite taking in consideration only the backcountry is useful to read issues as depopulation.

Looking at statistics from ISTAT (the National Agency of Statics) is easier to understand better the productive structure of the island, inhabitants' composition and distribution

Challenges of the peripheral region

One-third of the population is fully employed, 562.000 people are currently working and divided into the 3 sectors as follows: 34,000 are employed in Agriculture, 94,000 in the industry and 434,000 in services. Considering the third sector is interesting to underline that 33% of employed in serviced are living in the Cagliari area, which is even smaller compared with the other one-third only in Cagliari and hinterland area, that is even the smaller per extension. The level of youth unemployment is quite high, 46,8% of youth are not employed, 43,4% are male and 53,3% are female.

Youth in the southern regions of Italy face a greater challenge in entering the labour market. In Campania, Sicily, Sardinia, Basilicata and Calabria, the youth unemployment rate stood above 50%. Moreover, the youth unemployment challenge has become worse in each region over the last decade. The youth unemployment rate more than doubled in 9 of the 20 regions.

There are 103.802 businesses currently active in Sardinia, 80 % of them are working on services, the remaining in industries. The distribution of enterprises is not

geographically balanced as well, 32% of the currently active is working in Sassari province and 30% is working in Cagliari hinterland.

The Sardinian backcountry is quite similar from north to south, from west to east, in terms of social structure, density, occupation, and issues. The trend in these rural areas follows a growing depopulation process for decades. The depopulation process numbers are mostly related to young workers moving away from rural areas or the region, even workers over 30 yr. are interested in the trend. The migration of people from rural to urbanized areas has several reasons. state the inhabitants in Sicily are almost 3 times more, 5 mln against 1.6 mln, and the density is double in Sicily, 196 inhabitants per against the 68.8 of Sardinia Cause of depopulation, in the last 15 years 277 out of 377 municipalities in Sardinia registered decreasing resident population, only 78 municipalities registered an increase of inhabitants, and the others had no significant movements. Only 30 municipalities have more than 10.000 inhabitants.

Focus Group Interviews

Five young people were interviewed. All between 20 and 30 years of age. Four were female and one male.   All of them live in Sassari except for one who lives in small village right outside Sassari. However, he currently works in Sassari A semi- structured interviewed was conducted where the interviewer had 20 main questions; however, she added additional questions were more information was necessary.

Employment

All of the interviewees agreed that there aren't enough job opportunities in Sassari or in the who region of Sardinia, especially not for young people. One explained during the interview, that if an older person and a young person had to apply for the same job, the older person probably will get the job because employers believe an older person has more responsibilities and needs the job more. One also said, she has never worked in Sardinia. Her job experience is abroad. All of their answer basically express that is very difficult to find jobs in Sassari and above all, they find it almost impossible to find a job in their field of studies for those who complete higher education studies.

Social life

Because the island of Sardinia is a very touristic destination, participants feel most of the social life happens in the tourist season (Summer). Some expressed they feel the social life try to attract more tourists than locals. The reasons for this statement are the costs of entertainment and type of activities. Others expressed that when you have the seaside and local bars, that is enough as social life.

Cultural offers

These statements are excerpts of one interviewee, that clearly illustrates the consensus opinion regarding cultural offers in this area: ". I hope my city does not become a museum or park to showcase Mediterranean lifestyle. I don't want my city to die of gentrification.

Most cultural offers do not intend to attract locals but mostly tourists leaving some youngsters eager for cultural experience that they search else where like one of the interviewee that went to Siena to study and some other who express their friends go to Rome or Milan.

Others

In general, participants agree that they would have more opportunities if they lived somewhere else or maybe in a bigger city in the same region.

Future development and perspectives

Some of the future development and perspectives the interviewee envision are as follows:

"I hope that traffic and roads will change because since I was a child, politicians promise change. Besides that, I hope people around my age can have opportunities to go abroad and come back to Alghero to bring their new ideas and expertise".

"I think that what is needed, and lacking is a vison of long-termperspective for the community benefit. Things have been stable, and people look the personal being and not the community".

"Mindset needs to change especially of entrepreneurs in touristic sectors so they can hire young people and allow them to grow personally and professionally because right now is not beneficial for workers or tourists".

"Tourist season needs to improve; the way things are planned, so that it only lasts in the summer, but we use the cultural and arts we have".

Existing opportunities for capacity building and training in the peripheral region (particularly in the fields of entrepreneurship and employability)

Youth entrepreneurship support enjoys a high profile in Italy due to a set of National Youth Plans, which created several important institutions such as the Youth Department and the Youth Policies Fund.

EU-level policies such as the European Social Fund, the Youth Employment Initiative and the Youth Guarantee reinforce national efforts and help to engage regions, provinces, and local authorities in promoting and supporting youth entrepreneurship. Recent efforts to streamline the regulatory environment are paying-off in terms of a simplified process of business registration. This will be further improved with recent legislation that increases the opportunities to meet regulatory requirements online. Youth entrepreneurs stand to be among the groups that benefit the most from these efforts. Youth can generally access a wide range of entrepreneurship supports. Entrepreneurship training outside of the formal education system is quite accessible for youth, especially for youth entrepreneurs with innovative business projects. Similarly, coaching and mentoring is readily available, often provided with training as part of an integrated package. In addition, access to start-up financing is improving for youth entrepreneurs with two recent developments: a rapid growth of online crowdfunding platforms and recent regulatory changes to create a microfinance sector. The government benefits from a highly active non-government sector, including both private and public sector organisations. Many organisations and business associations play a significant role in engaging youth in entrepreneurship, directing potential youth entrepreneurs to information and resources about entrepreneurship, providing entrepreneurship training and facilitating access to financing for business start-up.

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There is a strong network of non-government actors in both the public (e.g. Unioncamere and the Chambers of Commerce, Confindustria's Young Entrepreneurs' Network) and private sectors (e.g. ItaliaCamp, Confcommercio), who play an active and crucial role in implementing government programmes in support of youth entrepreneurship. Many of these actors deliver business support services that are financed by national or EU co-financed programmes. They also frequently act as the initial contact point with young entrepreneurs, especially given the large networks of some of the organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce or Confcommercio. In these cases, these non-government organisations have an important role in disseminating information about available support and helping youth access the support needed.

In addition to the dissemination of information and provision of training, some non-government actors facilitate access to start-up finance for youth entrepreneurs. For example, youth entrepreneurs may be able to take advantage of the relationship between the local Chambers of Commerce and banks. In some regions' banks work closely with the Chambers, which increase awareness among youth about sources of financing and act as an initial screening mechanism for business plans assessments. However, the extent of integration with financial institutions varies across Italy's regions. In some regions, such as Lombardy, relationships are strong, but this is not true in all regions. An important role for the non-government stakeholders is to help young entrepreneurs become established in the marketplace. Private sector non-government organisations are particularly strong in this role. ItaliaCamp has been successful at linking youth entrepreneurs and

investors, notably international investors for high-potential youth. They estimate their economic impact to be approximately EUR 20 million, which is the result of intensive efforts that are focussed on a relatively small group of youth who benefit from high levels of education, typically in science and technology fields. While this approach leads to high success rates for ItaliaCamp activities and likely leads to the greatest impact in terms of contribution to the economy and job creation, many youth do not fit this client profile (e.g. NEETs) and therefore do not have access to this, or comparable, support.

Success stories of collaborations between organizations and peripheral citizens

Contamination LAB (CLAB)

The Contamination Lab project involve several universities around Italy and during the years had great results in terms of output and participation. The project interested several cities all around Italy, but especially in Sardinia had a big success. The project had a great impact in Sardinia because has been able to reduce typical obstacles of rural areas. Social entrepreneurship is key work in CLAB as almost all ideas developed during the previous editions are related to creating social value, offering services and products not provided by the market to disadvantaged people. During the previous edition, many social projects have been developed as a table game for deaf-mute, tool to help diabetic people to monitor glycemia levels, or devices to help deaf in daily life. Even ideas more

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"market-related" are born in Contamination Lab as projects who involved high technologies as 3D printers and drones, or touristic related ideas as rental ships platforms.

The CLAB aims to transmit entrepreneurial skills to new entrepreneurs through a specific path made of training, activities, and sessions made by experienced university professors. In the first phase, the group is composed of 60 – 70 people who start to meet and know each other, discussing personal ideas trying to find compatible people to create a team. Once created the team, usually of 5-6 people, the training part starts. During the second phase, expert trainers give a general overview of entrepreneurship and base skills. Sessions and workshops about marketing, social media, and economics, create a solid background of knowledge for future innovators. In the last part the team activities are more focused on idea development, especially to tailor the service/product to costumers' needs and idea attractiveness to external investors. In this phase, teams work on pitches and presentations for expertise public who debate with them ideas strengths and lacks. The winner startup is decided by a final competition in which the best teams present their ideas and the jury is composed of experts.

The Contamination Lab is a good example of how a project can help young entrepreneurs to overcome all obstacles of rural areas, creating a connection between them, external audiences and their expectations. The best startups of the last editions receive a grant to spend in idea implementation and free consultancy agreement with the most important social incubator of the country.

https://clabunica.it/

Case a 1 euro

CASE A 1 EURO
Acquistare case a 1 euro in Italia è possibile. Scopri come.

Case a 1 euro – the base idea of the project is to save small villages with a high rate of depopulation selling the old houses at the price of 1 euro. Usually the houses involved in this project are those in the historical villages' center, that belonged to people migrated long time ago. The project is trying to satisfy two needs: in one hand house owners who often want to leave old properties and taxes related, on the other hand, people available to invest their assets to renovate old houses and living in there. The project is supported by specific municipalities and, after they have the agreement with old owners, they offer the house with a price of 1 euro. The outputs for municipalities are quite positive, in fact with this tool they can push people to populate once again the villages and, at the same time, renovate old village center houses otherwise in decline.

The buyers have specific requirements to fulfill to get access to the houses: they are in charge to pay the costs related to property transitions and other bureaucratic taxes; the buyer is obliged to make renovation project of the house till one year since the purchase, around 20.000 – 25.000 of renovation budget; two months to start the work once obtained all permissions.

Several municipalities around Italy tried to apply the project to their villages especially from Sicily, Sardinia, Abruzzo, and Marche. In Sardinia, more municipalities are recently applying to the project but only data from two villages can be considered, as the long terms of project results. The first who adopted the project are the villages of Ollolai and Nulvi,

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rural villages from the center and center-north. The results of this policy are different, in fact, the potentialities of the project fully emerged in the case of Ollolai, vice-versa, in Nulvi the project didn't give the output awaited. In Nulvi the main difficulties are related to the first part of the project the municipalities had serious issues finding old houses to include in the project. The owners often have not been interested in the project, some just ignored the requests, but in the majority of the cases, the municipalities had to face with several owner successions and has not been possible to reach a common agreement. In Ollolai cases, the results are quite more positive. In the village of 1.300 inhabitants, the first round of the project started in 2016 and closed in 2018, in two years the applications were more than 5.000, 500 of them insert in the waiting list. The real estate who concluded the whole process is more than 30, while 18 are still in progress. The old houses have been renovated and used to different scopes. Some of them have become houses for inhabitants of the village, in other cases B&B or the location of business activities as local beverages distillery, wedding planner studio, physical therapist studio. Some places are now used to host immigrants, projects of eco-sustainability and medical centers. From the output created with the project, we can state the relevance for those rural realities who are facing depopulation and lack of service issues.

https://www.agi.it/cronaca/vendita_case_euro-5139241/news/2019-03-14/

Final remarks

Entrepreneurship development is an important requirement for achieving the goal of smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. It is also a means to respond to new economic challenges, to create jobs and to fight social and financial exclusion. The impact of the global financial and economic crisis calls for giving entrepreneurship and self-employment a stronger role in economic and social development policies. This is particularly relevant for youth who face higher unemployment rates than the adult population and increased difficulties entering the labour market to start their careers. However, the effectiveness of national, regional, and local measures and actions to promote inclusive entrepreneurship development in Europe can be hindered by a fragmentation of responsibilities, resources and strategies, and a failure to understand the goals of inclusive entrepreneurship.

Despite the many strengths of youth entrepreneurship support in Italy, the support system is hindered by the lack of an overall strategy. Consequently, many of the government's efforts are single shot interventions rather than being part of a co-ordinated system where actions complement each other. This is further complicated by the multi-level governance system in Italy, where most entrepreneurship support programmes are implemented at the local level. This results in a disparate system where the quantity and quality of support varies greatly by region. The overall approach to supporting youth entrepreneurship support is largely concentrated on innovative projects. There are merits to this approach since innovative projects are likely to create the most jobs. However, many youths do not fit this profile and therefore have substantially fewer opportunities to access support. With a NEET rate that exceeded 22% in 2013, there is a large youth population that is left under-served by the current youth entrepreneurship support system in Italy. One of the most

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effective ways of promoting entrepreneurship and supporting the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and skills is through entrepreneurship education in the school system. This is in the early stages of implementation in Italy. There is a need to scale-up ongoing experiments so that more youth learn about what entrepreneurship is, its potential as a career option and acquire some basic entrepreneurship skills. Moreover, teachers and other staff currently lack training to deliver basic entrepreneurship education. Moreover, there are few entrepreneurship role models for youth, particularly disadvantaged youth. There was little evidence that youth are exposed to role models unless they are already enrolled in some form of entrepreneurship support. Further, success stories of youth entrepreneurs are not promoted widely.

Access to finance remains a challenge for many youth entrepreneurs. Microfinance is underdeveloped in Italy due largely to the relatively recent adoption of legislation that permits this activity.

Youth typically launch small-scale entrepreneurship projects and are therefore often too risky and too small for bank loans. They have few other options of obtaining small loans. Monitoring and evaluation is not widely used to learn about the impact and effectiveness of public entrepreneurship programmes. This is especially true at the local level where much of the supports are delivered. It is therefore difficult for policy makers to understand which actions are working well and which are not.

LIEKSA

Geographic and demographic details

Geography

Located close to the Finnish-Russian border, territorially, Lieksa is the largest municipality in the province of North Karelia. Roughly the same size as the Ruhr region in Germany, Lieksa has only 10,799 inhabitants, which translates into 0.2% of Ruhr's population. Most of the municipality's population lives in the urban centre – the town of Lieksa. There is also a settlement of 700 residents near the Pankakoski Mill that produces cardboard and is one of the largest employers in the area. Most companies in Lieksa are micro and small businesses (more information about businesses in Lieksa:

https://lieksa.yrityshakemistot.fi/). There are other big companies, like Binderholz and Porokylän Leipomo, that employ several hundred workers. Since the main natural resource in Lieksa are forests, wood processing and tourism are important pillars of the economy.

The nearest larger urban centre is Joensuu, about 100 km south of Lieksa. It can be accessed by bus or train (the cost of a single ticket is €5-17). There are no direct connections between Lieksa and the capital city Helsinki, which is 530 km away. Lieksa has no airport.

The road connecting Lieksa and Joensuu is not a major highway, but it is well-maintained. Owing to a large-scale renovation project in 2020, the condition of the road has improved

significantly. The highway no. 6 connecting Helsinki and Kajaani runs west of Lake Pielinen. It provides access to the Koli resort but is far from the town of Lieksa, which, from Koli, is more conveniently reached by water.

Despite the vicinity of the Russian Federation, the access to the nearest border crossing is restricted. The nearest accessible border crossing is Niirala-Värtsilä, a two-hour drive away. Therefore, Lieksa is not a typical cross-border town. Even so, Lieksa's schools are involved in cross-border cooperation to attract students of all ages who live on the other side of the border.

Most of Lieksa's surface is occupied by forests, lakes, and wilderness areas, making it an attractive destination for different kinds of tourism and recreation, from hiking to hunting. The main tourist centres within the municipality's limits are the Koli National Park, the rapids of Ruuna and the Patvinsuo National Park (shared with the neighbouring municipality of Ilomantsi). The view of the lake Pielinen from the Koli hills has been dubbed the national landscape of Finland. Koli offers a variety of activities from hiking to day spa visits and spiritual retreats. Ruuna's tourist infrastructure is not as developed, but the rapids are located closer to the Lieksa urban centre. Patvinsuo is a wild swampland known for brown bear watching.

Demography

Lieksa reached its demographic peak of 26,000 inhabitants in 1960s owing to post-war industrial development and population resettlement policies. With the advancing industrial automation and dropping birth rates, the population boom did not last long. Lieksa's contemporary age pyramid shows uneven distribution of population. Compared to younger cohorts, persons at the age of 65 are overrepresented. In the last 30 years the proportion of elderly people in the entire population has doubled. With more people

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 2 Newly renovated road no. 518 between Eno and Kyyrönlampi. This is the main route connecting Lieksa with Joensuu.

dying than being born, Lieksa (and Finland as well, but to a smaller degree) shows a rapid negative natural population development. Interestingly, in the first two quarters of 2020, the net migration in Lieksa was positive (Lieksan Lehti, 66/2020, p. 11). It is too early to assess the significance of this development. The demographic situation of Lieksa reflects the problems faced by North Karelia and other peripheral Finnish regions.

Why Lieksa?

Demography and governance issues are the most relevant elements in terms of local development. Lieksa is an archetype of a peripheral and shrinking rural town in Finland. Its population has halved during the last 50 years due to demographic change and

outmigration fuelled by insufficient employment and educational opportunities. Typical for a peripheral community, Lieksa, its city administration, has often been the target and receiver of policies rather than a proactive actor that builds on its own territorial capital. On the one hand, the central demographic issues for Lieksa are ongoing outmigration and an aging population, which place continuous stress on the tax base of municipality. On the other hand, in the context of planned national reforms that would strengthen the autonomy of regions, the role of municipalities is bound to change, which is why municipalities, such as Lieksa, have to realign their governance and administration.

Lieksa is an interesting experiment in local development practices as it has drastically overhauled its traditional redistributive approach in order to privilege entrepreneurial initiative. Neo-liberal local autonomy (or new public management) is the current dominant governance trend in the case of Lieksa and is considered most likely to be relevant within the ten-year window. In case the planned regional reform takes place (which is likely), the autonomy of regions will be strengthened, which will take some responsibilities away from municipalities. The strategy is thus an interesting example how peripheral governments seek to turn narratives of marginalization into narratives of opportunity.

In light of this, the case study needs to be interpreted against the new local development strategy adopted in 2016. The strategy aims to raise Lieksa's level of vitality and viability and thus improve its socio-economic position vis-a-vis other municipalities in the region and in Finland. The Lieksa Development Strategy 2030 signals a shift to an entrepreneurial approach in local governance to strengthen vitality based on local potential and assets. The Strategy targets a shift from traditional aid-based policies. Indeed, recent local government processes appear to aim at gaining more local capacities and autonomy, in the sense of more control of this town's own destiny and development. Elements of this include a more effective and more transparent and participatory city administration; repatriation of economic policy making from the sub-regional to the local level; a proactive take on the changing role of municipalities in light of ongoing regional and social/healthcare reforms in Finland; and almost unanimous support across local party politics to change the fortune of their locality.

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 5 A monument celebrating the union of Eastern and Western cultural heritage, Lieksa

The image of Lieksa introduced above presents it as an extremely peripheral place, even in the Finnish context. For most of Finland, large distances between urban centres and low population density are normal. Many peripheral municipalities in Finland struggle with ageing and dwindling

populations, and the reduction of services. In Finland, numerous efforts are being made to present peripheries as places of opportunity and resilience, despite the odds.

Peripheral challenges

Methodology

The summary of peripheral challenges in Lieksa is based on desk research and semi-structured interviews with peripheral citizens and experts representing organizations that work with the youth, though not always exclusively. The participants were approached directly or through existing networks. The participants gave informed consent, either verbally or in writing. Interviews took place face-to-face and as video calls. Fourteen peripheral citizens with diverse backgrounds (but mostly between 16-30 years old) were interviewed for this study. Most were female (3 male participants), but gender bias is relatively common in this kind of study design. In addition, there were 10 expert participants who agreed to be interviewed. This group included representatives of third sector organisations, youth workers, teachers, and public health services. The interviews were semi-structured.

After the interview data had been preliminarily analysed, an online focus group discussion was organised to give the old and new participants a possibility to comment about and to validate the project's findings. The timing of this event coincided with a Coronavirus outbreak at a manufacturing plant in Lieksa. The initial focus group discussion did not attract enough participants to qualify as such, despite efforts to advertise it. However, we were able to use online discussions under a news article about the PIP

project published by the national broadcasting company YLE in the regional news section.

The article stirred a lively debate in a Facebook group about Lieksa (80 semi-public comments) and on Reddit Finland (34 public comments). The comments qualify as focus group discussions because a concrete theme was discussed, and the participants could interact with each other. This unexpected data allowed us to apply a netnographic approach.

Challenges

Overall, the participants were able to find positive aspects of living in Lieksa, which is safe and close to nature. The participants were also aware of existing challenges, though opinions differed considerably as to how serious these challenges are.

Iltasanomat interviewed me and my friend 20 years ago. I kept the article. The caption under the photo reads: we'll stay in Lieksa if we find work. I kept my promise and never felt like I wanted to move elsewhere [smiley face]. It's a good place to raise kids, work, network and have hobbies [heart] […]. (Facebook user)

As in the above quote, most commentators acknowledged that problems exist, but they rushed to defend the image of Lieksa as a place with potential, especially for families. Even individuals who moved out expressed their longing for their childhood hometown, though few declared that they would be ready to move back. Voices that supported further marginalisation of peripheral towns were rare, but the following comment deserves to be mentioned.

Distance learning won't help these places at all, jobs are in bigger cities, so you'll have to move eventually. I'm from a small town myself

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and most of my peers have moved away for studies/work [...] There are hundreds of small towns in Finland, for some of them their location offers great possibilities, but 90% of them you could erase from the map and let them die out in peace. (Reddit user)

The comment raises an important question about the feasibility of keeping small towns viable. Based on existing studies, unfavourable demographic trends are bound to continue and affect the municipality's future development. Local policy makers are aware of them and frame their actions accordingly. There are no foreseeable factors which would stop or turn these trends around in the next ten years. The governance patterns in Lieksa will most likely continue to be influenced by the planned national-level top-down reforms regarding regional autonomy. In response, increasing use of place-based solutions may be predicted, exemplified by the Action at hand, taking on the approach of New Public Management. Therefore, the state of neoliberal local autonomy was considered as the most viable state for 2030.

The policy environment that characterises the case of Lieksa can be associated with vectors of continued focus on financial stability reflected in contractionary fiscal policies at the national level. Furthermore, there does not exist coordination of project-led development in Finland, and local institutions and the third sector have a strong role. Therefore, locally managed austerity is seen as the most likely state for Lieksa in ten years. Regarding the coming EU policy funding period, it is noteworthy that increasing cohesion fund expenditure on bioeconomy, youth employment and integration of immigrants might have some positive effects on the case of Lieksa.

An example of a process that is unlikely to occur in Lieksa in the nearest future is the consolidation of municipalities. Smaller or more peripheral municipalities become swallowed by larger or more prosperous ones, leading to the reduction of local services. The process increases the peripherality of certain areas and works as a push factor for some residents. The village of Ullava in western Finland is a good example of challenges brought about by the consolidation (Rantamäki and Kattilakoski 2019). Although there is no plan to incorporate Lieksa into another administrative unit, the reorganization of services in nearby municipalities creates a similar effect (more about this in the section Future development and perspectives). According to Karjalainen (newspaper), the newest reorganization plans will affect the police force in Lieksa, Kitee and Nurmes.

Employment

Finding the right kind of employment in the peripheries can be a challenge. Understandably, employment opportunities were especially important for the participants above the age of 18, who cited them as the main reason for possible future relocation. Further education opportunities were also important. Lieksa may not have a particularly diverse offer of education opportunities, but the ones that exist are well-developed and reflect the local labour market's needs.

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The interviews with peripheral citizens reveal that young people in Lieksa have a good chance of gaining some work experiences already during school.

On one hand it's easy to find a job in Lieksa, on the other hand it's not. Youth employment is a challenge. If you want to work at the factories, you need training. You won't get a job without that. But it's easy to get a summer job or a sales job. (17-year-old girl)

Young people in Lieksa practise job search skills at school. Almost all interviewees have had internships and summer jobs in different industries: farming, maintenance, sports, retail, cleaning, and care. As teacher Olga Keränen notes, students who make a good first impression, have a good chance of being offered a regular job later, though others complained that some companies avoid longer cooperation with former interns.

Ms. Keränen assesses employment opportunities for business alumni as sufficient. Her former students usually work in retail, but it may take them months to find a job that may not even be in the same municipality. Ms. Keränen stresses that employers value positive attitude more than skills because skills are easily improved through practice. Having taught many students from across the border, Ms. Keränen comments that large retail chains (Lidl, S-Group, Kesko) have proven to follow fair hiring practices. Once an employee gets their foot in the door, they can easily move to another town where the chain operates. However, many young people are not interested in a retail job, despite the support that is available.

Peripheral citizens with migrant backgrounds generally described their employment situation as difficult, even though they had a clear idea what jobs they wanted to do. They have had summer job experience, however. Migration to a large urban centre is believed to increase chances of finding a job.

I want to work as a bus driver. I'll move to another town if I can't find work in Lieksa. (20-year-old man)

Racism was never directly mentioned by these participants. In 2010s Lieksa became infamous in national media, after the city had received more asylum seekers than was planned. This unexpected development, combined with a lack of specialised support, led to a conflict that escalated into several violent attacks on non-white residents. Since then anti-racist work has been done in Lieksa, and the province of North Karelia. Perhaps the best-known national campaign was Meille saa tulla (Eng. You can come to us). Nowadays the residents have started to come to terms with the new multicultural Lieksa, but tensions still occur. It was alleged during expert interviews that some local organizations are reluctant to hire non-white candidates. While some experts confirmed the existence of discriminatory practices, the peripheral citizens mostly described Lieksa as "a safe place" but without great employment prospects. The issue of Lieksa's reputation was raised in the online discussion, as several users expressed their dissatisfaction with the news article's heading that highlighted local challenges.

However, peripheral citizens whose families have lived in Lieksa for generations also complained about access to employment. The right networks are extremely important in a small community. Only one peripheral citizen mentioned entrepreneurship as a possible career choice. Even so, they believed that their business idea was not viable in the context of Lieksa. Although entrepreneurs' associations

are active in Lieksa, running your own business does not seem to be a career option that is intensively promoted among young people.

In addition, an expert from a third-sector organisation notes that the community has a hierarchy of outsiders that determines how much support one gets. A youth worker adds that several employers are reluctant to hire young people. Comments about employment opportunities in Lieksa are not unique. The emphasis on positive attitude and networking clashes with feelings of uneven access. This clash is not surprising, and it reflects different positions and personal circumstances.

Since most of the participants were students, education opportunities were more important than work. Overall, Lieksa offers several secondary education programs (general and VET). The funding for vocational education depends on alumni's employment prospects. Some programs that were available in the previous years had to be shut down.

Making the education offer dependent on the labour market situation is a fair move, but it is also a strong message that some people may take for a push factor. Therefore, leaving seems like an obvious step in many young people's life. The main reason is a lack of tertiary education opportunities. Some online users commented that the argument is absurd because many degrees may now be completed online, at least partially. According to these comments, wanting to leave is thus an example of an escape strategy that reflects one's inability to solve problems.

However, the culture of studying is more than attending classes and writing assignments. On the other hand, other commentators pointed out that universities are powerful development centres that can give small communities a significant boost. Germany was given as a successful example of developing small communities through universities. Likewise, the closing of universities (like in Savonlinna), has consequences for the community. Better access to remote work and learning is also believed to help raise attractiveness of peripheral regions and de-centralise jobs. This challenge is thus more complex than it first seems. Identifying the root cause is beyond the scope of this report but exploring the issue further may illuminate valuable insights about young people's needs and what vitality means for this group.

Social Life

Small towns have a close-knit community that offers a sense of safety. Several interviewees acknowledged this as an advantage. Young people generally think that it is easy to find friends in Lieksa. Schools and hobbies offer good opportunities to expand one's social circle.

This said, Katja Puurunen, a teacher who works with marginalised residents, mentions loneliness as the biggest challenge that her students face. Another downside of living in a small community is the power of gossip. Interviewees 5 and 11 complained that gossiping turns tight-knit communities into hostile spaces. This can indeed be a very unpleasant and isolating experience for an individual who must confront false rumours about themselves. Other interviewees also pointed out that having more people in Lieksa would be a much-needed change. Lieksa is unlikely to grow, nevertheless, so other ways must be found to address this challenge.

Although friends are important, it is employment opportunities that determine one's desire to move to a bigger urban centre.

Having friends here wouldn't make us reconsider our move. I'd find new friends in the new place and I could always see my old friends when I visit my relatives in Lieksa. (Woman who moved back to Lieksa)

This said, being able to visit the family may determine how far from Lieksa one is going to relocate. The capital Helsinki is far away, and smaller towns offer peace and quiet that larger urban centers lack. However, peripheral citizens with migrant background seem more eager to consider the move to the remote capital region, where many of their friends had relocated already. They, too, describe Lieksa as safe, and relatively problem-free. The main problem are limited job opportunities.

Although social relations were important for the participants, this aspect does not counterbalance the push factors that drive young people out of Lieksa. Social skills are a form of capital that helps to rebuild one's network after the relocation.

In the peripheries, individualism is valued, because it allows peripheral citizens to achieve the goals that they set for themselves. Small communities mean tight-knit networks. If everyone knows each other, support should be easy to find. In practice, this proves tricky. Individuals must therefore be active and invest in expanding their networks. To be successful in the periphery, an individual needs to be a self-starter:

Maybe it's my attitude that helps. You have to think positive, that you'll manage, that you can fulfil your dreams. Don't listen to your friends when they say some silly things. And believe in yourself. This is what I do if I want to fulfil my dreams or goals. (17-year-old girl)

The importance of positive attitude was also mentioned by Olga Keränen, who helps business students find internships. These comments raise an important issue of agency and structures in the peripheries. The periphery reveals how these two things are intertwined.

Culture, hobbies, and free time activities

The town of Lieksa, though small, has enough infrastructure to offer different free time activities. Nearby there are sport and recreation facilities, museums, a cinema, and nature trails. Underage youth can visit the Youth Club, get discounts at the cinema, or practise sport- and music-related hobbies. In the summer, driving around and spending time outdoors is a popular activity. Young adults can take community college courses or work out at the local gym. Even so, the opportunities are indeed limited compared to larger urban centres. For example, fewer films are shown at the cinema and cafes close early.

The interviewees who hold an expert position tend to agree that there could be more cultural and free time opportunities for young people. In contrast, the peripheral citizens' responses varied. A half does not consider cultural opportunities important, which partially explains the opinions that the current cultural offer is enough. At the same time, there are young people who value cultural services and would like to have more access to different activities. Among the peripheral citizens who represent ethnic minorities, there is a group who is not interested in any hobbies and claims not to use cultural services. If they have free time, they usually spend it in the digital world, e.g. consuming social media content. However, some individuals are keen on practising sports. Interest in other free time activities, however, was not mentioned.

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Both citizens and experts have clear ideas what would enrich the cultural offer, but they can run into obstacles when implementing these ideas. First, a new initiative requires resources – money and/or specialists (e.g. professional instructors). Second, it may be difficult to attract enough young people's interest. Although the community has ideas, the execution of these ideas may not always seem worth it. Therefore, while the locals may feel positive about expanding the offer of free time activities, it may not be pragmatic to do so. Promoting the youth's involvement in the municipality's life could alleviate the risks associated with organising of new events. The youth city council NuVa is an example of such an organization in Lieksa. NuVa has successfully proposed a few initiatives, but their ideas are not always met with understanding from the "adult" Council.

Lieksa hosts several social clubs but, because of the covid19 disease, most of their activities were suspended in early 2020. Despite having loyal visitors and committed staff, the operations of some of these communities are at constant risk because of funding uncertainties.

Perhaps more important than the cultural offer itself is the attitude towards it. The attitude may reflect the individual's more general outlook on life, their motivation, and their self-positioning in society. Some underage young people drink alcohol, even though minors are not legally allowed to buy it. As a result, the youth who attends some evening activities at the Youth Club must take a breathalyser test. Another challenge are young people who withdraw from the community. They often suffer from mental health problems, do not know what to do with their lives, have no interests or hobbies. Such individuals who are at risk of marginalisation can find specialist support, for example through a new MOTI-Project. In addition, Metka Community House tried organising workshops concerning mental health. The fact that these projects exist show that the periphery can be associated with hopelessness and a lack of prospects and that to overcome these challenges, at least partly, individual's must learn to cope with their insecurities.

Future development and perspectives

As noted above, Lieksa's demographic "boom" in 1960s was never believed to last. Reasons for Lieksa's rapid population growth were post-war baby boom, resettlement policies and industrial development. With low birth rates and progressing industrial automation, Lieksa is unlikely to grow back to its 1960s size. At 35%, the share of elderly population in Lieksa is large, creating a demand for specialized care services that are difficult to provide, especially in remote villages of the municipality.

With a dwindling population (and tax revenue), Lieksa is unable to sustain certain services, especially in sparsely populated remote locations. The cuts may be especially acute for elderly care and childcare recipients, as well as for residents who do not drive or own a vehicle. According to a local resident,

The municipality tries to force these people to move to urban centres". However, residents in the town of Lieksa are not in a much better position.

Although Lieksa offers all basic healthcare and education services, the necessity to travel far strains individuals' mental health. For one mother, a drive to the Joensuu hospital was a

traumatising experience when her child got sick. Another mother complained that the centralisation of daycare isolates migrant parents' children from opportunities to learn the Finnish language.

According to the RELOCAL report, Lieksa tries to offset the cuts by offering alternative services. Examples include upgrading the Internet connection in remote areas and ride sharing services. Also, a new library bus has been purchased (library buses are common in Finland). The bus doubles as an occasional youth club. Also, the municipality can pay the kindergarten teacher's salary, even if day care is organised privately. Nevertheless, a local resident complained that this is a poor alternative because the property owner is not compensated for any expenses, except for the purchase of food products. At the same time, the property owner is responsible for providing a safe environment for children

Despite cutting services, Lieksa has benefited from the reorganization of the neighbouring Juuka, which is also adapting to serve a much smaller community. Juuka has put some local pupils in a difficult situation by shutting down its peripheral schools. It turned out that an elementary school in Koli (Lieksa) is more conveniently located for these peripheral pupils than the school in the Juuka urban centre. As a result, children from Juuka now attend the school in Koli (ESPON 2020 report). Facing peripheral challenges means more regional competition. Lieksa hopes to strengthen its position by modernising the infrastructure. For example, a new school building and a new health centre are currently being constructed.

The city administration has recently been criticised for favouring businesses' interests over addressing pressing social problems, such as poverty. Lieksan Lehti newspaper cites an opinion that Lieksa is not going to fix its negative image by hiring PR experts. Instead, Lieksa should invest in building the residents' trust (Lieksan Lehti no. 69/2020). This comment shows resistance against the Development Strategy 2030.

Similar criticism against the administration was expressed by Interviewees 5 and 9 who commented that those who are not a part of certain networks may find it difficult to find support. Because of that, Lieksa may be missing the potential brought by entrepreneurial outsiders. The interviewees mentioned several business enterprises started by outsiders that failed because the owners were unable to attract the interest of local stakeholders. It remains to be seen whether the Development Strategy 2030 has successfully addressed the problem of access to support networks on municipal level. Although other experts confirmed that successful networking is possible, it requires time and effort.

Long distances and cul-de-sac location

Long distances are a problem in Lieksa. For many residents, long commutes are a daily necessity. Young people from rural areas sometimes cycle to school for many

kilometres. Reaching the age of 16, when one becomes eligible to drive certain motor vehicles, means that new possibilities appear. However, residents in rural areas complain about the poor condition of some rural roads (see e.g. Lieksan Lehti no. 66/2020).

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 8 School buses outside the Lieksa Central School.

The nearest larger urban centre is Joensuu, 100 km away. The major tourist attraction of Lieksa, Koli, is 90 km away by land. In the winter, there is a maintained ice road of 7 km, but its opening depends on the thickness of the lake ice. In the summer, there is a ferry connection between Koli and Vuonislahti. In 2020, following a drop in traffic, Lieksa sold the Pielinen Ferry and acquired a smaller vessel. In 2019, owing to the opening of a service station, Koli has seen a rise in private boat traffic (Yle News from Eastern Finland, no date).

In the online discussion, the participants commented that Lieksa's peripheral location is an asset, but its potential is not sufficiently exploited.

'In Lieksa they can't do marketing, it's a fact. I used to live there myself and now I visit the town through my relatives. It's obvious that they don't know how to utilise all these opportunities' (Reddit user)

This critical comment presents Lieksa as a place that could benefit from developing tourism if only more tourists could find out about Lieksa's beautiful nature destinations. Other user, however, pointed out that distances between tourist destinations make these places unattractive for visitors. These comments raise the issue of transport infrastructure. The popular tourist's dream to neutralise time and space leaves places like Lieksa in a difficult position because Lieksa embodies these two notions.

The proximity of major roads can be an opportunity for peripheral places. Lake Pielinen cuts off the city of Lieksa from the national highway no. 6. Thus, travellers who did not plan to visit Lieksa are unlikely to stop there spontaneously. Also, most of Lieksa is physically isolated from its main tourist attraction, Koli. Although Koli is a vibrant and popular resort, it does not promote the rest of the municipality among visitors.

In Nurmes, there is the Bomba House. Many go there because there is a lot going on. Lieksa has Koli but it's on the other side of Lake Pielinen so many people don't know Koli is a part of Lieksa. Lieksa needs its own image/brand. (Interview 5)

The topic of successful marketing was brought up by several participants. Many residents feel like Lieksa's tourist potential is not promoted sufficiently. However, Lieksan Lehti reports that in 2020, Lieksa's main tourist attractions received more visitors than in the previous year. Especially, the Patvinsuo National Park gained in popularity. Most of the 155,400 visitors in Koli were domestic tourists from the capital region. The number of visitors in different periods of 2020 reflects the Coronavirus-related travel restrictions (Lieksan Lehti no. 71/2020). The pandemic thus has helped attract more domestic

tourists to Lieksa. It remains to be seen whether the pandemic leaves a lasting positive impact on Lieksa's popularity.

Existing capacity building and training opportunities

The process of reorientation and restructuring of the City administration and governance, embodied by the Lieksa Development Strategy 2030, has the aim to provide the City with more effective tools for realising its own local development aims, which are targeted especially at the improvement of the business environment. The spatial justice dimension in Lieksa mostly relates to the safeguarding of the municipality's/city's socio-economic viability against the distributive background of continuing demographic decline, peripheral location (poor accessibility) in both regional as well as national contexts and dwindling financial resources.

Overall, the private sector's role has been consciously increased as both receiver and initiator of local development initiatives in this reform-affine environment. This intervention logic, applying a decidedly entrepreneurial approach to local development, has resulted in comparatively less attention to the potential inputs of third sector organisations and civil society at large. In generally, Finland has had an active third sector and Lieksa is no exception to this rule. There is an observable need to balance between administrative efficiency and democratic responsiveness. Nevertheless, the studied 'action' in Lieksa is still in its early phase and it remains to be seen whether proactive leadership can be a sustainable option for tackling spatial injustices.

Owing to the long tradition of research on Lieksa and a well-developed network of third sector organizations, capacity building and training opportunities are good. Vibrant organizations such as Riveria (Vocational School), the Christian Institute of Lieksa, Metka Community House, and the Nuokkari Youth Club gather young people and may be attractive partners for future cooperation. In addition, the Women Entrepreneurs and the Church have a strong position in the local community. There are also private businesses in Koli that support spiritual development and eco-friendly lifestyle.

Activities that support employability concentrate on finding education opportunities and connecting candidates with employers through internships. These activities are well-developed and available through different organizations (see the section on smart practices). Entrepreneurship did not emerge as a prominent topic in the interviews. One interviewee who studies in a hospitality industry program pointed out that Lieksa is not a particularly friendly environment to start your own business. Nevertheless, the Women Entrepreneurs of Lieksa was mentioned as a vibrant local organization, but its representative did not respond to the invitation to participate in this research.

Examples of smart practices

Managing peripheries: Re-organising and downsizing

The local development organisation has proven to be a success story. One vital key to change in Lieksa was a young mayor who brought in a new pro-active management style. Second, the decision of the local government to abandon the existing regional development institution PIKE and establish its own non-profit "LIEKE". At the same time, and in a shift from prevailing top-down practices, participatory elements have been introduced, and more transparency and open communication between local government and citizens have become part of municipal management routines.

Actual 'engagement' solutions were mainly related to the formulation of the 2030 strategy, after the new mayor took office. Like rounds of 'workshops' with stakeholders from various sectors (main businesses) but also civil society organisations. The big question that nevertheless remains is whether Lieksa can find a judicious balance between a clearly entrepreneurial approach, the need for fast and effective decisions, and facilitating participatory governance that includes the needs and energies of civil society. This is, of course, also the challenge for local development in Europe and elsewhere.

One could say that Lieksa, as many other municipalities in Northern Finland, is facing a perfect storm of peripherality coupled with demographic shrinkage (the two are inter-linked). Something that these municipalities, particularly those with the mentioned 'young mayors', engage now in quite actively is taking adaptive measures to shrinking, such as anticipatively right-sizing their infrastructures and services provided by them. This means that they are, for example, building new schools that are too small for the current situation but of the right size, or even too large, in the future. This shows their realistic take on future development (demographic shrinking will continue in the form of natural decrease). However, for image reasons they do this without openly admitting that they are shrinking municipalities.

Lesson to learn: peripheral communities need a strict nothing-goes-to-waste policy. Communication is a very important tool to convince the residents that assets are managed fairly.

https://www.lieksankehitys.fi/en-gb

Activate through education

Finland's policy of supporting people's access to basic education and lifelong learning is visible in Lieksa. The municipality of Lieksa provides primary and secondary education possibilities. Those interested in tertiary education need to study somewhere else, but the rising popularity of distance learning means that relocation to an urban centre does

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not have to be mandatory. There are also programs for those who need to strengthen their skills, or for those who learn as a hobby.

The multi-campus vocational school Riveria is known for its excellent teachers, a modern approach to education, and it regularly wins excellence awards. At the same time, the school mainly serves students from neighbouring municipalities, but the school also recruits students from the Russian Federation. Riveria prioritizes learning through practice. Classes are organized in a flexible way to accommodate the students' diverse needs. Students participate in traineeships from the beginning of their studies, which gives both the student and the employer time to get to know each other. The student can try a different workplace if the first internship does not work out. As teacher Olga Keränen notes, students who make a good impression, often get offered a regular job later but they have to work hard for that.

In addition to regular learning, there are institutions in Lieksa that support people whose education path is more complicated. Located in Kylänlahti village, the Christian Institute of Lieksa offers supplementary education for those who need more time to prepare for the next step in education. The institution puts an emphasis on career planning. The institute also provides primary-level education to adult learners with migrant background. Students practice literacy skills and prepare for secondary education. Also, there is a support program for individuals who are at risk of marginalization. A beneficiary may be suffering from mental health issues, have learning difficulties, or may have received bad career advice earlier. The purpose of the program is to prepare individuals for taking up studies, as well as practise job-searching and digital skills.

Lesson to learn: career support makes it easier for individual's to find their own path.

https://www.riveria.fi

Social life: Communities and clubs

The popularity of third sector activity in Finland, means that there are different support communities in the area. Organizations that create places where one can spend time in a friendly environment have an important role in strengthening the local community.

Although many of these places in Lieksa present themselves as open to all, in practice they tend to attract specific groups. Examples: Nuokkari Youth Café (middle- and secondary school students, ran by the city), Lieksan Tukipiste (senior citizens and the unemployed), Metka-talo (people with migrant background of any age) and Kirsi-talo (artistic community for people with disabilities). Many of these communities reach vulnerable groups and offer valuable activities at a low or no cost, but the main thing is creating a place where people can feel welcome. Some support communities cooperate with researchers. Metka Community House, for example, helped establish an annual all-Finland conference about the Somali minority.

Creating stable community organizations can enrich the life in peripheral communities. It is important to apply a long-term planning approach to supporting such communities. Also, the principle of openness should be followed. To encourage participation, efforts

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have to be made to ensure that communities are supported fairly.

https://metkatalo.net/

Lesson to learn: togetherness protects against marginalization

Peripheral culture: A little is a lot

Overall, Lieksa is home to many passionate individuals who try to promote the narrative of opportunity. Even so, some initiatives fail. Several interviewees noted that one could always organize more activities, but there attracting enough people's interest is a challenge. The goal, thus, is not to expand the offer, but to create an environment where one is motivated to pursue their interests. A good example of this approach is the monthly Night Café organized by the Youth Club. The event does not have a program. What attracts visitors is the opening hours - the Youth Club stays open late on a Friday night. Unlike thematic events, the Night Café always attracts many young people and is Nuokkari's most popular event. This means that a community does not require a huge investment or organizational efforts to thrive.

Peripheries are places where accepting limitations may be easier than fighting against them. Porokylän Leipomo is an example of a local employer that successfully expanded to the national market and specialized in now popular gluten-free products. The bakery markets itself as a responsible business that, for example, understands elderly customers and donates left-over products to those in need. It also offers opportunities for the local youth (see https://porokylanleipomo.fi/fi/me/). On the company's website the CEO, Erik Kärki, gives a career tip for young people. Mr. Kärki advises that one should be active but should not set the bar too high. The video was created as part of the Ammattiura (Professional career) project led by Riveria and funded by the Ministry of Education. The video may be controversial to some, but it may also be interpreted as a call for realistic action. To succeed in the periphery, one needs to be completely comfortable with it so peripheral limitations do not appear as obstacles but form a clear-marked path instead. Nevertheless, these paths may only exist because those who created opportunities are not "peripheral" themselves.

Lesson to learn: understanding the periphery's culture makes it easier to recognize opportunities.

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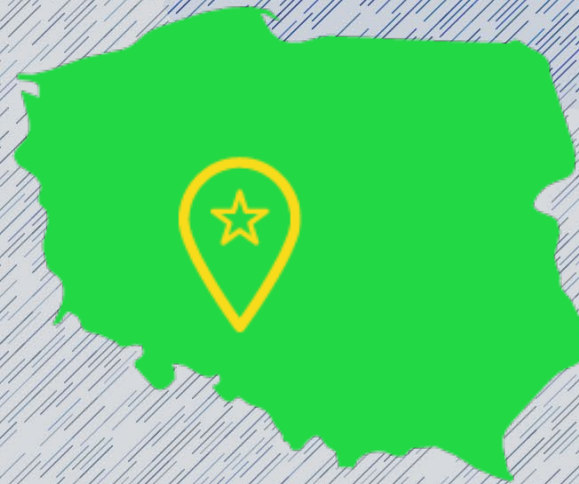Article about seasonal migrations to rural areas that challenges the popular view on depopulation:

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YLE article about the PIP project (in Finnish):

https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11571362

CZĘSTOCHOWA

Introduction

The Częstochowa region covers an area of 6,182 km², the meridian extent is 77 km and the latitudinal extent 127 km. It is located in the Śląskie Voivodeship.

It includes 17 cities and towns (Częstochowa – capital of subregion, Lubliniec, Myszków, Kłobuck, Kalety, Olesno, Pajęczno, Koniecpol, Blachownia, Gorzów Śląski, Praszka, Krzepice, Szczekociny, Woźniki, Żarki, Koziegłowy, Dobrodzień) and 52 municipalities.

The population is 779 600 people and 232 000 live in Częstochowa. After administration reform on national level in 1999 Częstochowa role was reduced just to provincial city, and its role and its possibilities of development decreased.

Historically, Częstochowa was part of Poland from its beginning in XII century. It's well known among Catholics because of Black Madonna sanctuary with more than 4 million pilgrims per year.

Częstochowa is located in southern central part of Poland, close to A1 and A4 routes with fast connection to Upper Silesia metropolis."

Częstochowa is 11th the biggest city in Poland in population terms but in many science survey is treated as periphery because of close neighboring of Upper Silesia metropolis on south and Łódź city on north. In last 20 years, after losing its role as capital of region, depopulation increased rapidly.

The development perspectives for Częstochowa region are not very good regarding data from GUS (Main Statistics Office) as unemployment in region is still

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quite high, even in period before covid-19 crisis. There aren't many opportunities for young people in age 25 even if there are 5 universities are located. GUS indicates that to change this perspectives only close cooperation Częstochowa city and other communities in region is necessary.

Regional survey made in 2019 by Silesian Marshal Office shows that young people are more ambitious and they want to improve their lifes comparing their parents. So after polish accession to European Union, many of them migrated abroad to UK, Ireland, Norway, Germany and Italy. In last 3 years internal migration is observed to biggest cities as Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, Łódź, says same survey.

Why Częstochowa?

We chose this region due to the fact that we live in the largest city of the area. Life of over 500 000 people living outside main city is strongly connected with it. Częstochowa region is starting its new development after almost 20 years of stagnation because of Voivodeship lost.

Częstochowa is a city located in the Cracow-Częstochowa Upland, in the Voivodeship of Silesia. Its area is 160 km2. There are 232 318 people living there. Warta flows through the city. Częstochowa is famous for the Jasna Góra Sanctuary, to which about 5 million people make pilgrimages every year, but it is worth paying attention to its other advantages. As the center of the Częstochowa Industrial District, it enjoys a high degree of economic development. Regular urban layout with centrally located Downtown, surrounded by clusters of residential buildings from the south and north, provides spatial order. There are many green areas here, and the most popular are the Promenade of Czesław

Niemen and Park of Forest Angels. The city has extensive social infrastructure, including over 100 schools at various levels, including 8 universities and 6 hospitals, well-developed sports and cultural facilities. Częstochowa is located on a transport node consisting of three national roads, a European route and five provincial roads. PKP trains, PKS buses and public and suburban transport run here. The advantage is the city's location on the route of a road of European importance and on the routes of three national roads and five provincial roads.

Existing opportunities for capacity building

JOWES – as a Lifelong Center, has implemented many capacity building activities, as social economy implementation center for whole region. For example Uczymy się wzajemnie project dedicated for students. Another example is Inkubator Transfer Hub where people, organization can apply for social innovation project.

University of Częstochowa – within Projects in which participates as coordinator and partner, many Capacities Buildings have taken place. The following projects have been implemented by University of Częstochowa and their Capacity Buildings as well:

Taught in Polish – courses dedicated for foreigners coming to Poland for better accommodation in Czestochowa and in our region

Third Age University – senioral education with life-long learning process. It's now developed in online platform, but it delivers not only education adequate to senior age but also social inclusion of this group.

Challenges for Youth Demographic

Methods and Interviewees

We gather a variety of answers which create different view of our region, its situation and its future in eyes of interviewers. We ask people from two different groups: young people who live in periphery about nowadays and perspectives of living in peripheries, and second group were youth workers and people who work with young people in peripheries about their opinions of young people living in peripheries and their perspectives. Questionnaires were different for both groups and adequate to target of survey. Same as used language was fitted to responders and understandable. Firstly we used free conversations about general situation as weather, football matches, new songs and then through some personal questions we came to main questions and after we also asked general questions. It made very comfortable atmosphere and build trusted connection between us. Both groups were chosen very carefully from wide spectra of potential interviewers, to keep geographical, gender, social and educational variety. Interviews were organized in face to face method. Below you can find profiles of interviewed persons:

Focus group #1

Kamil is 22 years old man that lives in small village on east from Czestochowa. He works in shoes industry and he is an amateur footballer.

Aleksandra is 25 years old woman that lives in small village on west from Czestochowa. She finished her studies (management) and works as shop assistance, she is an leader of local youth organization

Krzysztof is 23 years old man that lives in small village on east from Czestochowa. He studies in Czestochowa (computer science) and he is website designer

Piotr is 28 years old man that lives in small village on the east from Czestochowa. He finished his studies (steel industry) and he works in firefighter and he is professional martial art fighter

Łukasz is 30 years old man that live in small village on the north from Czestochowa. He finished studies, firstly worked as merchandiser and now he has his own store with sport equipment in Czestochowa

Focus group #2

Aneta is a 35-year-old woman, that lives in small village on south from Czestochowa. She is a social worker who works with youth from NEET group.

Konrad is a 32-years old man, that lives in Czestochowa, but he moved from small village. He worked in agricultural advisory and he works in province office responsible for youth policy

Monika is a 29- years old woman, that lives in small village on east from Czestochowa. She studied in Łódź, but she came back and worked in youth organization, she has her own business (pharmacy) and she is an youth worker in youth organization

Patryk is a 31-years old man, that lives in small village on east from Czestochowa. He worked for local community and he's local counselor and works as youth officer

Robert is a 27-years old man, that lived in small village and he was an youth leader, how lives in Czestochowa now where he works in steel industry but he supports his origin local community

Employment

Employment is one of the key challenges in Czestochowa's periphery as there isn't many big companies which can hire qualified and unqualified young people. Eastern part of region was typical agricultural with very small farms and now there are just several farms with bigger areas, so it caused unemployment. Even when unemployment indicator in whole Poland was really low (3,5%) in our region it was almost 8%. Aleksandra has finished studies and she thought that she will work in office in Czestochowa or other city, unfortunately she had to stay because of personal reason and she works as shop assistance, which is much frustrated for her. Łukasz pointed out that formal education doesn't give opportunities for better job, he had to changed his job orientation and takes risk to open his own business, but he is quite happy. Kamil agreed that if you don't have personal connections or you're supported by someone, it's really difficult to find even and primary job as he has. Krzysztof said that if you have passion and you really hard work on it and this passion can be profitable is quite easy to find job. He wanted to become IT specialist as he was 13, and now he works as freelancer in website design with non-constant salary but with some freedom which is important for him. Piotr said that he finished steel industry school to work in steel factory in Czestochowa as his father, but it collapsed when steel factory fired almost 80% of workers. He is an ambitious and took several courses to become professional firefighter.

In the second focus group, challenges regarding employability were mentioned from all the respondents. Aneta is youth worker with the most support need group which is NEET. Even if this group is really supported in EU in our region policy makers didn't see that in the time of prosperity. So there isn't many job places as social worker for NEET group because lack of budget in communities. Robert said as rural local youth leader had many difficulties to manage and it's not possible to keep yourself and your family in good financial conditions, so he had to moved to Czestochowa and works there. He comes to his village anytime to support young people in their development. Monika agreed with that, as after studies in Łódź, she was convinced that coming back and work in youth organization will be profitable and joyful as it was many funds for rural development. Unfortunately it wasn't which is disappointed for her. Konrad was responsible for advisory for young farmers in public institution and it was good profession but salary wasn't good to keep him in good financial condition. He had hand of fortune and support of other people that he works now in province office. Patryk admits that it's almost impossible to find proper job in peripheries. When he was elected as local counselor he had to quit his job in local community and he was for gross of interviews without success.

Social life and Cultural Offers

Interviewees said that it changed in last years but still cultural offers is not a same as in city. Social life they described is related with season. During spring and summer social life is really fruitful with many activities and during autumn and winter there is a lack of activities. It also depends on local communities activeness and NGOs activeness.

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Men are gathering around amateur sports club, voluntary firefighting and women around local NGOs and rural women clubs. They pointed out that because of rapid development of high seep internet in rural areas, social life has changed. Physical meeting changed into online meeting and online common activities as gaming. On other hand, internet gives them opportunity to access for more wide cultural offer as movies, concerts etc. Kamil said that in his village young people are well organized and they organize some activities by themselves as common watching of football matches.

Aleksandra admitted that if she would like to meet with her friends and colleagues she needs to go to Czestochowa which takes 30-40 minutes and because of lack public transportation is difficult to come back to home on weekends. Piotr agreed with that, after work he stayed in Czestochowa to meet with colleagues and not coming back to home and he's thinking about moving to Czestochowa because he spends 1 hour in car every day.

They all highlighted that there aren't many bars or cafeterias in peripheries. If they are, not for young people meeting without adequate music and atmosphere and it's better to drive to city. Czestochowa is not a big city but it offers much more in cultural aspects of life. Those causes specific interests of young people. Not many of them like theatre, operas, dances beside to gaming, movies and watching sports. What was observed that obesity in increasing in rural areas.

In the youth workers focus group similar results emerged. Aneta said that NEET group increased rapidly in last year in rural areas. Young people are really frustrated because of losing of job and without many social and cultural offers this frustrating is growing.

Going to Czestochowa is something as big trip as it takes 30 or 50 minutes. Robert agreed with that. Sometimes he prefers to stay in Czestochowa where he lives now, rather than coming to origin village and work with young people. He mentioned that young people in rural areas are more creative than those who live in cities. Even if they prefer gaming, they taking computers to common rooms and play together not only online but physically. That's very good he admitted.

Monika said that even Czestochowa doesn't offer to much for young people. Just few cinemas, theatre and not many concerts, so young people, because they're better mobile, they prefer to go to Katowice, Warsaw or Łódź to touch life as from screens. She confessed that she do it same at least once per month. Patryk thinks that generation after them it will be more electronical and social life in virtual world will be something natural. Even for him it's something terrible as he likes to play video games, but beside that he loves to meet friends, talks and dancing. Konrad highlighted that this need diametrical change of policy makers thinking. They don't care very much about social and cultural offer for young people and during yearly plan elaboration they think just about people 50+ and young people's voice is still not listen. He said that we can see that even used EU funds from Rural Development Programme are mostly utilized in road infrastructure, not in widening of cultural offer

Future development and perspectives

First group responders, all of them, would like to live in peripheries but under some conditions. First one is of course employment. Kamil said that he would like to stay in his village, but have a proper job in Czestochowa. He listed many aspects of living in village is better in living in cities. Łukasz agreed with

that, as he does live like this now. He admitted that city brings more opportunities for employment or own business development, but loves to play football with his colleagues in field built by them own. He also pointed that he loves be close to nature even if it's doesn't smell very well sometimes. Krzysztof agreed with that. For him very important was high speed internet and he can work from home, having meeting online with his clients, but he confessed that because that he has just 15 minutes by car to Czestochowa. Aleksandra said that she had a big dreams about her career and about her future life, but it changed 180 degrees. She is looking for better job and confessed that if not personal problems she would moved to city as there isn't job opportunities in her area. Of course she appreciate aspects of living in rural areas but with good transportation possibilities to cities. All of them confirmed that their villages changed a lot with EU funds. It's more clear and more beautiful. Many places are renovated or built in last 15 years and children have better education conditions than they had.

Youth workers said almost same as first group responders. All of them would like to stayed and live in their villages because of silence, neighbors, and they said that villages are changed and offer more. But beside social aspects of life there is professional one. As Robert said he had to move to city to work. Life organization between village where you live and city where you work is not easy and he decide to move to city. Aneta said that she is really connected with her village and for her it wasn't and it won't be possible to move somewhere else. Monika confirmed that sometimes she missed her friends in Łódź or in Częstochowa but she believe that rural areas will still develop and with good transportation qualities is better to live in village. Konrad agreed with that. He also highlighted that Poland is only one country in Europe with bigger back migration, so more people are moving to rural areas than to urban.

Success stories

There are many stories of cooperation between rural areas and cities as well as between organization and peripheral citizens. Sustainable development is crucial for our region and closer cooperation between communities is need for that. Czestochowa's university deliver high educated and high qualified people who need their own career development plan. We believe that not many region's resources are used and many of them can bring our periphery on high development level. Unfortunately GUS indicates that in next 20 years only Warsaw will have in plus migration and other region will be in minus as young Poles will moved abroad. We need to change it and some examples listed below are this change.

The Association of Municipalities and Provinces of Northern Silesian Voivodeship

The association is the effect of the cooperation to date of 34 communes and poviats of the northern subregion, including on programming, implementation, coordination, financing, monitoring and settlement of Regional Territorial Investments of the Northern Subregion under the Regional Operational Program of the Silesian Voivodeship for 2014-2020

The association's activities are focused on supporting sub-regional development and cooperation for the effective use of EU funds in the financial perspective for 2021-2027, as

well as on the protection of common interests and the dissemination of the idea of local and regional self-government. It is worth adding that all subregion self-governments, regardless of political differences, have declared their accession to the Association..

The Association for the Development of the Information Society of the Northern Subregion of Śląskie

It was established on August 30, 2016, in connection with the implemented project "Construction of IT infrastructure for the Northern Subregion E - Częstochowa region". As part of the project, fiber optic infrastructure was built with a length of about 340 km along with: • 125 passive distribution and access nodes • 33 active nodes • 33 public wireless Internet access points in the Commune Offices, Poviat Elderships from the Northern Subregion and the Center for Network Management and Distribution subregional. One of these points is located in the building of the Poviat Eldership in Częstochowa, it allows free internet access via Wi-Fi. The completed infrastructure covered a significant part of the Northern Subregion with a backbone and distribution network, which allows to provide access to high-speed Internet in areas where infrastructure was lacking or difficult to access. The aim of the implemented project is to provide the residents of communes in the Częstochowa, Kłobuck, Myszków poviats, the city of Częstochowa and enterprises and institutions located on their territory, possibilities and improvement of access to broadband services through the built-up IT infrastructure, complementing the existing and creating new resources of the subregional broadband network. The main goal of the Association is to supervise and manage the fiber optic infrastructure implemented as part of the

project, as well as to inspire and take initiatives aimed at socio-economic development. The Association's activities are also focused on the acquisition and use of assistance funds of the European Union, national and international financial institutions to meet the collective needs of the local government community through the use of modern technologies. Members of the association are 33 local government units, including: the Commune of the City of Częstochowa, poviats: Częstochowa, Myszkowski and Kłobuck, and 29 communes from the area of the above-mentioned poviats.

Częstochowa-Olsztyn-Mstów-Żarki cycle highway

Under the agreement, three municipalities (including the city of Częstochowa) undertook to build a bicycle connection enabling comfortable ride of cyclists. The development of bicycle infrastructure, city bike system and applications for cyclists is also an element of cooperation and jointly implemented programs. It helps to open small business and local infrastructure among that path.

LARISSA

Introduction

With 162,591 inhabitants (according to the 2011 census) Larissa is the capital and largest city of the Thessaly region in Greece. It is the fourth-most populous city in Greece. It is a principal agricultural center and a national transport hub, linked by road and rail with the port of Volos, the cities of Thessaloniki and Athens.

The city is encircled by a multitude of mountains, such as Olympus (the highest mountain of Geece), Ossa (or Kissavos), Kamvounia Mountains, Mavrovouni and more, forming a natural fortress of massifs. Here, the microclimatic conditions create an ideal environment where wildlife grows.

The soil of the region is also very fertile: cotton, fruits, vegetables, tobacco, wine and tsipouro are just some of the famous products of Thessaly.

The history of the city is also rich with a variety various historical monument, with the First Ancient Theatre of Larissa being the most emblematic and is the only one in the Balkans to be located centrally in an urban net.

Larissa

"Larissa holds a central position in the country, since it's situated on Greece's main transport axis, connecting Athens and Thessaloniki."

Although Larissa is a populous city, in comparison to Athens, is considered a periphery and our chosen target group, young people aged 15-30 (also the Erasmus Plus Youth target audience) has limited

opportunities and fewer opportunities. As we shall see below, young people have to deal with a small range of options in peripheral cities in terms of employment, cultural and social activities.

According to ELSTAT, there is a quite intensive gap in terms of job opportunities, education providers, number of enterprises and businesses etc. in Larissa (the capital of Periphery of Thessaly) in comparison with the capital city of Greece, Athens. Official statistics based on a survey implemented by ELSTAT (Hellenic Statistical Authority) were presented in 2016, regarding the high percentages of young unemployment in the region of Periphery of Thessaly.

The Hellenic Statistical Service, recorded the percentage of unemployment at 24.9% nationwide but in Thessaly was higher than this, reaching 51.9% in the groups of 15-24 years, with young people being the major "victims" of the crisis. In terms of cultural, social activities targeted for young people Larissa doesn't have any Youth Center or specific facilities that implement activities solely for young people in comparison with the capital city. Considering the placement of Larissa in the center of Greece and combined with the high levels of young unemployment, reversing gravity and bringing back life is needed in this area.

Why Larissa?

Larissa could be transformed in a youthful and vibrant city that could offer employment, cultural, social opportunities in young people. Agritourism and youth agriculture could also be an attractive factor for young people and citizens of Larissa, to stay in the city and work in the field of agriculture having in consideration that the area of Larissa has one of the largest plains in Greece, the Thessalian

Plain (Thessalikos Kampos). Also, since 2015, Larissa has welcomed many refugees, among them many young people with limited opportunities, and it could be transformed in a multicultural center of the central Greece, if proper action plan and strategic implementation take place in the area.

Existing opportunities for capacity building and training

KAINOTOMIA – as a Lifelong Center, has implemented many capacity building activities, as a partner in the European projects in which has participation. In PRIORITY project, for example, KAINOTOMIA has implemented one Capacity building in its premises in Larissa. Other capacity buildings, in which KAINOTOMIA has participated are within other Erasmus+ projects, such as Dare (Disable the Barriers) and EduDrone

University of Thessaly – within Erasmus+ Projects in which participates as partner, many Capacities Buildings have taken place. Indicatively, the following projects have been implemented by University of Thessaly, and their Capacity Buildings as well:

PATHWAYS "Participation to healthy workplaces and inclusive strategies in the work sector", 663474" European Commission: Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA).

Promoting gender equality in the transition from education to the labor market: Actions of counseling and guidance with a gender perspective". Program funded by E.P.E.A.E.K II. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (Ied) – The Institute of Entrepreneurship Development is a research organization established in 2005, focused on the promotion

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of entrepreneurship for everyone. The organization's main activity is the implementation of projects under some of Europe's most influential and groundbreaking Programmes like the HORIZON 2020 and the ERASMUS+ Programmes. Within Capacity Buildings take place in projects such as:

Gen-Z: Developing competences and opportunities for social media entrepreneurship

Virtual Open Innovation Lab

SME's Growth and Innovation through Learning at the workplace.

Challenges for Youth Demographic

Methods and Interviewees

In order to gather a variety of answers and reach a general and objective view of the situation, we established two different focus groups. The first one consisted of young people, living in the specific area, that provided information on the pros and cons of living in the periphery. The second one was a focus group of youth workers, who could share the particular circumstances from a third-person point of view, giving us a picture of the worries young people have in the periphery. To retrieve the interviewees' answers, we used carefully designed questionnaires, that were easily understandable while they triggered and guided fruitful dialogues between the participants. The respondents were chosen carefully, having a different background and representing different social statuses, in order to ensure the existence of diversity inside the focus groups and gain a realistic overview.

More specifically, the profiles of the interviewees are the following:

Focus group #1

Eleni is a 26 years old woman that lived in Larissa for 23 years. She is the owner of a family business- a shop with hairdressing products and the last 3 years she moved abroad to study fashion

Thanos is a 27 years old man that lives in Larissa since he was born. He is a lawyer, working in a public organization

Konstantina is a 26 years old woman, that lives in Larissa for 22 years in total. She works as a secondary school teacher and after living in many different cities in Greece-especially islands- she recently returned back in Larissa, where she lives the last 3 years.

Thodoris is a 30 years old man who was born in Larissa and never left. He is a farmer, growing his own products and selling them to local markets.

Katerina is a 25 years old woman that was born in Larissa, left to study but returned back. She lives in Larissa for 3 years now (21 years in total) and is currently working as a Project manager in a company.

Focus group #2

Paraskevi is a 27-year-old woman, from Larissa, working in a community center in Thessaloniki whose beneficiaries are mostly young women facing difficulties regarding their acceptance by societies- especially small ones.

Ioanna is a 25-year-old woman, from Larissa, working in a youth organization in Athens that works with young people that are at risk of marginalization and social exclusion

Marios is a 23-year-old man from Larissa and he works occasionally in a youth organization in Athens

Stefanos is a 35 years-old man from Larissa that works as a psychologist in an NGO Pyschological Institute in Larissa that provides individual counselling but also vocational and career guidance

Dimitra is a 26-year-old woman from Larissa. She is a member of the Municipal Youth Council of the Municipality of Larissa and a frequent volunteer for local, youth activities.

Employment

Employability in periphery is one of the most commonly attributed challenges and both focus groups verified this hypothesis. In the first focus group, the majority of respondents admitted that they faced hurdles on finding a job, especially on their field of interest. Katerina pointed out that she had to change her professional course and abandon her views on working in a field related to her studies, as she was unable to find a job in Larissa. She said that it was a devastating choice for her, but she had no other option. Thanos intensely agreed with her, marking that in a small city like Larissa opportunities are so limited that even if you find a job, you will probably be underpaid. At this point, he shared his own experience by admitting that when he was a trainee lawyer, he was underpaid for 18 months and had to deal with an extensive workload. However, he said that he belongs to the lucky few as he recently managed to find a good-paying job, relevant to his studies. Konstantina, who is a secondary school teacher, explained the hurdles she faces as a worker in the public sector. For years, she was unemployed waiting to be appointed as a deputy teacher. She had to work as a waitress at a neighborhood café,

building at the same time a small network in order to work as a private tutor. She said that the fact that she works without insurance, makes her feel very insecure about her future while the money she makes is rather than satisfying. Eleni stated that, although she loved her city, she decided to move abroad to study and chase better career opportunities. Thodoris, was the only one that offered a different approach on the discussion table. He said that the periphery is ideal for jobs in the agricultural sector. As a farmer, he enjoyed a multitude of opportunities: "the fact that Larissa is a small city helps as we all know each and thus, we can develop a strong market network, from suppliers to customers". However, he also admitted that he sometimes feels insecure as the competition grows rapidly and the mass production phenomenon can undermine his work.

In the second focus group, challenges regarding employability were mentioned from all the respondents. Everyone admitted that working as a youth worker in periphery is extremely hard. Both Ioanna and Marios stated that, as there are no youth centers in Larissa, they have to work remotely for youth organizations in Athens and they have to constantly travel between the two cities. Paraskevi confirmed the situation, claiming that this was the reason she moved to Thessaloniki, as she had no chance to work as a youth worker in Larissa. At that point, Marios added that, few years ago, he tried to talk to the mayor about the lack of youth centers but although he received a positive answer, nothing actually happened. Dimitra, said that the issue has been recently raised by her and some other members in the Municipality Youth Council but it still is a major flaw of the city. She said that although she is very willing to become a youth worker, she can't trace any opportunities in Larissa

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besides volunteering. Stefanos, who is psychologist in an NGO, explained that finding this job was clearly a matter of luck. He was looking for a job in Larissa for 7 years, without finding anything in his field of interest. As he admits, there are very small chances of finding a job as a youth worker in Larissa.

Social life and Cultural Offers

Participants confirmed that there is a positive correlation between small cities and a healthy social life. All five agreed that living in Larissa gives them the opportunity to have all their friends and family close to them. They don't need heavy transportation nor have to spend hours on reaching their destination in order to hang out with their friends. "Larissa gives the ability to go everywhere on foot or by bike and thus helps people maintain stronger relationships", Thodoris observed. Therefore, it is easier to find and keep contact with like-minded people. Konstantina said that she has friends with whom she shares common mindsets, habits and ideas and they all support and understand each other, as they are in the same condition. Katerina aptly observed that, although a small city offers less social choices as there are less people to interact and thus less variety of personalities, it is ideal for socializing as you can have a daily interaction with the ones you actually match: "in a big city you may have quantity, but in a small one you have quality". However, due to lack of career opportunities many young people leave and move to bigger cities, such as Athens and Thessaloniki. The majority of the respondents stated that many of their friends don't live in Larissa anymore and even those that do, are looking for chances to leave.

Eleni, who lives abroad herself, said that it is very difficult not seeing her friends every day, as she used to do. Social life seems to be an important factor for all respondents regarding their choice to stay in Larissa. They all admitted that they came back or never left because it would very difficult for them to be separated from their friends and family.

The feeling of intimacy seems to be a common need for all the members of this focus group. On the other hand, Larissa seems to have very few cultural offers. Thanos said that there are some cinema and football clubs-team but there is a lack of cultural events. Konstantina also said that there are no theatrical scenes or performances, not until summer, when Larissa hosts some theatrical performances from. Thodoris agreed with her vigorously and stated that there are some festivals that take place in the city but they are mostly private initiatives: "the city lags behind in relation to cultural events organized by the local authorities". Katerina also agreed and said that there is lack of art galleries and musical scenes. Even the cafes and bars play a specific type of music and there is no variety of options. Eleni pointed out that she sees a big difference now that she lives abroad. In a big city like London, options are countless, from museums and art exhibitions to music concerts and food festivals. As she stated: "Larisa offered me very limited access to that kind of activities."

In the youth workers focus group similar results emerged. All the respondents agreed that there are pros and cons regarding social life in periphery. Marios mentioned that living in a small city allows you to meet with your people much more easily but you also have a limited network. Most of the times, you tend to keep hanging out with people you know since you were young, which is good, but on the other hand it is hard to meet new ones and make new friends. Paraskevi, disagreed with Marios and said that this is something that she misses as a resident of Thessaloniki. When she

lived in Larissa, she used to hang out with friends that had very strong relationship with, whether in Thessaloniki she also has friends but it's not the same: "Sometimes you need to meet with someone that is really close to you, a friend who is like family. These kinds of relationships are harder in big cities." Paraskevi said. The impact that socializing has in the participants' life is again high. All respondents said that it would be very hard for them to leave friends and family behind, and move to another city. As they claim, it is important to come back from work and interact with people that you feel intimacy and trust and you have similar mindsets. Otherwise, everyday life can be meaningless and dull. Respondents of the second focus group expressed similar views regarding the cultural offers of the city.

As Ioanna and Marios explained there is very limited cultural interaction in Larissa. Although, there are some cultures like Roma, Albanians, Syrians, Pakistani etc. they tend to be marginalized, giving the impression that Larissa is a homogenized city in terms of culture- which is not true. They said that they asked from the local authorities to organize some festivals to promote these cultures, but their request was denied. Paraskevi added that, even though there is some infrastructure, such as the ancient theatre or squares and parks, where cultural events can take place, very little mobility is observed. Stefanos, said that this lack of cultural activities has a negative impact on the city: "On the one hand, the city's cultural identities are not mixed up and thus the city evolves much more slowly. On the other hand, young people don't enjoy a variety of amusement activities, which a highly important factor for the residents' well-being."

Future development and perspectives

Interestingly, most of the respondents of the first focus group would choose to live their life in Larissa if some aspects, like living and employment, were developed. Thodoris said that he loves Larissa because it is a peaceful city with a lot of green: "I can imagine myself starting a family here. It would be much better than raising my children in a big city center" Almost unanimously, other respondents agreed. However, Katerina and Eleni disagreed. Although Larissa is a beautiful city, is very small and with very few opportunities regarding employment. Katerina said that she pursuits to reach as high as possible career-wise and thus leaving Larissa is inevitable. Eleni has already gone, stating that "my dreams demand a bigger center with a wide market and audience" As Eleni pointed out, employment is extremely important. At that point, everyone agreed with her. All respondents expressed their worries regarding job opportunities. This is definitely a sector that needs to be developed. A higher quality of living is a major need for everyone and thus peripheral cities need to enhance their economy and claim a more competitive spot on the market. To succeed this, funding is needed, according to the respondents. Eleni said that there are some sources for funding whether they are local, regional and even European. Thodoris confirmed this by saying that, with the proper funding, the agricultural sector of Larissa could be evolved drastically. Besides funding, recreational activities are also important, in order to keep the city alive and well-functioned. The respondents said that there should be cultural events as well as better public infrastructure such as clean parks, more bicycle paths etc.

Respondents of the second focus group said that living in the periphery is hard and none of

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them is sure if he/she wants to live here forever. Stefanos believes that Larissa is a good city for someone who is in retirement. But if someone is young and wants to achieve bigger things, the city will hold him/her back. Paraskevi noted that it is not only the economical aspect. In Larissa many people are close-minded as they never left their hometown. This is also an issue that needs to be fixed. All respondents agreed with her. "This is why cultural events are important" Stefanos said. More cultural activities would help people enrich and modernize their mindsets and as a result modernize the city too. Bureaucracy is important too, as Dimitra said. In small cities like Larissa vulnerable groups face tones of hurdles, as for example an extensive bureaucracy and thus tend to be excluded from social activities and live - almost in ghettos- in the outskirts of the city. "There should definitely be more initiatives promoting multiculturality and inclusion in Larissa." Dimitra stated.

Success stories of collaboration between organizations and peripheral citizens

Sustainability sets the focus on the future. It means the item or action is generating environmental, social and economic benefits, while not using up too many resources or causing pollution. Yes, all these aspects are covered under this one word. Compared to" green" and "eco-friendly," sustainability has much higher standards. Sustainability includes eco-friendly activities and green products, but green doesn't necessarily mean sustainable. For instance, a product made from renewable resources is considered green, yet if a life-cycle analysis shows that it required a lot of energy to manufacture and ship to you, and if there isn't a proper way to

dispose of the product, then it's not considered sustainable. To be honest, there's not much out there in the consumer product world that is truly sustainable. Rather, some products are simply more sustainable compared to the alternatives. From this aspect, one business in periphery of Larissa, named Grinco, has achieved these high standards.

Grinco

Grinco company was founded in 2005 is one of the first biodiesel producers in Greece and it's a unique biodiesel producer which uses used cooking oil up to 100% in the production, through the new production line that established, which deals with the refining preparation of used cooking oil and fats. The main product that company produces is, Biodiesel or fatty acids methyl esters (FAME) which is biodegradable, without sulfur, used as an alternative to conventional diesel fuel to prevent air pollution and protect the environment. The chemical process that takes place in the production of biodiesel called transesterification. Produced biodiesel is in accordance with EN 14214:2012+A1:2014 while all the sustainable quantities are certified from the International Sustainability & Carbon Certification System. The company has employers from most of the regions of Larissa, especially from villages and marginalized areas.

https://vipe-larisas.gr/epixeiriseis/grinco-aebe/gri

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THES Gala

THES Gala Cooperative Company introduces a different approach to cooperative ways of working. Negotiating prices and contracting with the dairy industry, on behalf of its members, is the primary objective, of the THES gala management team. Primary objective is that the total production is absorbed at a price level that corresponds the quality of milk produced. Throughout the negotiation process with the dairy industries, the Cooperative is fully supported by a team of technical and legal consultants. Each agreement is secured by binding contracts that protect both the Cooperative and the member – producers. THES gala Cooperative Company has been recognized and accepted as a pioneering cooperative group, both in the domestic and foreign markets. The innovative method of dairy product distribution and delivery to the end consumer has been the result of commitment to excellence, research & development, together with high investment levels. The THES gala Cooperative is accredited as an example of a company emerging from an era of recession and crisis, who introduced an innovative & revolutionary business model for the distribution of high-quality dairy products at affordable prices, available 24/7 to the end consumer.

https://thesgala.gr/

Mikel Coffee Company

Mikel is a multinational chain of coffee shops based in Larissa, Greece. Today there are over 240 stores in 10 countries: Greece, Cyprus, United Arab Emirates, Great Britain, Australia, United States of America, Bulgaria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Romania. The company began in 2008 in Larissa, Greece and saw growth in the following years. By the end of 2013, Mikel had 60 stores in Greece. In 2015, the first coffee store opened in London and after that many others followed, in order to expand Mikel internationally.

All the above examples confirm that nothing is impossible. Although small cities have to deal with much more hurdles regarding entrepreneurship and employment, it is evident that, with hard work, cooperation and passion, great ideas can grow and rise even in peripheral regions.

https://www.mikelcoffee.com/el/home

Final remarks

Opportunities:

- Easy to hang out with friends
- Ability to build stronger network

Challenges:

- Limited career options for young people
- Lack of job opportunities for youth workers
- Minimum choices regarding cultural/recreational events
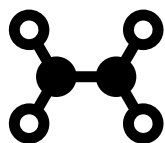- Very little promotion of other cultures.

Prospects in the Peripheries

Tool Box

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TOOLS FOR THE PERIPHERIES

Our Methods to create Prospects in Peripheries

Partners from seven peripheral regions in Europe came together to collect and design methods that tackle the typical and not so typical challenges of peripheries. We want to offer you tools to target social, cultural and economic conditions in your regions – as we believe their combination will increase opportunities sustainably.

To make the methods accessible to those, who want to make change in their region happen, we have grouped them by the challenges that they meet as well as by scale of the actual method – from long term strategies to shorter exercises. Given the comprehensive and intertwined issues displayed in all regions, we decided that intricate combinations of large scale strategies, medium scale trainings and small scale exercises would fare best as an offer for initiating and sustaining change.

Strategies

These different levels of methods work by bringing stakeholders together in strategies with a broader aim & collective impact. Strategies are designed to effect change over a longer period of time. Visions for the future of the regions are negotiated via networks of stakeholders over several events, platforms and trainings.

Trainings

The methods offered as trainings within the PiP Toolkit are characterised by a specific aim and group impact on their participants and beyond. Trainings last a shorter period of time (a day, a weekend or a week) than strategies and are composed of exercises, more focused to one topic.

Exercises

Our last group of tools, the exercises supply an individual impact on the participants. As they aretypically, not standalone, but serve a function in larger events, such as trainings. Exercises last an even shorter period of time (minutes to few hours).

The following tools were selected by participating regions for their particular set of challenges. In the compilation of this tool kit they were tested and modified for adaptability beyond their geographical origin as well as online and offline application.

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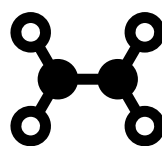
CHALLENGE 1: ONE SECTOR JOB MARKET

Limited job opportunities with the consequence of inhabitants leaving en masse at the job entrance age is one of the most widespread phenomena of peripheral regions. Especially in regions dependent mainly on tourism, the variability of employment fields is extremely limited. Stemming from the Danish Islands our first toolset for this challenge empowers young people to increase the bandwidth of industries and businesses through entrepreneurship with a regional focus on environmental sustainability.

TOOLSET 1: Empowerment through Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Contributed by Crossing Borders for the Danish Island of Samsø.

Main Challenge: #one sector job market

Related Challenges: #unemployment #youth outmigration #sustainability

Strategy 1: Sustainable Entrepreneurship through Personal Goal Realization

Duration: min. 6 month

This strategy is designed to visualize and create long-term entrepreneurial plans for individuals and thereby enhance

sustainable economic and demographic development of the region as a whole.

A series of talks, trainings and reflections will allow participants and stakeholders to recognize the potential of the region and of themselves, highlighting how they can stay and enhance their region whilst minimizing brain drain. This can help educated people be attracted to the region, while further enhancing the region itself.

Local NGOs, public institutions and businesses are involved as stakeholders, thus creating a lasting network that supplies

future entrepreneurs with the resources and support and existing structures with fresh input from young minds.In a series of talks, trainings and reflections different methods and aims are combined to create a rich and diverse learning environment.

Participants

Young people at the last stage of their school education, school leavers and university students from the region are invited to further the skills in sustainable entrepreneurship adapted for implementation in everyday life in the community of the peripheral region.

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Result

increased community directed entrepreneurship by the periphery's young inhabitants increased place attachment by linking own self-development with regional development attracting educated people to the region through new jobs and initiatives brain drain is reduced

Training 1: Personal Goal Mapping and Implementation

Plan Duration: 3 -7 days

The seminar will train participants to visualize, develop and apply their goals in context of the issues that occur in their region in practice. It allows participants to recognize the potential of the region and of themselves, highlighting how they can stay and enhance their region whilst minimizing brain drain.

The training consists of a series of exercises, which aim to create a targeted training opportunity for peripheral places that suffer from a lack of entrepreneurial opportunities. Making use of the structure of 'mixed learning opportunities' the training includes exercises, talks and reflections in which presentations from stakeholders and participatory workshops are combined.

Three stages of the training   A   detailed training plan is available online.

General Impact

On the participant

- awareness of own skills and potential used for furthering job opportunity

- giving an opportunity to those that may want to work in the peripheral regions

- but may not have the knowledge to do so

On the local community

- showcase diverse talents present in the region attract more people to region or prevent extensive outmigration

- potential of creating new industries and jobs making the local environment and conditions work for the community

On key indicators:

Participation in society

Participants will get to form a network to inspire each other, along with this and the knowledge acquired through trainings, participants will hopefully take this knowledge into their peripheral regions, this will then hopefully be used to create ways for sustainable entrepreneurship.

Awareness as citizen

Participants will become aware of the issues that they may face and how to overcome such issues.

Place Attachment

Participants will be able to see how they can unlock the potential of the nature, environment to create potential industry experience.

Empowerment

Participants are empowered, to take charge of the potential issues affecting them and turning this into opportunity for themselves and the region.

Exercise 1: Treasure Mapping

Duration: 1 – 2 hours

The main objective of the activity is to encourage participants to link their personal skills to entrepreneurial goals in a practice oriented way.

The offline version of Treasure Mapping includes a trainer who guides participants through exercises dedicated to personal goal mapping and growth. Participants would be anyone interested in learning personal goal mapping within a sustainable entrepreneurship context. The online version differs in that it would be conducted over zoom, but the methods and exercises would remain the same.

Instructions

The facilitator will guide participants to do the following:

1. Clarify the goal they want to work towards and visualize what it looks like. Write down the goal and visualization in detail.

2. Consider and visualise the outcomes of achieving personal goals.

3. Create a visual representation of what achieving the goal looks like and put it on the treasure map.

4. Consider the steps required to reach the goal and consider the process in a retrospective pattern, working backwards from achieving said goal. Create a visual manifestation on the treasure map of the process.

5. Align and connect all images on the map.

Example of a Treasure Map for Exercise 1

This exercise will utilize trainers with knowledge of success stories from the peripheral region and will involve discussions, reflections and presentations from participants of their treasure maps and plans.
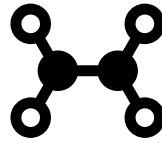
CHALLENGE 2: LACK OF PARTICIPATION

Every place has its potential. Why can't we appreciate it? Peripheral communities can be vibrant, despite limited access to resources. Often the participation potential in peripheries can be tapped into through the PIP activation methods. In Toolset 2 our partners from the University of Eastern Finland support participation by empowering citizens to develop and implement their own projects in their community.

TOOLSET 2: Creating Social Innovation by Attracting Funding

Contributed by University of Eastern Finland for the city of Lieksa.

Main Challenge: #lack of participation

Related Challenges: #unemployment #youth outmigration #lack of regular cultural activities

Strategy 2: Facilitating social innovation from within
Duration: min. 6 month

This strategy promotes grassroots initiatives in peripheral regions. By equipping peripheral citizens with tools to turn ideas into real-life projects, the strategy strengthens the region's capacity for innovation in the face of peripheral challenges.. it offers support to carry out residents' own initiatives, while communicating to the residents that local challenges can best be addressed by local initiatives. The strategy brings citizens closer to institutions and resources needed to implement their ideas.

Training 2: Projects in Peripheries

Duration: 1 day to a week

By equipping peripheral citizens with tools to turn ideas into real-life projects, the modular seminar strengthens the region's capacity for innovation in the face of peripheral challenges - all the while furthering employability and place attachment of the participants.

Three Stages of the Training

1. from inspiration to a project idea

2. from vision and mission to the filled in application

3. test your project in a community event (e.g. exhibition of ideas, project market)

General Impact

On the participant

- self-development by acquiring new skills and balancing own ideas with opportunities in the region

- better mental health

- skills for employability / entrepreneurship increased place attachment

On the local community

- increasing young individuals participating in the local community

- creating or extending social networks in the region

- increased attractiveness of region through resulting cultural projects and services increased capacities of community members attract more people to region or prevent extensive outmigration / brain drain

- potential job creation from successful projects

On key indicators:

Participation in society

More young individuals participating in society by creating cultural projects that respond to local needs

Awareness as citizen

Participants will become aware of the issues that the region faces and how to overcome such issues through their own actions.

Place Attachment

Participants will be able to see how they can unlock the potential of their region to create opportunities. This helps to visualise the future of the region and their own as one entity.

Empowerment

Participants can become empowered, to take charge of the potential issues affecting them and the region and turning them into opportunity.

Exercise 2: Mission and Vision

Duration: 30 mins

In this exercise, participants start concretising a project by identifying their mission and vision statements.

The exercise can be implemented face to face, as a discussion or a brainstorming session, using regular classroom tools (e.g. a whiteboard, posters & markers etc.). The activity can also be implemented via video conferencing tools. It is advisable to use power points or an online whiteboard as a visual aid. If the activity is delivered as group work, the participants should use a tool that allows shared access and editing rights for multiple users (e.g. Miro or Google Docs).

Instructions

The facilitator will instruct the participants through:

1. Introduction to the two concepts "mission & "vision".

2. 'Mission' is a sentence about the concrete activity that the project offers. It is concise and focused. 'Vision' is a sentence about the future change that this activity is meant to bring. It is inspiring but realistic.

3. Writing mission and vision statements to help identify the project's core objectives and goals. It is always a good idea to revise the statements when the plan is ready to make sure that the project plan sends a clear message of what will be done, how and why

4. Prepaing the two statements for their specific project idea

The activity does not have to be documented. It is rather the process of formulating vision and mission statements, that will help the participant fill in their project proposals and applications.
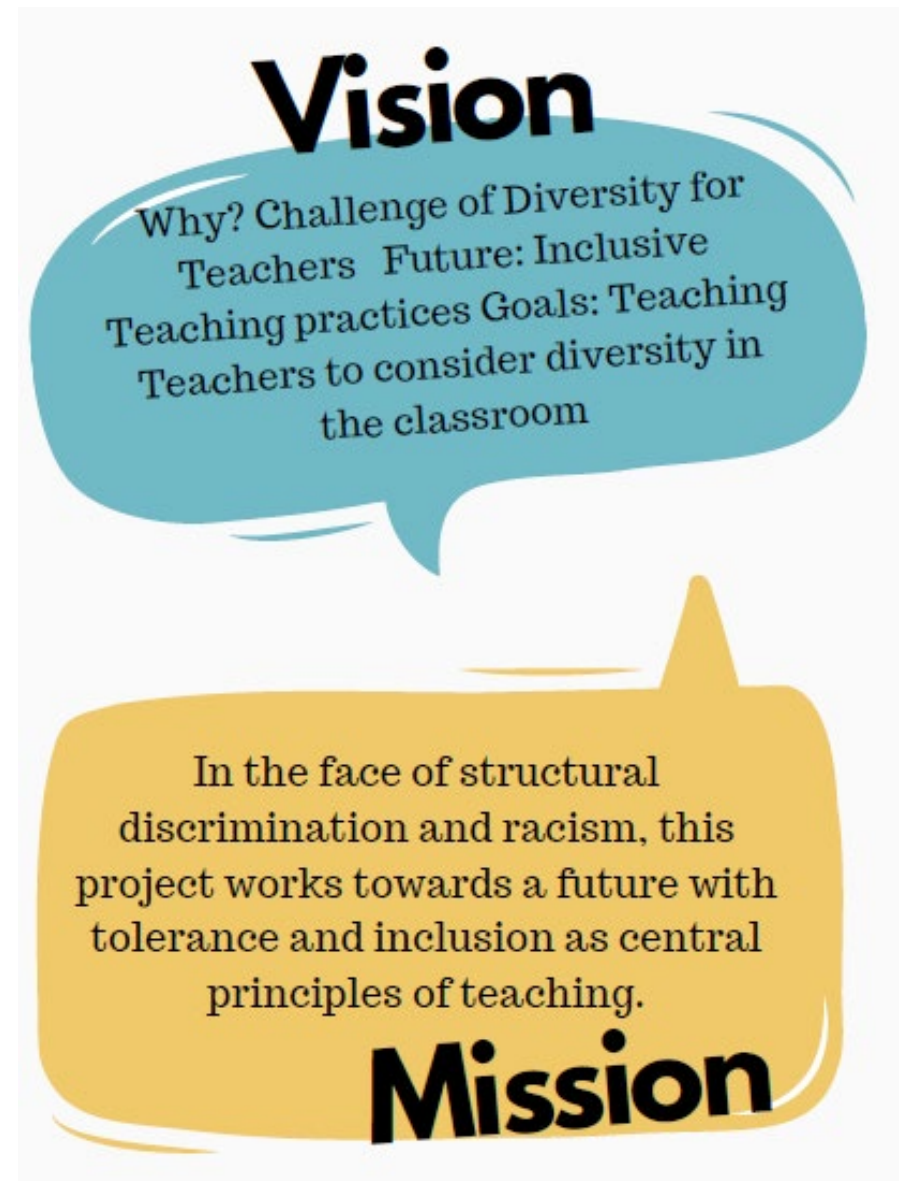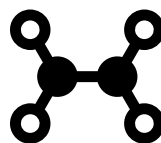
CHALLENGE 3: SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Issues of social inequality, unemployment and lack of cultural activities typically associated with peripheries weaken social cohesion and multiply social exclusion. In Toolset 3.1 our partners from Imagina contribute a method, that counteracts this vicious circle by giving citizens of their region the tools they need to succeed in their lives while making a positive impact on their region as a whole. Kainotomia confront marginalisation tendencies through methods that create inclusive learning environments throughout their city.

TOOLSET 3.1: Social Inclusion through Mentoring

Contributed by Imagina for the region of The Guadalhorce Valley, Andalucía, Spain.

Main Challenge: #social exclusion Related Challenges: #unemployment #youth outmigration #lack of regular cultural activities #lack of digital infrastructure #lack of participation

Strategy 3.1: MEDIANDO

Duration: min. 1 year | In the Guadalhorce Valley mediando has been running for 15 years

This strategy is mainly oriented to promote mediation as a tool to solve conflicts at young ages and in the educative system (peer to peer mediation), but also promotes active citizenship, entrepreneurship, knowledge and value of the region.

The MEDIANDO network organises a non-formal curriculum preparing youths for future challenges and employment opportunities. Students are trained as "mediators" share it with the rest of the school community through a "Mediation club" and participatory workshops in their schools with the topics learnt in the trainings (f.e. how to solve conflicts in a peaceful way, how to know yourself better, creativity workshops, emotional management, etc.). The preparation of the strategy needs to follow a specific "protocol" to organize logistics, content of the trainings, methods used, best practices shared, number of students, certifications, etc. The variety of trainings and exercises are designed to share best practices and support each other in a network of cooperation. MEDIANDO has a direct effect on the creation of opportunities in the territory, enhancing entrepreneurship and answering to the main need of the territory of job opportunities for young people.

Stakeholders

Schools and social work services are stakeholders as they benefit from the trainings provided Local businesses benefit by receiving more skilled employees.

Government agencies benefit as the programme prevents further youth unemployment.

Participants

Young people at the last stage of their school education are the participants of the trainings, exercises and events. Teachers and social workers are involved as trainers and facilitators.

Result

- increased skills and knowledge in the local community:

- local resources, local entrepreneurship, innovation, soft skills, creativity active participation

- networks in the region are created or extended brain drain is reduced

- youth unemployment is prevented young entrepreneurship is facilitated

Participants of MEDIANDO have proven to be more open to go out their comfort zone, open their minds to new opportunities and value their territory.

More information: http://mediandoenelvalle.blogspot.com/

Training 3.1: IMPULSA Entrepreneurial Learning

The training will open the mind of participants toward the value of the region and the different opportunities of it in terms of local resources, possible opportunities for entrepreneurship, different jobs or career paths.

Students with fewer opportunities will get inspired by representatives of the region in the field of entrepreneurship, associations and social initiatives, and share their knowledge with the rest of the educational community through different channels (posters, articles, podcasts, videos…).

The training is structured through "active tasks" that guide participants to ask specific questions, while visiting entrepreneurs and NGOs and afterwards - thus internalising the learning contents better.

In teams they need to create "journalistic reports" using different digital tools (videos, articles, posts in blogs, social media, etc.).

Thanks to these tasks, they need to ask specific questions and they interiorize better the learning contents.

Then this is a way to share the results with the rest of the educative community as well as with other youngsters through digital tools.

The stages of the training

1. visiting and interviewing local entrepreneurs and NGOs

2. create media material of success stories (posters, articles, podcasts, videos) disseminate the created material

General Impact

On the participant

- creating awareness of own skills and potential used for furthering job opportunity developing skills for employability / entrepreneurship

- empowerment, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship,

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- creating awareness of local resources and opportunities, open mind towards innovation in entrepreneurship

On the local community

- creating or extending networks in the region potential of creating new industries and jobs / diversifying the labour market

- highlighting the role of entrepreneurs and local companies in economic development attracting educated citizens to the region

On key indicators:

Participation in society

Companies and entrepreneurs participate in educating young people. Students are trained receiving the good examples of companies/entrepreneurs that invest in the local region.

Awareness as citizen

Youngsters are more aware of challenges and opportunities of their region and have develop their initiative skills and sense of entrepreneurship

Place Attachment

Youngsters are more aware of the value of the local resources, give value to traditions, local products, natural resources and develop a better attachment to the region.

Empowerment

Youngsters are more aware of the value of their own skills and capabilities. Entrepreneurs and NGOs get recognised for their social and economic contributions.

Exercise 3.1: Out of the Box - Creative Workshops

Duration: min. 2 hours

The main objective of the activity is to open the minds of young people or people with fewer opportunities to career paths in crafts by doing a artistic activity (e.g. cooking, craft, pottery). The exercise develops skills in creative professions that is grounded in the strengths and traditions of the territory - thus motivating youths to mix tradition and innovation in future initiatives.

Participants will have the opportunity to meet with and learn from a local person that earns his/her living with a creative activity. The students/youngsters have the active role of reproducing the activity during the exercise, for example by cooking a meal or making a ceramic pot. Through learning by doing, they will have the skills to share the activities with their peers in the future.

The exercise can be embedded and combined in a longer training on entrepreneurship in the region, but as standalone exercise is to give a practical insight into craft as a career.

Instructions

The facilitator will have to prepare by:

- selecting of professionals, artists or entrepreneurs that can teach and share their craft with the youngsters.

- selecting the "artistic/innovative" activity to experience preparing the means/materials/places needed

This exercise is not easy to adapt online since the goal of it is to do a creative and handy

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activity. The way to adapt it to an online version of it would be to:

Send a list of materials to use at home while doing the exercise online (ex. pottery, painting or other). To do the activity via video call (zoom, teams, google meets…)

In contrast to the offline version the experience of visiting the work place, talking to and learning from a local artisan is limited. Online the goal would be to make a short creative activity just to let know about the activity itself and then to focus on talking about the opportunities of the activity in the region.

Creative Workshop with a Local Chef

TOOLSET 3.2: Lifelong Learning for Active Citizenship

Contributed by Kainotomia for the Municipality of Larisa.

Main Challenge: #social exclusion

Related Challenges: #unemployment #youth outmigration #social cohesion.

Strategy 3.2: Larisa Learning City

Duration: min. 1 year

"Learning Cities" is an innovative project that aims to dynamically intervene in the level of Lifelong Learning. As of January 2016, the city of Larisa is the first Greek city to become a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (UNESCO).

The Municipality of Larisa, which undertook the initiative in 2015, tries to offer to the local community educational programs to support vulnerable social groups affected by the crisis and at the same time pushes the members of the local community in an interesting process of lifelong learning and personal development. Local conferences and global web conferences for the formation of active citizenship frame a diverse set of training activities for citizens of all ages.

.In this way the strategy promotes lifelong learning, increase job prospects, supplement professional competence and address several issues of the city of Larisa. Through the increased knowledge, the strategy seeks for promoting personal growth, connecting with a broader range of people and active citizenship and active thinking.

Furthermore involved citizens get to know the strengths and weaknesses of their city. They

are feeling an active and determinant factor of their future. In combination with the training sessions and seminars offered, the bonds among them and their city are fostered and strengthened.

Stakeholders

- Municipality, Regional Authority of Thessaly, Youth Council of the Municipality of Larissa, Larisas Labor Force Employment Agency

- Other Public Entities: Equal Society Center, public (KEK OAED) Foundation for Youth and Lielong Learning (I.NE.DI.BI.M), National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP))

- private adult education institutions (IEK OMIROS, KEK EUROPROODOS) local channels (larissa net)

- local associations (Association of workers in the municipality of Larissa, Association of Thessalian Entreprises–STHEV)

Participants

Local citizens, who are willing to improve their skills and upgrade their educational background will be able to participate in a variety of activities.

Through a great variety of activities with different educational themes, a great number of participants will be engaged according to their interests.

Result

- establishment of inclusive learning from basic to higher education

- revitalization of learning in families and communities promotion of learning in the workplace

- expansion of the use of modern learning technologies improved quality and excellence in learning

- nurtured lifelong learning culture

Workshop in the framework of Larisa Learning City

Training 3.2: How to build Priority Hubs

Duration: 1 day

Central goal of this training is to prevent social exclusion of several groups of people within a modern society which promotes respect, understanding and empathy for others. Furthermore the activities of this training promote respect, understanding and feeling empathy for others.

In a three day training process - leading from theoretical knowledge over spatial mapping of areas at risk of marginalization to conflict resolution participants will be triggered to help reform established behaviours adopted in these areas to create a more inclusive community.

The theoretical and practical activities enhance the ability of participants to recognize such behaviours and accordingly boosts their inner power to combat them. The resources are based on scientific research, while the activities rely on non-formal educational strategies, like group activities in real-time. Citizens and local businesses will be able to participate, in order to reform the ideas established and the behaviours adopted in their areas, creating more inclusive communities.

Three stages of the training

1. theory on social exclusion and marginalisation

2. mapping and visualisation of areas of risk in the community role play and conflict resolution

A detailed training plan is available online. Further material available here.

General Impact

On the participant

- improved knowledge of marginalization and social exclusion

- promoted respect, understanding and empathy enhanced ability of participants to recognize social exclusion mechanisms

- boosted capacity to combat marginalisation

On the local community

- increased capacity of citizens increased number of active citizens prevention of exclusive behaviours

- increased empathy and understanding among citizen

On key indicators:

Participation in society

Participants will be equipped with theoretical and practical knowledge regarding radical behaviors happening in modern societies. After the completion of this training, participants will be able to recognize and combat incidents that happen in their community and are opposed to human rights.

Awareness as citizen

As a citizen, the participant will be able to understand the impact of his/her actions on other people and thus, deeper relationships will be created among citizens.

Place Attachment

Through the mapping of areas of marginalization, participants and citizens can identify the areas of their community that need to be reformed.

Empowerment

Participants will be empowered and enabled to recognize and combat incidents of marginalization to other people in areas of their communities. In this way, they will contribute to an inclusive community based on human rights and acceptance of diversity.

Exercise 3.2: Power Mapping My Community

Duration: 2-3 hours

The exercise contributes to the promotion of integration and cooperation among all citizens regardless of their differences of gender, ethnicity, sexuality etc. The engagement of participants in activities that are to a certain extent customized to the needs of their region, enables them to identify the risks and impact of marginalization and social exclusion.

Citizens, NGOs and Public Institutions will be the direct or indirect participants of this exercise, so as to be able to correspond to everyday challenges of their community.

The central objective of this exercise is to promote integration and cooperation among all citizens regardless of their differences of gender, ethnicity, sexuality etc. The application of this method expects to enable citizens-especially youth- to take part as active members of the local community.

The exercise is based on spotting and visualising the different areas of the community that need to be improved in mutual cooperation of citizens of the community. The exercise can also be conducted online through platforms like Zoom with an online map of the community. Using the annotate and the stamp functions of the Zoom platform, the facilitator can easily apply this exercise in the framework of a training. The interactive character of the exercise is maintained and the cooperation among learners is enhanced in both, the online and the offline version.

Instructions

The facilitator

1. will gather a small number of learners, provide them with a map of their community and let them spot the areas for improvement.

2. promotes dialogue through the learners in order to explain the reasons for choosing these areas.

3. together with the learners could explore these areas by having a walk around different neighborhoods of the community or by sharing photos and reports about these areas in the online version.
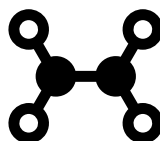
CHALLENGE 4: BORDER COMMUNITY

Geographic peripheries, situated at the edge of a country, are often faced with a similar set of challenges and opportunities: On the one hand receiving less attention from central governments and economic stakeholders, while on the other hand the border position gives access to transborder encounters of the social, cultural as well as economic sphere. Our partners from CRN contribute methods inspired by methods tested in the Polish-German border region by the long running project perspektywa (RAA).

TOOLSET 4. Generating Intercultural Participation

Contributed by Comparative Research Network for the Region of Vorpommern.

Main Challenge: #border community

Related Challenges: #lack of participation #youth outmigration #ethnic divide #social cohesion #place attachments

Strategy 4: Intercultural Community Building

Duration: min. 1 year

"Intercultural Community Building" is a animation strategy for border areas that benefits citizens, businesses and communities by channelling the strength from both groups into joint participation. The aim is to form a community across border lines and/or ethnic groups, that is capable of tackling regional challenges together through social, economic and cultural activities.

In a cascade of networking events, participatory seminars and engaging public events, resources and methods of local stakeholders from both sides of the border are combined effectively to revive local communities through active intercultural participation. In the first phase networking events can include round tables of stakeholders, in the activation phase trainings directed at active and inactive local citizens increase visible local participation, in the final phase public display of the created activities is enforced through media and events.

All events are bilingual or feature simultaneous translation to aid the minimisation of the language barrier in the region.

Stakeholders

A network of stakeholders from social, economic and cultural institutions and businesses across a border region are mobilised over a period of 6 month before the first participatory event takes place.

Participants

local citizens, that were or are active in initiatives and associations in the cross border region so far inactive local citizens from both sides of the border

Result

- increased joint activity of individuals, associations and companies in local intercultural communities activation of local citizens for community participation

- increased place attachment by linking own self-development with regional development attracting migration to the region through increased attractiveness of social and cultural life decreasing racism and discrimination

- raising tolerance and intercultural understanding

Training 4: Intercultural Labyrinth

Duration: Preparation: 1 month - Training: 1 day - Exhibition: 1 Week

"Intercultural Labyrinth" is an innovative training that aims to activate social, economic and cultural life across ethnic lines in a village of a border community. By diagnosing the current and past activities from different ethnic groups in a village or area of the community the training (re)connects and motivates already active local actors as well as new or culturally inactive residents from different ethnic groups to form or revive the local community. The effect radiates beyond the participants of the training by including a public and interactive display of the result in the two bordering languages.

Preparation: 1 month

Research of current and past local activities and associations by the facilitator, collection of picture and print material for the labyrinth walls

inviting initiators of past cultural activities in the village or group of villages (at least 3, max.15) requesting them to bring photos and print materials of the events

Stages of the training

1. facilitating exchange of experiences with past activities between the active citizens Warm Up with narrative methods (Facilitator acts as interviewer)

2. Show and tell of brought materials

3. Confront the participants with collected materials / photos of past cultural events Initiate Labyrinth Building Process

4. creating a public display of past cultural activities in the village in labyrinth form in the two border languages holding a week long public exhibition of the labyrinth with an interactive section for future ideas and a sign up sheet for activation of citizens.

A detailed training plan is available online.

General Impact

On the participant

- re-activating participation among the co-creators of the labyrinth

- activating participation among the public recipients

- forming or stabilizing a network of local actors empowerment for social and cultural participation through knowledge & communication

On the local community

- activated joint participation of different ethnic groups along a border

- increased intercultural capacity of citizens increased number of active citizens prevention of exclusive behaviours

- increased empathy and understanding among citizens of different origin

- activation of intercultural community

On key indicators:

Participation in society

Local networking events, that bring together public involvement of active and inactive citizens

Awareness as citizen

All the activities are directed at creating awareness of existing social and cultural infrastructure and their gaps.

Place Attachment

The emotional bond between person and place is strengthened through citizens getting to know the strengths and weaknesses of their community better and relating them to their own interests and needs.

Empowerment

Activating citizens to co-create the future of the community intertwines their identity with the place they are living in.

Exercise 4: We Are All Migrants

Duration: 10 minutes

The exercise is innovative, and multifunctional while requiring no preparation and minimal resources. It visualizes migration and diversity as forming part of society. The central objective of this exercise is to create self-awareness as a part of diverse society. It can function in many trainings from serving as an innovative introduction / icebreaker in any training / event to laying ground work for a topical training on integration / diversity / community.

The exercise is based on lining up the participants origin throughout the generations on a world map represented by the training room.

Online Version

The exercise can be conducted online through platforms that allow for spatial representation like kumospace.com. However, it loses the icebreaking character of the offline exercises as verbal and non-verbal communication between participants flows less freely in an online setting.

Instructions

The facilitator…

1. asks the participants to imagine the room as a world map, identifying north, south, east and west in the room first requests that all participants move to the place on the map, where they were born

2. leaves time for everyone to perceive the movements and locations represented in the group (this can be supported by asking all or some participants to name the place they were born in, or motivate the participants to talk to their neighbour (depending on group size)

3. next requests that all participants move to the place on the map, where their mother was born leaves time for everyone to perceive the movements and locations represented in the group

4. finally requests that all participants move to the place on the map, where their maternal grandmother was born invites a group discussion on the meaning of migration and diversity in their community

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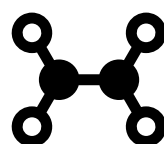
CHALLENGE 5: LACK OF INNOVATION

Many peripheries are faced with a lack of innovation. Innovation in the economic sector can be fostered by mobilising and professionalising entrepreneurs. The connection between stakeholders and citizens needs to be nurtured to form social networks and communities that work together towards this common goal. CSRMP fosters these connections in Poland through the following strategy, training and exercises.

TOOLSET 5: Regional Networking for Economic Development

Contributed by CSRMP for Czestochowa and the Region of Silesia.

Main Challenge: #lack of innovation

Related Challenges: #unemployment #youth outmigration #place attachment

Strategy 5: Diversifying the Regional Value Chain

Duration: min. 6 month

Diversifying the regional value chain utilises the power of social network capital to foster innovation by connecting individuals, companies and work related institutions in a region.

Stakeholders from each sector of economy and society will be involved. All of them will be interested in development their area and their value chain. A set of online and offline multiplier events and trainings is designed to create a common picture of a development strategy for the region. By formulating action plans all stakeholders agree to contribute their part in fulfilling the shared strategy. Action Plans should include possible hard results, e.g . number of initiatives to be done, number of scholarships. Involvement of stakeholders should be balanced and active for proper preparation of final document.

After agreeing on an action plan each organisation offers trainings that involve participants in the innovation process by framing their skills and interests in the aims of the development plan. Trainer(s) and prepared curricula need to involve stakeholders and participants from different social groups.

Preparation

The preparatory of this method is crucial for effectiveness. Organizers need to establish

a network of stakeholders that share the interest of diversifying and developing the region economically. Furthermore rules of work, periods of works and period of participants contribution need to be agreed upon. It need fixed curricula as formal base for method.

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Stakeholders

- Businesses

- Public Institutions

- NGOs

Participants

Citizens, who live in rural and/or peripheral areas, especially young people in search of a career or a business idea.

Participants should be fitted to context and marginalised groups in the region of application.

Result

- establishment of an extended network of local stakeholders that share the wish for innovation

- initiation of co-creation of change for the development of the region promotion of entrepreneurship and employment in the region empowerment through capacity building

- increased participation in the local community / community building nurtured place attachment / identification with the region

Training 5: Follow the Change

Duration: 1 day

Follow the Change empowers young entrepreneurs who lead businesses in rural areas (peripheries) to be more economically efficient. The activity is going in line with strategy and action plans to use a region's potential and local resources. Simulating real world conditions and decision making in business is really important for future. It's based on a simulation environment of real market conditions.

Follow the Change workshops need to be prepared by reviewing current problems in specific sector or social group and prepare short exercises using online tools. Activity can be organized offline and online. Online adaptation needs to choose correct collaboration tool and prepare very strict simulation rules.

Stages of the training

1. selection of young entrepreneurs with businesses in rural areas each young entrepreneur prepares a resume of their "experience" selection of simulation criteria

2. preparation of the tool with participants conducting the simulation

A detailed training plan is available online.

General Impact

On the participant

- improved knowledge and understanding of local market

- increased identification with and attachment to the region

- enhanced development of economic diversity

On the local community

- activated joint participation of different ethnic groups along a border

- increased intercultural capacity of citizens increased number of active citizens prevention of exclusive behaviours

- increased empathy and understanding among citizens of different origin

- activation of intercultural community

On key indicators:

Participation in society

Local networking events, that bring together public involvement of active and inactive citizens

Awareness as citizen

All the activities are directed at creating awareness of existing social and cultural infrastructure and their gaps.

Place Attachment

The emotional bond between person and place is strengthened through citizens getting to know the strengths and weaknesses of their community better and relating them to their own interests and needs.

Empowerment

Activating citizens to co-create the future of the community intertwines their identity with the place they are living in.

Exercise 5: Let's Surf

Duration: app. 1 hour

This exercise supports young entrepreneurs and young people willing to be entrepreneurs with improvement of skills regarding e-commerce, organizing marketing campaigns services and presenting products according to regional needs. Let's surf enables participants to learn from faults made by other local businesses before by utilizing real life case studies.

Online Version

This activity can be done online and offline. Online platforms like zoom can be an assistive tool for the conduction of this exercise. The facilitator will share the screen and all learners can watch the presentation. Online meetings are recorded and the report is prepared by trainer. Offline activities are 'recorded' on whiteboards and report is prepared by trainer.

Preparation

The facilitator...

1. chooses young entrepreneurs with businesses in rural areas. needs to have knowledge about the region and the strategy.

2. selects and prepares the tool to make the interview with participants.

3. prepares fixed curricula, that include the elements specified under "instructions" below.
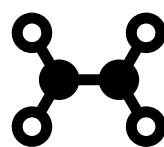
Instructions

The facilitator…

1. conducts interviews with all participants

2. prepares a resume of the "experience" of each participant

3. shares case studies of good and bad examples with the participants

4. guides the participants to formulate an alternative, more successful path the actors in the case studies could have taken

CHALLENGE 6: PLACE ATTACHMENT

Art does not simply open a space for recognising and re-thinking how rural communities perceive themselves, their contexts and histories so that they can create a vision for the future. It can also trigger a process of creative questioning and an exploration of potential, based on both inherited and new inputs – and it can communicate what those processes of innovation might give form to.2

TOOLSET 6: Art as Medium of Participation

Contributed by Mine Vaganti NGO for the Island of Sardinia, Italy.

Main Challenge: #place attachment Related Challenges: #unemployment #youth outmigration #rurality

Strategy 6: Participatory Art in Rural Areas

Duration: min. 6 month

Participatory Art in Rural Areas utilises creativity and arts to foster a connection between individuals and the (rural) place they live in. By embedding the activities in the specific contexts of the rural area, local artists create their own piece of art and connect with their area and its people.

Within this strategy, "art" is considered a "diagnostic" instrument for analysing the surrounding environment, detecting issues and co-designing potential solutions. A great effort of networking and cooperation of all relevant stakeholders is necessary in order to maximize the impact as well as the inclusion of disadvantaged target groups as participants (e.g. people with disabilities, elderly people, young people). Participants are engaged not only in the realisation of the (art)works (e.g. the photos) but also in the organisation and advertisement of the following event (e.g. the photo exhibition) or publication (illustrated book or blog), thus gaining some art as well as community management skills which they could apply in the future in employment or even starting their own projects or businesses.

Training 6: PhotoVoice - Participatory Photography

Duration: min. 3 days – max. 2 weeks | Depending on extent of the photo projects and group size

Photovoice is a participatory and collaborative method, invented by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris in the early 1990s. In our training the method is applied to empower youth with fewer opportunities, adults at risk of exclusion, people with mental / physical disabilities, member of minority groups, and marginalised groups.

By enabling the unheard gain a voice, record and reflect on their experiences and their communities' conditions, both positive and negative, this trainingencourages critical consciousness. Choosing, discussing, and reflecting on the subjects of their photographs, the participants come to a clearer understanding of their circumstances and the economic, social, psychological, and political forces that shape them. Finally, it brings about change that will improve conditions and enhance lives by reaching and influencing policy makers.

Participatory photography workshops strongly rely on analysis of the surrounding reality, identification of shared problems and discussion. This makes participants feel directly involved and improves the likelihood that the project will be continued after its end. Certainly, an important factor is the overall duration of the workshop, which allows for the creation of more or less strong relationships among participants and between participants and organizers. To increase the activation effect participatory photography projects can include a call to action to ne fulfilled after the project has ended.

Four stages of the training

1. Introduction to Participatory Photography

2. Developing a photo project that represents an aspect of the community

3. Reflecting on the local community through the photo projects of the group

4. Call to Action (optional)

A detailed training plan is available online.

General Impact

On the participant

- improved knowledge and understanding of local social issues

- increased identification with and attachment to the region

- promoted respect, understanding and empathy of other local citizens

- enhanced development of personal and social identities

- boosted social capital and competency

On the local community

- increased capacity of citizens increased number of active citizens

- improved dialogue and communication between citizens and policy makers

- increased cultural activities

On key indicators:

Participation in society

Participants are activated as they perceive themselves as co- creators rather than victims of the local circumstances.

Awareness as citizen

Change of perspectives and goals in ways that make it possible for participants to improve their lives and their region with or without policy changes.

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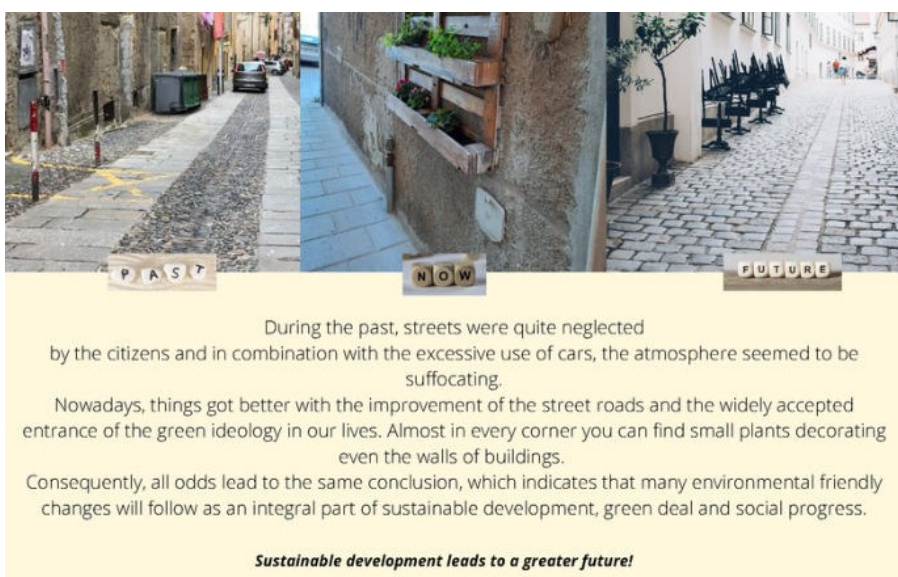of the European Union

Place Attachment

PP projects make participants reflect on their community and their place within it.

Many participants in this kind of project state that participating in photovoice led them to think about their community for the first time, both on the positive and negative aspects.

Empowerment

Participants will viewing themselves and their region in a different and more positive light.

Participants will start thinking about alternative futures for themselves and their region.

During the past, streets were quite neglected
by the citizens and in combination with the excessive use of cars, the atmosphere seemed to be
suffocating.
Nowadays, things got better with the improvement of the street roads and the widely accepted
entrance of the green ideology in our lives. Almost in every corner you can find small plants decorating
even the walls of buildings.
Consequently, all odds lead to the same conclusion, which indicates that many environmental friendly
changes will follow as an integral part of sustainable development, green deal and social progress.

Sustainable development leads to a greater future!

**Exercise as conducted in
"Digital participation"**

Exercise 6: Speak Out Creative Lab

Duration: min. 2 hours

The aim of the exercise is for the participants to reflect on the meaning of belonging to a community, and more specifically to reflect upon their community, what and how to change it. This exercise connects a photo retrieved through the participatory photography method to the meaning of community and the individual's role as an active citizen in the different spheres of participation and the experienced, lived, everyday life of the citizens. It can be done with a short theoretical explanation as a stand alone exercise or be adapted to workshops of diverse topics.

In the Erasmus+ KA2 project "Digital participation", the exercise was implemented with a group of adults with a disadvantaged background and it helped them to express the difficulties they encountered in their community and society on a daily basis. The same thing can happen with a target group of young people, with or without a disadvantaged background.

Online Version

Online platforms like zoom can be an assistive tool for the conduction of this exercise. The facilitator will share the screen and all learners can watch the presentation in which a theoretical introduction to the exercise and explanation of the template is given, together with an explanation of the Zoom platform. Through the explanation, the facilitator can engage learners in order to participate in the exercise. Apart from the use of an online platform the offline and online version of the exercise are identical.

Instructions

Preparation

The facilitator familiarizes themselves with materials on theory behind participatory photography:

- Photovoice

- Photovoice Manual Transi Tales Guide,

- Participatory Photography

- Participatory Photography Project Guide The role of the Spheres of Participation/ Active Citizenship on Communities.

After a theoretical input on participatory photography, the facilitator invites the participants to excercise as conducted in "Digital participation"
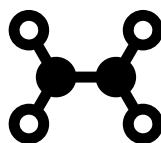
1. share a picture of which they would like to change the story.

2. to imagine what was happening a year before the photo was taken and what will happen a year after the photo.

3. use words, drawings, collages or any other mean they are invited to create a college representing the past, present and future of that photo

4. reflect on how being actively involved in a community can help change their story. Consider the roles of different spheres of participation on their story.

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Prospects in the Peripheries

The Partnership

THE PROSPECTS IN PERIPHERIES PARTNERSHIP

Crossing Borders (Denmark)

Website: www.crossingborders.dk

Contact: emma@crossingborders.dk

Crossing Borders is a non-profit, civil society organization. Crossing Borders educates and empowers young people to become active global citizens. Across cultures and professions, we provide platforms for young people to cross-fertilise ideas and form global associations, networks, and communities worldwide. In a learning environment where all participants are encouraged to grow and learn from one another, we enable youth to share their best ideas, best products, and best practices.

In 1999, Crossing Borders started out as a project to support dialogue in the Middle East, and in 2004 it was registered as an NGO.

The same year, Crossing Borders became an official partner with UNESCO. In 2013, Dr. Mariano A. Davies became Chairman of the Advisory Board and in 2016 the Danish Photographer and author of the American Picture Jacob Holdt joined the Advisory board too. In 2017 Crossing Borders moved to the center of Copenhagen. In the same year Ambassador Zindzi N. Mandela became the Patron of Crossing Borders. In 2019, the Danish-Kurdish Author Sara Omar became the Life Ambassador of Crossing Borders.

Vision

We believe in a world where young people see themselves and are seen by society as active global citizens whose human, civic, and social rights are integrated and mainstreamed in the development policies of their home countries.

Mission

Our mission is to educate global citizens and raise awareness of educators on global issues with the aim to contribute to building a peaceful and sustainable world. This is done by providing capacity building and space for youth to take action and create space for dialogue.he aim of the exercise is for the participants to reflect on the meaning of belonging to a community, and more specifically to reflect upon their community, what and how to change it. This exercise connects a photo retrieved through the participatory photography method to the meaning of community and the individual's role as an active citizen in the different spheres of participation and the experienced, lived, everyday life of the citizens. It can be done with a short theoretical explanation as a stand alone exercise or be adapted to workshops of diverse topics.

Karelian Institute (University of Eastern Finland)

UNIVERSITY OF
EASTERN FINLAND

Website: www.uef.fi/en/web/ktl

Founded in 1971, the Karelian Institute is a unit in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies at the University of Eastern Finland. Staff consists of 6 professors, 30-40 researchers and 8-10 doctoral students. The Karelian Institute engages in basic and applied multi-disciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences. Within the framework of its project activities, it supports the supervision of postgraduate studies and researcher training, and participates in undergraduate teaching. It also carries out commissioned research in connection with the university's societal service mission. The Institute is engaged in research in three overlapping thematic areas:

- Regional and Rural Studies
- Ethnicity and Culture
- Borders and Russia.

The researchers participate in nationwide and international research networks and groups. In addition to their own research, the researchers work as experts in various projects and communities and participate in the public debate in Finland and globally. Commissioned research is organised at Spatia, the Centre for Regional Research, which is part of the Institute. VERA, the network of Russian and Border Studies, coordinates and promotes research and education programmes on Russian and Border Studies at the University of Eastern Finland.

Comparative Research Network (Germany)

Comparative Research Network:

Website: www.crnonline.de

Contact: training@crnonline.de

The Comparative Research Network was founded in 2007 and worked since then in the field of non-formal adult, youth and VET education and research.

CRN's activities are divided in three vertical fields: research, education and publication.

The research department aims to bring social sciences closer to society. Research fields are among others: European Borders, Civic Participation, Urban Issues, Peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue, diversity and citizens science.

Among other CRN is organising the Berlin Border Seminar, performing research on the impact of the Berlin Wall and seeking ways how to strengthen participation of citizens in civic education and city development.

The training department is working on non-formal education in cross-sectoral approaches. Among other CRN is specialised in civic education and participation, cultural heriage, digital and media skills, storytelling, intercultural skills and creative social entrepreneurship.

The education department is implementing training activities, train-the-trainer courses. It is developing methodological tool-kits, training plans and concrete tools such as online games, apps and handbooks

The three columns are connected with two horizontal initiatives – the CRN Participatory Lab, combining research, education and publication of civic education and the CRN Peacebuilding Programme, which is performing research and training on civic dialogue, conflict management and peacebuilding in the Euromed, Eastern European and the Balkans.

The publication service of CRN is dedicated to publish OER, free-licence training materials, handbooks and support research publication. All books receive an ISBN and are featured in the Archives of the German National Library.

Due to CRN being organised as a transnational network, it has an international scope. At the moment, it employs 4 permanent and around 10 freelance staff, and has a network of more than 120 members, located in almost every European country.

Major target groups of the CRN beside trainers are marginalized groups, such as migrants, people in conflict areas, seniors and unemployed. We work towards helping citizens in diverse neighbourhoods to participate, fight social exclusion and generally support the idea of a social cohesive Europe.

Imagina (Spain)

Website:
https://www.asociacionimagina.com/

Contact: imaginaerasmusplus@gmail.com

The Asociación de Desarrollo Social Participativo IMAGINA is a non-profit organization whose mission is to increase an inclusive development of our territory in the interior the province of Malaga. This is done through the participation in the social and public life of the citizens, especially promoting the inclusion, equality of learning and mobility opportunities to young people in our territory.

IMAGINA was first established in May 9th of 2017. It was created due to the necessity of a group of young people to develop ideas and projects to work with young people about important themes such as the inclusion of people with functional diversity, gender equality, fight against racism and xenophobia through innovative and educational tools. The focus in the value of the resources of our region and the learnship through non formal education methodology and allow to develop key competences such as cultural expression, creativity, entrepreneurship and language learning.

In the beginning, IMAGINA was created as an informal group of young people in 2015 with the idea that any person who wanted to collaborate and be part of activities or to propose ideas for projects could do it. IMAGINA maintained this philosophy leads to the cooperation in projects between different entities and people. Also allowing young people, especially from rural villages to find in

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this association a tool to develop projects that promote values and development in their territory.

Mine Vaganti NGO (Italy)

Website: www.minevaganti.org

Contact: info@minevaganti.org

Mine Vaganti NGO is a non-profit organisation established in Sardinia in 2009, whose services encompass Education and Training, Project Design and Development, Thematic Research, International Mobility, and Consultancy - in Youth, Adults, Education and Sport sectors.

The organization has 3 offices divided between 3 cities of the northern Sardinia (Sassari, Olbia and Tempio-Pausania) and reaching out with its operational branches to many other regions in Italy, around Europe and beyond.

MVNGO promotes intercultural dialogue, social entrepreneurship, social inclusion through Sport, Formal and Non-Formal Education including disadvantaged targets as migrants and people with disabilities.

The core services proposed by MVNGO at local, regional and European level for public and private bodies are Training, Project Design and implementation, Thematic and Desk Research, International Mobility and Consultancy.

MVNGO promotes and develops European and transcontinental projects under Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, COSME, AMIF, JUSTICE, Europe for Citizens, Creative Europe, EuropeAid, Life, the United Nations (UNDEF), and with foundations such as EYF, Fondazione con il Sud, Anna Lindh and Open Society.

Częstochowskie Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Małej Przedsiębiorczości (Poland)

Website: www.csrmp.pl

Contact: csrmp.stowarzyszenie@gmail.com

Czestochowa Small Business Development Association is a non-profit organisation established in order to actively fight against unemployment, societies development and entrepreneurship development in the Silesia.

The Association conducts various training, workshops and advisory and conference activities. In order to support local involvement.

The Association also supports activities for the youngest inhabitants of the region, for which there are colonies, semi- colleges, junior colleges, international youth exchanges and training in the field of occupational health and safety in agriculture. It is involved in youth policy activities and is a member of the Rural Development Network.

Kainotomia (Greece)

Website: www.kainotomia.com.gr/en/

Contact: info@kainotomia.com.gr

KAINOTOMIA is a Center for Lifelong Learning (I.C.L.L) in Greece, operating in the field of Vocational education and training.

KAINOTOMIA has implemented more than 60 continuous vocational training programs targeted at unemployed people, educators of all education levels, students of higher education, employed/self-employed persons and vulnerable social groups, for the development of professional opportunities and their promotion and integration into the labour market and the society in general, through innovative close to market programs.

KAINOTOMIA provide business consultancy to companies & supporting services and consulting support services to trainees to facilitate their (re) entrance into the labour market and has participated in several national projects, offering a high degree of expertise regarding training in contemporary fields, matching them with those that have a high demand in job's market, in order to develop trainees' knowledge, skills and attitudes towards their integration in the labour market.

KAINOTOMIA has been participating in co-funded national projects under the name of "local development plans and entrepreneurship for unemployed based on specific local needs and growth potential". Furthermore, it has participated in EU projects, under Erasmus+, as a coordinator and partner.

KAINOTOMIA works closely with various enterprises, having a network of over 60 collaborative partner businesses, mainly industries. Therefore, has a strong network of collaborating associations and partners in Greece and Europe. The organization collaborates with Region & Local Government, Universities and Technological Institutes and Private & Non-Private Companies in Greece and in Europe, is a member of Association of Thessalian in Enterprises and Industries and has strong collaboration with the Enterprise Europe Network-Hellas.
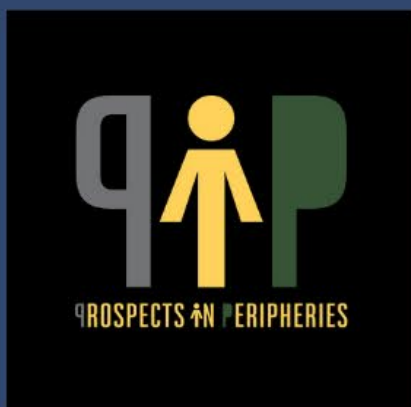
Co-funded by the
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of the European Union

Know more about the project
and find all the results
by scanning the code