



Opposing Force

HOW TO COMBAT THE ON-GOING DRAIN OF
YOUNG ADULTS FROM RURAL AREAS

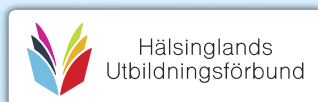


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HANDBOOK of TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

for Learning Centres, Youth Workers, NGOs, Community and Enterprise Development
Organisations, Voluntary Bodies, Civil Society Organisations and Municipalities

Based on Erasmus+ research in Sweden, Iceland, Romania and Ireland



EDITORIAL TEAM

Klas Tallvid

Hälsingeutbildning Ekonomiska Förening (HUTB), Sweden

Dr Aidan Kenny

Teachers' Union of Ireland, Ireland

Dr Lotta Svensson

Hälsingeutbildning ekonomiska förening (HUTB), Sweden

Dr Anne Murphy

Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this handbook reflect those of the Project Partners and are not necessarily those of the Erasmus+ Programme



AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

This Handbook of Tools and Techniques is one of the main outputs from the Erasmus+ Knowledge Sharing project entitled:

Opposing Force - How to Combat the On-going Drain of Young Adults from Rural Areas.

The need for such a project was clearly identified in previous research, and by policy-makers, youth workers and civic society organisations in the partner countries because there is a growing awareness of the decline in numbers of young adults who were staying on to work and to live in rural areas and small towns after school age. It was apparent that young adults who chose to stay in their rural community faced particular challenges related to employment, housing, further and higher education and training opportunities, and inclusion in civic society and in local decision-making.

The forces drawing young adults away from rural areas include opportunities to access higher education, better employment opportunities, access to the goods that support social and cultural capital, and space to become independent adults within the values associated with larger urban settlements. There can be societal expectations in rural areas that young people will leave, and perhaps should leave, unless they have prospects locally for sustainable employment and for a supportive lifestyle. These expectations influence the attitudes and values of school children who absorb the urban-as-norm values of their older peers and their families. Such worldviews and local realities can impact negatively on rural areas economically, socially and culturally. Consequently, young adults are rarely proactively involved in local economic development or in local decision-making, and are rarely actively encouraged to become involved. Nor are there many opportunities to start their own enterprises or to take over existing enterprises. Additionally, young adults in rural regions, experience all the 'normal' challenges of gender stereotyping and role expectations, which can influence their decision-making about whether to stay or to leave.

The Opposing Force project aimed to explore some of these issues in selected rural locations in three of the partner countries - Sweden, Romania and Iceland. The fourth partner, Ireland, provided expert advice and assistance. The project team, through the development and testing of new tools and techniques, engaged with young adults in training for enterprise development, and for participation in civic society and in local decision-making. The project objective was to develop and implement supportive networks to raise individual and personal competences as young adults to enable them to stay in rural areas.

This Handbook of Resources describes how the tools and techniques were actually used and what the outcomes were. Additional resources are available on the project website: **www.opposingforce.eu**.

All resources produced by this project are **Open Source** and provided free for general usage.

The project team expects the tools and techniques will be of use to educators, learning and training centres, civic society organisations, youth workers, businesses and local administrators in other rural areas.



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PART 1: ABOUT THE
OPPOSING FORCE
PROJECT

THE MAIN AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The Opposing Force project had its genesis in research conducted in Söderhamn, Sweden since 2006 by Dr Lotta Svensson¹. That research identified the economic and sociological factors which resulted in the majority of young people leaving rural areas and going to urban locations for education, training and employment. This process of leaving rural communities occurred even in circumstance where the young person had a desire to stay. The drain of young people impacted both on the economies of the rural areas and on the self-regard and self-motivation of the young people who stayed either by choice or by necessity. The research found that young adults are not genuinely involved in local decision-making, either because they are not enabled to do so, or because they are perceived as peripheral to, and perhaps regarded as 'recipients of', local development and local governance. Young people were found to be unaware of their collective and individual power to influence society and local development. Few were encouraged to start new enterprises or to take over existing enterprises. Few opportunities to access mentoring or business counselling were available. Nor were there opportunities to access enterprise and business training locally, delivered flexibly for both individuals and clusters.

The Opposing Force project aimed to explore some of these issues by developing 'forces' - tools, techniques and interventions - for use by agencies and groups that might assist young adults to stay in their own areas. The project started in 2014 and ended in 2016.

The tools and techniques in this Handbook offer a range of options for working with young adults to build capacity, increase confidence, enhance social engagement, encourage activism in local communities, develop enterprise skills, and assist young adult to view staying in their community as a real option.

The project team tested and developed the tools and techniques contained within this Handbook. The project team acknowledges the contribution made by participants and others who were actively involved during the project.

PARTNER CONCERNS AND THE DESIRED IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

The main **aim** of the Opposing Force project was to design and test new tools and techniques to assist rural communities in the following:

- » *Developing youth leadership skills to engage in rural areas' democratic and development processes,*
- » *Building capacities for enterprise development and enterprise succession/take-over in rural areas,*
- » *Encouraging wider usage of social media for mutual support in rural areas,*
- » *Exploring increased flexible access to higher education and training in rural areas, so that young people who choose to stay, work and participate in civic life could do so.*

The **desired impact** of the project is that young adults will find more sustainable social, political and economic support from the surrounding community (including education, training, and development) so that they can choose to stay, live and work locally in their rural area.

The specific concerns explored in the project included the following:

- » *Young adults in rural areas in many European countries have a **high level of unemployment** relative to their urban peers. They experience fewer opportunities to start a new business or to take over an existing one, especially if they do not have succession expectations within family businesses. This impacts both on the individual and on the local society and economy.*
- » *Young adults are generally **not encouraged to engage** as active participants in their rural area's **local governance and local decision-making** processes or local economic development other than as consumers of services. As a result, young adults have few opportunities to develop leadership skills and to participate actively in the democratic process and to influence the direction of local development.*
- » *In rural areas in most European countries, young school-leavers have **few opportunities to gain higher qualifications locally** mainly due to a lack of facilities and infrastructure. While some countries have well developed distance learning and online learning infrastructure, in most there is no alternative mode of access to higher education opportunities. So, many young people have to decide to leave their rural community temporarily or permanently to gain higher qualifications. Young adults from low-income families are particularly affected by this issue.*
- » *Young people, experience **societal expectations** regarding their life choices, their socio-sexual behaviours and adherence to traditional cultural norms regarding gender roles. They may choose to leave rural areas rather than conform to expectations.*
- » *Opportunities for **inter-generational learning** with regard to enterprise-development, local development and decision-making are frequently culturally embedded in rural areas, resulting in the exclusion of young adults from access to power at all levels of civic society, from political activism and from decision-making.*
- » *The role of **social media** in the lives of young adults is under-explored with regard to the forces that pull them away or push them to stay in the communities which this project researched. The views of young adults on this issue were sought and discussed within the project.*

¹ (http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/departments/economics/fairse/specialissues/Special_Issue_No_4_-_Economic_and_Social_Aspects_of_the_Peripheral_Region_-_September_2013.pdf)



THE PROJECT QUESTIONS

At the initial stage of the project, pilot workshops were held with young adults. The workshops explored and tested different tools and techniques to identify the most appropriate ideas to facilitate the aims of the project. The questions below were used to explore key areas of concern. Partners in Iceland, Sweden, and Romania organised activities with local young adults to explore their opinions and attitudes in this regard. The Partner from Ireland provided technical advice and feedback at the different stages.

- » **Question 1:** *How can the unemployment levels of young people in rural areas be reduced by enterprise training and providing supports to start a new business or to take over an existing business?*
- » **Question 2:** *How can training and education opportunities be brought out to rural areas so that young people who choose to stay can have access to them?*
- » **Question 3:** *Is there a role for social media in addressing the main challenges faced by young adults who wish to stay, live, and work in their local area?*

Partner organisations had the autonomy to customise their approach to the project in order to meet the local needs in their area. This allowed partners to cater for their distinct rural requirements in terms of population density, geographical location, local economy, social activities and cultural practices. Additionally, partners could place more emphasis on areas they considered important to their community. This approach enabled diversity of practice to emerge within the partnership and with sensitivity to local needs.

The partner organisations operate in very different economic, social and cultural environments. While some partner organisations are well resourced to provide education and training programmes, others are less well supported in terms of resources and facilities. The project partners are also at different stages of development in their enterprise and activities. Some had an established long-term track record of education and training provision, while others are newly developing. The service focus of partners also varies with some supporting community development and social empowerment while others prioritise training, education and skills development for the world of work. The geographical location of partner organisations shaped the direction adopted by the project, particularly in sparsely populated rural area which are isolated from, and have limited access to, urban infrastructure and supports. In addition, partner organisations engaged in the project from a perspective of their own cultural understandings and attitudes to education, training, development and enterprise. The project work was greatly enhanced by the diversity of partner organisations and the free sharing of knowledge, expertise and insights.

Populations in many of European rural municipalities and counties are shrinking. This is mainly because of the low birth rate which is further exacerbated by the movement of young people to larger cities, resulting in an increase in the proportion of elderly people in rural areas and communities. This means that fewer young people will be there to support a larger and aging part of the population in these municipalities. This will lead to problems which are easy to predict such as: it will be harder to recruit businesses to the rural area, the local taxes need to be raised to fund public services, and the municipalities will have difficulty offering attractive educational opportunities. These factors will in turn affect young people's decisions to move or stay. Urbanisation thus becomes embedded in the population structure. Another contributing factor is the underlying belief that the norm of

life for young people should be taking place in an urban context. The attraction of the urban centre is strong. It offers facilities and opportunities for work, education and social life. To try to counteract this drain of young people from rural area there needs to be considerable positive interventions locally, including community development initiatives, enterprise development opportunities, and education and training programmes. These problems can be overcome to an extent by offering young adults local engagement opportunities, advice and supports within their community.

The Project Approach to Unemployment Rural Areas

The project partners sought to attract young adults who were unemployed to participate in the project events. This was done to offer advice and guidance on possible options in terms of education, training or employment. During engagements with participants, partners endeavoured to enhance an understanding of both community and regional development, and of enterprise and entrepreneurship. Some partners placed more emphasis on capacity building in comparison to entrepreneurial development opportunities.

The Project Approach to Higher Education Interventions

The project developed several different approaches to engagement with higher education in universities. In some cases, initial linkages were developing between the partner organisation and the local university. This allowed for further development work to continue into the future. In other cases, co-operation already existed between the partners and the university, and project ideas had developed into actual programmes or pilot programmes for young adults to gain access to higher education. Partners with resources and expertise offered online and distance education and training resources to young adults relating to pre-university skills and knowledge requirements.

The Project Approach to Social Media

Partners endeavoured to engage young adults by means of social media mainly by Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Website and Instagram. The main purpose was to share information and to promote opportunities available in the region and the local community. Whilst there was some success and some young adults engaged with the social media as intended, however, the general feedback from young adults was they did not want the partners to interfere with their social media space. They used social media for a different purpose to the partners: they wanted to talk and chat to friends, share likes and dislikes about matters relevant to themselves, although they were not opposed to developing social media groups with the project partners for specific issues for a definite time period. The young adults were also much more advanced in their understanding and use of the technologies that supported social media, in the use of smart phones, tablets and a variety of platforms and applications (apps). Some of the partners considered they could avail of additional training to promote the use of this new service.





PART 2: HOW TO USE THE HANDBOOK

HOW TO USE THE HANDBOOK

The Opposing Force Project Handbook of Tools and Techniques is intended for learning and training centres, youth workers, NGOs, voluntary organisations, community and development organisations, businesses and municipalities. It can provide useful information, tools and techniques to compliment the work these organisations already carry out with young adults.

The Handbook is primarily about new, or locally adapted, tools and techniques used by the partners with teenagers and young adults in their rural regions in Iceland, Sweden and Romania. The purpose of this resource is to provide insight into tools and techniques that worked in these diverse regions. The partners used education, training and development approaches to enhance young adults' interest in their rural areas and to identify supports and facilities available. The tools developed are based on groupwork methods which incorporate business and confidence-building games as well as seminars and workshops. The tools and technique should be considered as one component of a local strategy. The other necessary elements are funding, infrastructure and support from local agencies and stakeholders. The tools and techniques can be used separately to explore topics and issues. They can be incorporated into other existing programmes, or they can be combined together to develop new workshop activities and programmes. It is recommended that the tools and techniques are used by those who already have skills, competency and expertise in workgroup, in education and training, and in community development.

The six tools selected for particular focus are as follows:

1. *Capacity building for local community development*
2. *Peer education and leadership training*
3. *Role play and theatre for gender role awareness*
4. *Enterprise training courses*
5. *Generating ideas for enterprise development*
6. *The use of Buzz Groups in different contexts.*

The Handbook also provides critical reflections and analysis of the tools and techniques used, and whether the feedback from the young adults on their experiences of using them was broadly positive or otherwise.

GOOD PRACTICE AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Safe practice is of primary consideration when working with groups and young adults. Before using the tools in this Handbook, trainers/leaders should be aware of the importance of working safely with groups, and the importance of using best practice approaches and guidelines. Each partner country followed the guidelines below when working with young adults.

Groupwork

Groupwork can be seen as a key resource to promote equality and integration. It can address issues such as discrimination, disability, and unemployment, by providing a way for people to discuss issues that affect them. A balance has to be maintained between the task set for the group (the job that has to be done) and the individual needs of the group (sense of belonging, learning new skills). Trainers/leaders need to have an awareness of the needs of group i.e. the content of the project, building accessibility, equipment required, appropriate use of language. A space for inclusion and diversity should be created, by asking participants their views on time and place of activities, how games are used, the size of groups, etc.. Groupwork can develop ownership of the project by the participants. Games and exercises can be used to encourage team-building and how to work on tasks together. This can build confidence, and participants can learn new techniques. Problems and conflicts within a group can be resolved through feedback. The group participants should be encouraged to give and receive feedback. Feedback is a process of review and evaluation of the task undertaking by a group. It can be both positive and negative. Feedback requires each participant to listen and give opinions objectively on the issue being discussed by the group. In this way a consensus can be developed which can absorb contentious issues and bring about positive results.

Integrity

To maintain trust and confidence in a project a trainer/leader has to be honest and trustworthy. An awareness of the values and norms of both trainer/leader and participant in the project is needed as they influence the behaviour of the trainer/leader, the participants and communities. Trainers/ leaders need to form appropriate relationships with participants and to maintain personal boundaries so that learning takes place in a safe place. Employment laws and standards of good practice reflect the values and norms of society and give protection for interaction. Expectations within aims and objectives need to be realistic. A standard of fairness needs to be maintained to promote equality among participants.

Safe Practices

Trainers/Leaders need to have appropriate qualifications to work with young adults. In some cases this includes certification from the authorities/police that they are approved to work with young people. Trainers/Leaders need to be honest from the start with participants about guidelines and procedures they are obliged to adhere to. They should communicate issues that may cause conflict in a respectful and safe manner.



Facilitation

Facilitation is about building ways to develop methods for a group or community to discuss, evaluate and create positive outcomes on issues that affect their lives. Trainers/Leaders need to be informed of the issues affecting their groups and the area in which the project is taking place. To facilitate groupwork the trainer/ leader should have good communication skills for effective learning to take place. An awareness of verbal and non-verbal language is needed to convey non-judgemental attitudes and to build trust. The trainer/leader should have a respectful caring attitude, be open, calm and confident, and give reasonable advice and assistance. Language should be inclusive which can show participants that there is a willingness to listen to their concerns.

Empowerment

Empowerment is based on equality and respect. It is about participation and involvement in society to enable people to take more control over their lives. It is important that a project builds confidence and self-esteem, and supports participants to build on and to gain new skills. By recognising the inequalities that exist between individuals, groups and communities, ways can be created to change existing structures.

Capacity-building within a project can empower groups, individuals and communities with the resources and facilities to deal with issues which affect them. Social capital and networks can be built on to give access to new skills and knowledge. Trainers/ leaders should build relationships with other organisations and communities to share resources and experiences.

Participation

Participation is about encouraging groups who are experiencing social exclusion, inequality or discrimination to take part in a project to bring about change in their lives, their communities and society. Trainers /leaders should seek to encourage participation of young adults in their communities so they have a direct voice. Active civic participation can empower people and communities. Participants can take part in learning from, and evaluation of, a project. Trainers/leaders can use creative ways to engage participants in a project and to build networks with other groups.

Dignity and Respect

Respect means acceptance of a person as an equal, to be treated as an individual, regardless of the behaviour or life choices of a person. Self-respect is the feeling of being worthy of respect and it is this self-respect that gives a person dignity.

Trainers and participants need to respect that each person can contribute in discussions and tasks, that each person is recognised for their own qualities and abilities. This does not mean approval by the trainer/leader.

By recognising diversity in society and respecting cultural differences, trainers/leaders can promote understanding in groupwork.

Ethical and respectful involvement of young adults

The Opposing Force project observed best practice in research with human subjects. All partners agreed on the following ethical principles:

1. *Participation in project activities would be voluntary in all cases.*
2. *Participants would be fully informed about the aims of the project and the extent of their possible involvement in it.*
3. *Participants would give written/signed consent for their involvement in any activity.*
4. *Minors under 16 years old would need to be signed parental/guardian consent to participate.*
5. *Participants would have the right to withdraw at any time.*
6. *Personal data would remain confidential.*
7. *Generic data only would be used for dissemination or reportage.*
8. *Participants would give permission for the use of appropriate individual photographs in any medium. This permission could be withdrawn at any time.*
9. *Photographs of participants would not be used in reports or other dissemination literature if the subject matter were sensitive. In these cases, generic images from the public domain would be used.*
10. *Research data would be maintained securely by the partners.*
11. *Interpretation of data would be verified through multiple editorial oversights.*
12. *Public access to data and documentation connected with the project would be strictly supervised.*

The partners were acutely aware of the risk of intervening in the lives of young people through project activities, and of the need to ensure that the outcomes were positive and enhancing. In this regard each person actively working with the young participants on behalf of the project were appropriately qualified, competent, and sensitive to the aims of the project and to the risks of raising expectations or disturbing the personal equilibrium of any individual participant.

Examples of participant consent forms are included in the Appendices at the end of the Handbook.





PART 3: HOW TO USE
THE KEY TOOLS
AND TECHNIQUES

HOW TO USE THE KEY TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

In this part of the Handbook, the six key tools and techniques are described. In addition, partners give insights into how they used the tools and some of the techniques that assisted the process during the development stage of the project.

Data Gathering Tools

During the initial stage of the project development, the partners engaged in pilot workshops with young adults to consider the main aims of the project. During the workshops and follow-up work, the partners used several tools to gather data and find out the opinions and views of young adults. The main tools used were: group interviews, focus groups and surveys. These tools assisted partners to consider the project aims within each rural community context. It also enabled partners to either customise, or to refocus, the project aims to best meet the local need.

The Group Interview

Partners used the group interview tool with groups of between 8-12 young adults. The process consists of inviting young adults to attend a group interview meeting. The group interview meeting was facilitated by a trainer/leader who introduced the group to the purpose of the meeting and the duration. Participants sitting in a circle were invited to introduce themselves to the group. Once the introductions were complete the trainer/leader informed the group about the interview process which included the consent procedure relating to recording and taking photographs. Once the participants agreed the consent procedure, the group interview commenced. The interview consisted of the train/leader posing a list of questions sequentially to the group and noting the responses. The trainer/leader endeavours to give everyone an opportunity to speak. The trainer/leader needs to manage and control for any issues or conflicts that may arise during the interview process. The group interview meeting should be time-managed allowing equal time for speakers before moving on to the next question in order to complete the process within the agreed timeframe. At the end, participants are thanked for their engagement. The trainer/leader then drafted a report on the group interview discussions.

Group interviews are useful to obtain data in a relatively fast and easy way. They are reasonable cheap to organise and run. The group interview should be facilitated by someone with experience of group work. The outcome of the group interview should not be presented as representing the views and anyone other than the group itself.

Focus group interview

Focus group interviews are very structured and planned. A focus group interview can be developed from the results of a group interview, survey or other available research or data. The focus group interview seeks to explore in greater detail and depth the opinions, ideas, attitudes toward specific issues, items or concerns of the group. The sample group is invited to attend the focus group meeting. The purpose of the focus group is explained. The sample group is informed of the procedure for the running of the focus group. The sample group is requested to give consent for the recording the focus group and permission to use photographs (if required). The focus group is administered by a trained facilitator/

researcher. A structured scheduled of questions, prompts, and scenarios are then put to the focus group for their response. The facilitator/researcher must manage the process and try to maintain the focus of the contribution from the participants remains in the general subject area. The facilitator/researcher should seek to ensure further depth in the answers presented during the discussion phase of the interview. In some cases, this will require the reframing of questions. The facilitator/researcher has to have a good knowledge of the subject area in order to develop further impromptu questions and make deeper inquiries. The facilitator/researcher may seek additional information or clarification from a participant regarding their answer. The facilitator/researcher must be aware that in some cases the participant may feel uneasy when posed with further questions. In this circumstance the facilitator/researcher must move on and not persist in questioning the same person. At the end of the focus group session, the participants are thanked and reminded of the consent requirements. The facilitator/researcher writes up the focus group notes which can then be analysed, and a report generated.

The focus group interview is a way to gain in-depth insights into a specific items or area. It can be costly due to the necessary preparation work and the hiring a facilitator/researcher with expertise in focus group methodology. In circumstances where the methodology which includes the sampling technique is applied corrected the inference can be made from the findings regard the sample population.

Questionnaire survey

Some partners used a questionnaire survey to get the opinions of the local community regarding the aims of the project. The questionnaire was constructed in either of two ways 1) the direct way, where the questions were formed from the project aims and objective, 2) the indirect way, where the questions were informed by the findings of the group interview or the focus group interview or a consultation meeting with groups. Once the questionnaire questions were formed and arranged into order, the survey process could commence. The survey was in some cases administered by the partner and in another case it was commissioned to a higher education institute to carry out. The partner or administrator identified the sample group from the sample population. The surveys were then distributed online to the sample group. The survey contained consent guidelines and protocols. The survey data were then analysed and the findings used to inform the partner group's approach to the projects.

Questionnaire and surveys can be a relatively cheap and fast way of gathering initial information. Although in circumstance where the findings are to be used for campaigning or lobbying purposes then the cost may increase as the work may need to be commissioned to an external research company.



1. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Focus: Community, Group Development, Active Citizenship
How: Uses groupwork to explore social concepts and local issues with a view to development of further engagement and participant in the activities of local communities.

2. PEER EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Focus: Self-development, Group Development
How: Creates a safe space to explore complex societal issues, concerns and ideas relating to social norms, practices, and concepts, culture, sexual identity and relationship.

3. ROLE PLAY AND THEATRE FOR GENDER ROLE AWARENESS

Focus: Group, Self-development and Creativity
How: Uses art-based approaches to encourage the safe exploration of complex concepts relating to gender and sexual identity.

4. ENTERPRISE TRAINING COURSE

Focus: Individual, Enterprise skills
How: Uses games and groupwork to stimulate participants to take an interest in concepts and ideas relating to the development of enterprise skills and entrepreneurial thinking.

5. GENERATING IDEAS FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Focus: Individuals, Enterprise development
How: Uses workshop and seminar formats to identify the enterprise and business needs of a community/rural area and maps out the possibilities for developing small enterprises.

6. THE USE OF BUZZ GROUPS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

Focus: Individual, Enterprise skills
How: Uses a mentoring style to explore a business idea from concept, to development, to implementation.

All the tools and techniques presented in this Handbook seek to emphasise the importance of putting strategies and interventions in place to assist young adults to widen their social networks within the municipality, rural area or county. Some are focused on connecting young adults to strengthen their knowledge and consciousness about their situation, their society and to enhance their self-esteem. Others are enabling young adults to connect to adults as mentors and advisers and to build useful social capital (see Putnam, 1993, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*) and to be more connected to the local community.

To experience this connection you have to be involved, to participate and to contribute to your local society which makes you feel like you belong (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2005, in *Community Organizing and Community Building for Health*), and that helps you to find meaning and strength in life (Antonovsky, 1987, *Unravelling the Mystery of Health: How People Manage Stress and Stay Well*).

By organising and facilitating opportunities for meetings between young adults and enterprise, education and community leaders, ideas can be generated that may help change the rural community and make it youth-friendly. The social capital of the adults will also be wider as a result. The older adult gets a better insight into what is important to meet the needs of the younger adults and can better allocate resources to respond to these needs.





Photo: Johnér/Scandinav Bildbyrå

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SWEDEN, ICELAND AND ROMANIA)

Rural communities are facing significant challenges as the depopulation process continues. Young adults for a variety of economic, social cultural and other reasons, are choosing to leave their rural community and go to urban centres. This loss of young adults is adversely affecting the social and economic life of rural communities.

New opportunities need to be developed to assist young adults in rural communities to have the option of staying and working in their home area. To achieve this, it requires a joined-up approach, whereby community organisations, businesses, and education centres work together with young adults in a capacity-building approach. Through social engagement and the creation of opportunities to get involved in the community, in civic activities and in local enterprise, positive options can be created to support young adults to stay.

The capacity-building approach seeks to use local engagement of all the social partners and stakeholders, to identify gaps and needs, and then develop ways to reduce these gaps and to resolve issues. The capacity-building approach is based on social interaction and the sharing of resources and knowledge with a view to developing something more than originally existed. Local communities, through active citizenship activities and engagements, map out options and develop strategies to meet their needs. The capacity-building approach allows for external supports to provide specialised knowledge or skills to assist the communities in building their own capacity. Many rural communities and villages form their own local development enterprises or social enterprises where they can offer their local members/villagers opportunities to work with common tasks. Whilst these local enterprises may be considered small scale in terms of resources and employment they have a very big impact on the social well-being and social capital in their rural communities and areas. The type of capacity-building work these social enterprises are involved in, is more concerned with human development and human growth than with economic gains.

HOW IT WAS USED IN PRACTICE

My Community-Countryside Movement (Sweden)

This event involved 30 participants aged 14-30 and a small number of adults from 30-65. The event was organised over a weekend of 24 hours in workshops held in the local museum. Participants came from a vast geographical area. The following is a list of the tools that were used in short sessions during the event:

Tool A – The Mapping Exercise – My Community

Participants located themselves on a large map of Sweden and was asked to describe their community. The aim was to focus introductions on the individual in his/her home setting.



Tool B – How Rural Development Works

In the session, experts explained to the group how various programmes for rural community development worked and how to apply for funding.

Tool C – The Roles of Youth Coaches and Youth Leaders Were Explained

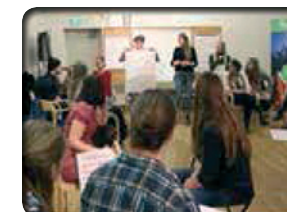
Descriptions of successful projects were provided.

Tool D – Inter-generational Boards

The purpose and role of inter-generational boards are explained:
The process and benefits of working through committees
How to identify appropriate funding and apply for funding
The procedure for nominating a representative for the Board.

Tool E – Four Gates to Engagement – Panel Discussion

A panel discussion led by migrants and migrant support groups covered topics such as the changing profile of the young population in the country. The panel discussed ways to encourage and promote involvement by new-comers to participant in local and civic society and community development.



Tool F – How Difficult Could it Be? Logical Approach to Finding Solutions

This tool is a format for structured discussion as follows:

- Step 1:** Clearly state issues and challenges and areas in need of support
- Step 2:** Consider possible solutions
- Step 3:** Select the best solution
- Step 4:** Plan the implementation of the solution through a project plan
- Step 5:** Present the project plan to peers for feedback
- Step 6:** Revise the project plan accordingly.



Tool G – Shop, Cook, Eat and Share the Global Grocery Bag

Preparing food is a useful opportunity for less formal learning. In this tool, the participants shop for local and imported food, cook it and eat it together. Then they discuss the importance of supporting indigenous food producers to sustain local communities.

Tool H – The Country Inside – Gender Awareness Workshop

This tool requires competence actors to illustrate the experiences of gays and lesbians in rural communities. The tool is useful in providing a safe environment for opinions and experiences to be shared.

Tool I – The Cash is Here!

This is a training session guiding participants through the process of applying for a range of funding possibilities for rural development opportunities.

Participants practice formulating ideas to fit various application formats and systems.

Tool J – Facebook Group – Information On What is Happening in the Rural Community

This is a useful tool to allow young adults to share and provide information and thoughts on what is happening in their rural area. A Facebook Group page was formed among participants which help maintain energy and enthusiasm after a long training event.



My Community – Countryside Movements (Sweden)

Involving adults in rural community development is a complex process in any country. Encouraging young people to be actively involved is particularly challenging. However, to support this there needs to be active encouragement from business, education and training providers, and from community groups.

The approach in Sweden is to take an integrated approach to rural community development which involves the personal, the collective and the economic.

Knowing that activism can lead to cash investment in an area with good development ideas is a powerful motivator for involvement.

Making Good Use of National Rural Development Platforms

Partner countries in the Opposing Force project have very different structures for rural development, for youth development and for supporting new enterprises. All countries and areas undertaking similar activities will invariably work with what exists already. Resource available will vary considerably.



Academic Basic Year Programme (Sweden)

Sweden, HUTB Opposing Force team, initiated a capacity-building idea to enhance young adults' chances of successfully enrolling onto a higher education programme. The project

idea was discussed with colleagues in HUTB and was developed into a programme to develop the competences required to enter higher education. The result was the roll-out of an Academic Basic Year programme. The programme contained all of the necessary pre-university skills and knowledge a young adult would need. While some universities offer a type of academic basic year on-campus for applicants, the project idea was to develop and deliver the programme in the regions and rural communities. This was achieved by means of negotiating a position with staff in HUTB, gaining support for the idea and then assisting in the development of the programme.

The programme was then made available in the local learning centres and the knowledge centres in the region. In some cases participants were offered facilities to meet or study, with access to online study material. HUTB gained cooperation from the university in the region for the project in terms of recognition and to allow student assess. The success of this initiative required engagement with several stakeholders and the identification of resources and facilities.

The following steps were taken:

- » Project team developed the idea
- » Negotiated the idea with HUTB
- » Developed the outline of an access programme
- » Discussed the programme with other stakeholders and the university
- » Piloted the programme content
- » Finalised the programme content
- » Promotional material was designed to explain the programme to young adults
- » Career guidance staff were informed about the option
- » Open days and evenings were arranged to promote the idea.
- » Young adults were given detailed advice on the approach.

HUTB provided on-going support and advice to young adults who successfully completed the programme and have enrolled into a higher education programme in the university. The academic basic year programme is now on a stand-alone project, funded by the ESF and with several partners in the region.

Website Broadcasts (Iceland)

The Opposing Force project in Nyheimir explored the use of social media options in collaboration with students in media studies at the local secondary school (FAS) and developed a project called 'Ung Rodd' or 'Young Voice' which was presented on a website: <http://ungrodd.fas.is/>. The aim was to create a platform for young people to have their voices heard, to get young people to critically observe their own circumstances and the social status of young people within the community by giving them tools to carry out their own explorations. In addition, the projects sought to provide empowering and inspiring media for young people in Hornafjordur and also to make an attempt with the use of social media for the empowerment of young people.

Through their work with the media, the student have, amongst others things, dealt with the



issues of the opposing Force Project: community participation, employment and educational opportunities. They also discussed other issues of concern to young people in Hornafjörður.



They interviewed young locals and explored what young people are doing, what they are involved in and what opportunities they see for their own progress in the local municipality. In their discussions, students wanted to point out what can be done better and at the same time have a positive impact on young people's attitudes to the place and the opportunities that it has to offer. A well supervised radio slot for and by young people facilitates skills development across a range of areas and can be a very powerful tool when appropriately designed for specific ages and target groups.

Liaison with the Municipality to Promote Civic Engagement (Iceland, Sweden, Romania)

The level of liaison with local governance and administration structures will depend on the target age group and profiles of young people.

Younger age groups are more likely to need knowledge and understanding of 'how things work'.

Older age groups will invariably be interested in participating in local governance and in influencing policy and provision that impact upon them. This level of involvement requires considerable phased capacity-building among young people as well as an attitudinal shift among older political leaders and administrators. Civic and political leadership training may be required.

Distance/Online Learning Clusters in Local Learning Centres

Access to distance learning was suggested by young people in Iceland, Sweden and Romania as an urgent need in rural areas. The rationale for the Opposing Force project included existing evidence that one of the main forces drawing young people away from rural areas and small towns is to attend university or specialist training elsewhere. One way to oppose this force for those who choose to stay and to continue family businesses or to start their own business is to bring specific education and training to them in their local learning centres, perhaps through distance learning from a main provider in an urban area. While economies of scale and real costs would prohibit physical outreach across many dispersed rural areas, there is no good reason why local Learning Centres could not facilitate online learning for both individuals and clusters, though the participants themselves are likely to pay for it. This was suggested by young adults in all partner countries.

Project partners developed and made available different types of online material for young people to access. Some partners such as HUBT have a specialist section that produce online learning material, whilst other partners are just beginning to explore this area. The project partners consider that online learning facilities are of crucial importance to young people in rural areas. There needs to be a joined-up approach to the supply of online supports and online learning in rural area. This could be done by means of linking with local education providers and higher education institutes. The partners were committed to developing these options further.

PEER EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Peer-to-peer Learning (Iceland)

Peer-to-peer learning is a technique by which young people of broadly the same profile (age, geographical location) share information and knowledge, and discuss their life options and choices. It is a powerful tool to build competences in self-awareness and self-empowerment. The process is facilitated by a person trained in peer learning methodology. Peer education has been shown as an effective way of sharing information on topics because young people generally seem to feel more comfortable discussing subjects with people they see as being on their level (UNESCO, 2003).

Training for Peer-Learning Leaders

Leaders of peer education techniques need to be trained in its unique methodology. Leaders need to undergo the peer education process themselves so that they are aware of the challenges, risks, outcomes and follow-ups required.

For a leader to be successful he/she needs to have certain personal qualities, such as: belief and interest in the peer education method, knowledge of the learning-by-doing method, experience in working with youth, and a knowledge of the chosen subject to be able to facilitate deep discussions relating to the topic.

HOW IT WORKS

A peer-learning project is usually organised by a learning community organisation or group. The organisation/group engages in a consultation process with young adults in the local area. The consultation process can use different methods to find out the opinions/concerns/issues of young adults. For instance, individual interviews and focus groups are suitable methods to gain knowledge on these issues. Also they



are useful to discuss with participants the framework and arrangements for training and to question the way in which they choose it to take place and what qualities a coach must have. Once these issues are identified the organisation decides on the topic of a peer education programme. Thereafter it is important to locate a Peer-Learning Leader who has the appropriate range of skills to facilitate workshops/seminars on the chosen topic, based on engagements with a group of young adults.

Then a group of young adults is formed. Participants either register themselves, or are randomly or systematically placed in a specific group. The optimal number of participants is 10-20. It is important to keep in mind that as the group grows, it is desirable to extend the training because training is intended to be based on systematic engagement and experiential learning.



The Peer-to-Peer Learning process facilitates in-depth exploration of issues of concern to the participants. The workshop/seminar is organised in a suitable facility where the participants feel comfortable. Time is required at the early stage to build confidence within the group to enable the free flow of knowledge and experience sharing. The workshops/seminars are private and confidential to the group.



The Peer-Leader establishes the procedures for the operating of the workshop/seminar. The facilitated process enables social engagement, interaction and knowledge-sharing among the group. The process can result in heightening levels of self esteem and of confidence for the participants.

HOW IT WAS USED IN PRACTICE

Peer-to-Peer Training Programme (Iceland)

Peer-to-peer Education Programme

Step 1: Data Gathering

Interviews are a useful tool for analysis of survey results to further identify key issues and to gain in-depth understandings of attitudes, opinions, and experiences.

- » Individual interviews can be carried out to identify issue of importance to young adults.
- » You should consider which type of interview sampling to do: random sampling, systematic sampling, or by gender, age, background.
- » Time is important when planning interviews.
- » Field notes can be transcribed and analysed from the interview data. Data can then be categorised in preparation for the next step of the project, which is the thematic areas.

Step 2: Theme/Focus

Data can be analysed and categorised into themes. These themes can then be further discussed to decide which themes will be the focus of their projects. Then Step 3 is planned.

Step 3:

When the themes are decided, activities can be planned with the young people. Venues can be booked, workshops planned and experts trainers invited.

Step 4: Evaluation

A survey can be used to assess the quality of the peer education programme.

Leadership Training (Iceland)

Leadership training can be organised in collaboration with Youth Organisations, Student Councils, Municipalities or Education Centres. Leadership training builds the capacity of young adults to become involved in their local communities and to take on leadership roles.

Step 1: Theme/Focus

Leadership training should focus on the process of empowering participants by educating them on the subjects of democracy, administration and governance, activism and lobbyism, This has the potential to improve self-confidence and self-esteem.

Step 2: Leadership Training Events

The leadership training materials needs to be prepared in advance of the workshop. The project co-ordinator introduces the idea behind the leadership training programme and then introduced the topics in turn to the group. The group discusses each item in detail before progressing to the training programme., The programme includes items such as elective representatives, how to get elected, self-expression, comfort zones and fears, and appropriate behaviour.

Advanced workshop items include, how to lobby in the social media and local campaigns, and how to promote active citizenship.

Facebook groups can also be of assistance.

ROLE-PLAY (SWEDEN AND ROMANIA)



Role-play is an established practice within the arts, theatre and creative fields. Role-play as an approach has been used in areas such as business, community, learning, counselling and therapy. Role-play allows participants to engage in discussion or practices from the perspective of another (the character). The participants have the freedom not to be themselves and act as they consider someone else would.

Role-play as an approach enables groups to explore complex issues, situations and events in a safe and creative way. The participants, working from scenarios or scripts, engage in a process of creative exploration. This allows participants to simulate life situations and/or experiences and try different perspectives and character types.

HOW TO USE IT

While role-play is a creative process this does not mean it is an *ad hoc* method. Within community development and youth-work, role-play operates in a structured way with defined roles, characters and ways to engage. The role-play must be facilitated by a trained or competent leader/trainer. Preparation of content and methodologies must be developed



in advance of the role-play. All participants must be made aware of the purpose and process to be used for the specific role-play.

In general, there are three stages to role-play:

- » Preparation for the role-play action
- » Engaging in the role-play action
- » Review of the role-play action.

During role-play the trainer/leader must emphasise the boundaries of the event and the safe practices that should be followed. This includes assuring participants that the role-play remains in the room and should not be discussed outside after the event. This allows participants to engage freely without fear of being made fun for their acting during role-play after the session.

Effective role-play requires a definitive purpose which includes a description of the topic, (scenario) details of the characters and their roles, and a question or problem to explore. It should be noted that designated time is required in order to process and perform a role-play.

Role-play is a standard technique in youth work, schools and colleges. It is an effective technique on rehearsing real-life situations such as enterprise development – and in exploring complex and sensitive societal issues such as gender roles and racial stereotyping. It is also a good technique to practice different kinds of meetings with officials, politicians and others in the adult world.

Debates, Presentations and Public Speaking (Iceland, Sweden)

Speech-making, debating and public performance are key competences for engagement in civic society and in running a successful business. Peer learning leaders, youth social activists, youth organisation and young entrepreneurs need such competences as they encourage rational thinking, argument structure and appropriate engagement with more powerful persons, systems and structures. It is an effective tool in strengthening the participant’s self-esteem and confidence in social interactions.

Public ‘Slut’ Walk (Iceland)

A public walk by young activists is an event designed to draw attention to what they perceive as an important social, environmental or political issue. The example here is of young women drawing attention to stereotyping of girls in modern Icelandic society, scheduled to coincide with the centenary of votes for women. Such a walk should be carefully planned so that participants are empowered and enhanced through participation.



‘Living Library’ (Iceland)

Exploring sensitive topics through literature, book reviews and discussion. This technique can be used to explore issues of exclusion or difference in society by young adults reading and discussing published literature on the topics, led by experienced adult facilitators.

A “Living Library” was held where the focus was on the difference in humans. Library guests choose books of human interest and discussed the speciality and background of the book, such as: origin, age, disability, profession and sexuality. People gathered to talk to each other and ask questions about each others lives. The events were well attended.



‘The Country Inside’ - Folk Theatre and Story-telling to Explore Sensitive Topics (Sweden)

Role-play and theatre can be used as tools to address issues that affect young adults in society. Many rural civil society organisations (among them youth organisations) use folk theatre and story-telling as tools to make visible challenges in society which might otherwise go un-spoken. Themes common in theatre include role-conflict within family structure and communities. Using role-play and theatre as tools to address issues can be effective if competent external facilitators are involved.

Facebook Group (Iceland)

A Facebook group can emerge from a series of activities organised during a weekend. The Facebook group allows for the sharing of events and ideas about the community. Those interested can post ideas, opinions, problems, and others can respond with suggestions and solutions.





ENTERPRISE TRAINING COURSE (SWEDEN AND ROMANIA)

Large scale employment opportunities are normally available in urban areas which have the required infrastructure. In rural areas, employment opportunities are more small scale and can be limited. In order to encourage the growth of employment opportunities, local communities are endeavouring to promote enterprise training initiatives to stimulate a business development culture.

Young adults do not normally have the knowledge, skills and competency to start up their own business or take-over an existing enterprise. Developing enterprise skills for work is perceived as a positive approach to encouraging your adults to take a risk in starting a local enterprise. In order to advance this process enterprise training can be offered to young adults.

HOW IT WORKS

The community group, learning centre or organisations, carries out a general analysis of the enterprise and employment needs in the rural area. Contact is made with some of the local employers and small business owners to explore their experiences of starting and running a business. The project team develops an enterprise training programme and a range of appropriate tools. By means of a selection process, young adults are placed into a group to participate in the enterprise training exercises.

The training course consists of business-focused groupwork including games, round table meetings with employers, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders. During the organised group meetings, the young adults get an opportunity to network with the local business people and to ask questions about starting and running a business.

The project team organises the events including locations and materials. The project team establishes the operating boundaries and responsibilities with the participants at the start of the training course. As the training programme advances, arrangements are made with employers to allow young adults to visit the business and gain an understanding of how a business is run. The participant group is encouraging throughout the training to share information and develop a support network for their own further enterprise endeavours.

HOW IT WAS USED IN PRACTICE

Enterprise Development Training: Tools and Techniques (Romania)

The project team used a variety of business games, roundtable meetings and visits to workplaces during the course of the enterprise training.

Relationship with Money and Business – *Me and My Money* – Interactive Game

Time: 20 -25 minutes

Tools: Several coins

Number: 10 - 20 participants with one or two participants

Objective: To map the participants' attitudes towards money

How to use the game

Participants sit in a circle and place coins in the middle. Each participant chooses a coin and takes turns to speak about the following questions:

- » *What do you think about money?*
- » *What role does money play in your life?*
- » *How do you deal with money?*

Participants invite each other to answer these questions. The trainer summarises participants' thoughts about money and its management at the end of the task.



Exploring Risk and Strategy – *Frogs Jumping Stones* – Interactive Game

Time: 1.5-2 hours

Tools: Sheets of A3 paper

Number of participants: 10-20

Objective: To introduce the planning process, risk and strategy to the participants, and to observe how they perform in the planning processes.

How to use the game

Select a few of the participants who will be the observers (the number is determined based on the total number of participants). The observer's tasks will be to note the behaviour of the players and what they talk about what they say during the game.

During the game, two teams of frogs are trying to get across the river jumping from stone to stone without falling into the water. In the first round of the game, we form an even number of teams, each of three persons.



Place 7 pieces of A3 sheets on the floor and form lines/rows to represent stepping stones (if we have 4 teams, form 2 rows, or if there are 6 teams we form 3 rows). Teams position themselves on the rows in such a way that they are opposite to each other and the sheet of paper in the middle is empty.

The task is to change places respecting the following rules:

- » *only one person at a time can move;*
- » *you can only move forward if there is a blank sheet in front of you, or if a person from the other team is in front of you and behind him, there is an empty sheet (so you can jump over one person from the other team but only one);*
- » *you cannot jump over persons from your own team*
- » *you cannot jump off the "stones" (Sheets)*
- » *you cannot turn back*
- » *if you make a wrong step you cannot correct it and you have to start the game over again.*

In the case of success in the first round put participants into teams of 4, later on in teams of 5. As the number of players/team increase the level of difficulty grows and planning and documenting the whole process gets more important. At the closure of the game, participants sit in a circle and share their experiences during the whole process.

Next, the observers report about what they saw during the game, and then the whole group starts discussing the process through the following questions:

- » *What did you learn from the game?*
- » *Is planning necessary? If yes why? If not why not?*
- » *What risks do we take in cases where we have not done any planning beforehand?*
- » *Do we meet the same situations experienced in the game in real life?*
- » *How do we react to these?*

The trainer takes notes during this phase and makes a summary of what has been learned about planning a business and taking team risks.

Forming a Business Vision Statement: What Will the World Be like in 30 Years?

Time: 1 to 1.5 hours

Tools: A3 sheets, coloured pencils

Number of participants: 10-20

Objective: Mapping the future and potential challenges that need to be met.

How to use the game

Participants receive an A3 sheet and coloured markers.

The task is to draw how the business world will look like in 30 years' time.

Participants have 25-30 minutes for this task, after which they present their drawings and explain what they drew.



After the presentations is a phase with questions:

- » *How is our future outlined?*
- » *What challenges await us?*
- » *What values / skills will be needed to meet the challenges?*

The results of this round of discussions can be used in a next task, for example, what are the future challenges/ opportunities of our own businesses based on the future image we foresee?

Visits to Successful Business and Interviews with Employers

As the whole training was designed to offer a balanced approach as far as theory and practice of entrepreneurial skills development is concerned, during the second session best practice examples of small businesses set up and run by young people in the area were the focus of discussion and examination.

On the first day trainees drew up an interview questionnaire to be used during the on-site visits to the good practice examples of businesses. The next day of the second session participants paid on-site visits to four good practice businesses.

Internships/Apprenticeships

The introduction of internships or apprenticeship for new enterprises and for take-over and running of existing enterprises. All enterprise training activities for the Opposing Force project identified the need for appropriate types of apprenticeships or internships for new start-ups and for take-over of existing enterprises.

While it was outside the scope to the project to provide these opportunities, the need for them was well noted and communicated to local governance and business interests.



GENERATING IDEAS FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Providing employment opportunities is key to encouraging young adults to stay in their local community. Creating employment requires local agencies to work together and to collaborate, with a view to identifying the possible areas for development. Local agencies can implement initiatives which are supported of local enterprise development. Generating ideas for local enterprise development requires the engagement of all stakeholders.

HOW TO USE IT

Generating ideas for local enterprise development is an approach based on the social engagement of local stakeholders, enterprise, community, public representatives, agencies and young adults. Ideas can be generated in structured social engagement events which focus on the needs and potential for local enterprise development. The events are normally facilitated by an agency which organise and manages the programme and records the outcomes.

Within this interactive process numerous different practices can be used such as co-operation games, brain storming techniques, and groupwork. Central to the success of the process is:

- » *All stakeholder involvement*
- » *Stimulating debate and discussion*
- » *Recording the ideas that emerge*
- » *Testing ideas for their potential*
- » *Feedback and refinement of ideas*
- » *Developing implementation plans*
- » *Identifying the resources and funding options*
- » *Acting on the agreed plans.*

Young adults should be involved in all stages of the process. This will enhance buy-in and develop a sense of ownership and belonging to the initiatives. This involvement will assist young adults to realise they have the potential to effect local enterprise development, and they can be part of the development of new enterprises in their local area which will create employment opportunities into the future.

HOW IT WAS USED IN PRACTICE

Ideas Forum (Sweden)

The Labour Council in Bollnäs responded to local concerns about the 25% rate of unemployment among 16-24 year olds. The Council convened a youth conference called Idéforum. It was expected to be an inspirational and developmental day for the future of the municipality.

IDÉFORUM



Idéforum brought young people together with politicians, officials, businesses and trade unions to share their experiences and ideas about the future of Bollnäs. In total over 300 attended.

The Idéforum event was the first opportunity for young people from the municipality to become involved in such an event. The Idéforum is essentially a rotating discussion event over two intensive hours.



How the technique works:

- » *A set of 12 different questions is decided before the event based on concerns already expressed by young people in other fora.*
- » *The attendees are organised around small tables with fewer than 10 people each, mixed by sector and organisation.*
- » *A responsible person takes responsibility for one question for the list. That person starts with a table and explains why that particular question was selected, taking no more than one minute.*
- » *Then he/she asks the participants around the table to suggest answers to the questions for no more than 7 minutes.*
- » *A participant records notes responses on large paper sheets.*
- » *Then the two move to another table and repeat the exercise.*
- » *When each table has had an opportunity to discuss the 12 questions the recorder tacks the pages on the wall in 12 sets. Participants then move around the room reading the sets of answers to the questions.*
- » *The sets of answers are typed and posted on Municipality websites for public response.*
- » *Sustainable ideas are followed up by the Municipalities.*



'How Difficult Can it Be?' From Identification of Issues and Challenges

This is a brain-storming and solutions tool to help young people to think through possible situations in logical steps:

- Step 1:** Articulate issues as they experience it
- Step 2:** Brainstorm possible solutions
- Step 3:** Evaluate the solutions collectively
- Step 4:** Decide on actions.

The technique can be used to connect citizens of all ages within the local community. It is important to designate responsible for implementing the agreed tasks, otherwise it is easy to forget some of the ideas, and action will not materialise.

The technique can be used with quite young children as well as with adults. It is preferable to invite competent external facilitators both for objectivity and for trust-building.

Buzz Groups in Different Contexts (Sweden and Romania)

A description of the pilot model and activities:

Preparation

A resource person working with a young adult explains the model process. The young adult proposes idea(s) relevant to the model such as: activities in the local community, careers, networking, entrepreneurship and events. The idea(s) must be achievable with the local community. The resource person discusses the idea(s) and provides feedback with a view to assisting the young adult to develop and refine their idea(s).

The idea(s) is described by the young adult first orally and then in writing. The idea(s) description is then designed with a view to submitting the idea(s) to a 'Buzzgroup' for further consideration. The key elements of the idea(s) description for the 'Buzzgroup' is detailed in the text-box below.

Implementation

Resource persons, 3-5 persons, are invited to attend the "Buzzgroup" together with the young adult. The resource persons has a copy of the idea(s) description in advance of the meeting.

- a.** The "Buzzgroup" starts with a short introduction of those attending.
- b.** The idea(s) is presented by the young adult.
- c.** Each of the resource persons gives their feedback on the idea(s).
- d.** A general discussion takes place about the idea(s)
- e.** The discussion is summarised and actions are identified for next meeting, agreeing a date, time and venue.
- f.** The meeting is declared closed.
- g.** A memory note is compiled of the "Buzzgroup" discussion.

Follow-up

The same resource person (including other experts as required) are invited to the follow-up meetings to provide advice and feedback on the development of the young adults' idea(s).

Running the 'Buzzgroup'

- » The Buzzgroup lasts for a maximum of 1.5 hours. Same idea(s) discussed at the meeting may require follow-up meetings.
- » The resource person is invited to treat everything written and said related to the current Buzzgroup meeting as confidentiality.
- » The mission as a resource person is an honour and will not be financial compensated.



"BUZZGROUP": Young Adult Description of the Idea(s):

1. Who are you? Describe briefly, a few lines, your educational background, your family, your (if possible) work experience (also summer jobs, internships etc.).
2. Describe briefly, a few lines your idea/thought.
3. What do you hope the "Buzzgroup" can lead to?

Give this to the "Buzzgroup" responsible.

NOTE: Don't write or announce anything that you do not want to be disclosed or shared with others!



HOW IT WAS USED IN PRACTICE

Think and Talk project with Buzz Group (Sweden)

The Think and Talk project was jointly organised by four municipalities, named Ung i Tornedalen (Young in Tornedalen). The purpose was to encourage young people to become involved in local community development so that they might influence the direction of their own lives.

The target group was young people from 12-25 years of age.

Organising and Funding Events

Local employers and a number of individuals in the four municipalities pledged sufficient funds to implement sustainable ideas for the Think and Talk event.

The event itself was funded by the four municipalities, The Swedish Inheritance Fund and two County Councils. The themes selected for Think and Talk were:

- a. *attitudes of young people towards adults*
- b. *difficulties experiences by young migrants when trying to become integrated into local society*
- c. *fears and expectations about the future*
- d. *why young men choose to leave or stay*
- e. *why young women choose to leave or stay*
- f. *what disappoints young people about local administration.*

The process involved short presentation by young people to small groups of adult attendees.



The project was a formal, organised and structured way for young people to make their opinions known to important power-holders in the region with the expectation that action would follow. If an idea was interesting, follow-up meetings were arranged by the group.

The ideas and opinions on which the young participants agreed were discussed on local radio and in articles in local newspapers. Particular ideas were also explored and discussed with large organisations and enterprises. A process of networking has started with similar groups in other parts of Sweden by the participants.

A Youth Forum was established to liaise with the administration in each particular municipalities and an association was formed to apply for funding to implement the ideas of the young participants.



Mini Buzz Groups at Conferences or Large Meetings (Sweden)



Using Mini Buzz Groups at large gatherings such as conferences or AGMs is a more inter-active way of disseminating information and getting feedback than a poster presentation or a leaflet. It is also efficient as the audience is already convened by another organizer!

Mini buzz groups around small table - perhaps with coffee - on specific topics allow young people to present their ideas to interested adults in a comfortable environment and to get instant feedback.

Young people can utilise Mini buzz group events as a good networking tool events to make contact with interested activists who might be able to support their ideas in the future. If young people under 18 years are involved they need appropriate adult mentors and leaders involved in the process.

Buzz Groups with Mentors - Me and My Business Idea (Romania)

Based on results of our first training and discussions with the Opposing Force partnership we considered implementing the buzz-group model as a potential solution for addressing the needs of young adults from the region.

Buzz Group Activities

The first step was to form the buzz-groups by inviting "mentors" (resource persons) in order to work together with young adults willing to share their own ideas and to collaborate on implementing an idea. The group of mentors was formed by full-time staff of Soros Education Centre (SEC) and two temporary staff members very active in the start-up and business sector outside the SEC.



Three young adults were selected from the group who participated in the first Opposing Force training session, based on their motivation and interest. Several individual buzz-group sessions were organised for each of the three young adults. During the first sessions, the young adults presented their own ideas after which the mentors gave feedback on the ideas.

Further on the implementation of the idea was discussed in more detail (first actions to be taken, problems arisen, guidance needed etc.), and steps to be taken in the whole process by each member of the buzz-group (information to be gathered, further resource persons to be contacted, next buzz-group sessions to be organised).

In some of the cases, the idea owners realised that they either need further training in order to successfully implement their ideas, or that their ideas are not viable enough. So they reconsidered them and followed a different path. Regardless of the situation faced by the young adults, they were fully supported by the mentors of the buzz-groups.



SUMMARY LIST OF USEFUL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

DATA GATHERING TOOLS		
TOOL	USE	DESCRIPTION
Questionnaire (on-line)	Purpose	To gather general data/information on topics, issues, concerns within the community, area or region.
	How	Small to large sample groups, administered from a distance by email and URL link to survey, answer is statistically analysed at a later stage
	Need	ICT skills, ICT equipment, access to internet
Telephone interview	Purpose	To explore and gather in-depth information on topics issues, concerns within the community, area, region
	How	One-to-one interviews, these are recorded, the answers are analysed at a later stage
	Need	Telephones and recording device
Focus group	Purpose	To explore in-depth information on a specific topic
	How	Small group of participants (5-8 people) and facilitator, questions are asked about the topic, answers are recorded and analysed at a later stage
	Need	Meeting room, flip-chart, writing material

GROUPWORK TOOLS		
TOOL	USE	DESCRIPTION
Role play	Purpose	To creatively explore topics, situations, events in a safe environment, can be used for warm-ups and icebreakers
	How	Small or large group are guided through role play techniques and then engage in acting out a scenario
	Need	Large room or space, leader/trainer/facilitator, props, writing materials
'The Country inside'	Purpose	Facilitates inter-generational discussion of topics and concerns by means of folk story telling
	How	Groups invite guests (older members of the community) to tell their life story or experiences of life in the community
	Need	Meeting space and Facilitator
Debates	Purpose	Allows groups to focus on a topic and formulate their own opinions in a structured way
	How	Two or more teams of 3-5 people are organised, presented with the topic for debate, a chairperson facilitates the discussion.
	Need	Appropriate size meeting room, facilitator, writing materials

ENTERPRISE GAMES		
TOOL	USE	DESCRIPTION
'Me and my money'	Purpose	To explore knowledge of money and money management
	How	Small group of participants work through a set scenario; the group is facilitated by a trainer
	Need	Meeting room, trainer
'Jumping frogs'	Purpose	Learning about strategy and working with other
	How	The trainer sets the problem and the participants working in small groups need to work together to gain the solution
	Need	Meeting room, paper and trainer
'Visioning the Future'	Purpose	Exploring possible future enterprise needs
	How	A trainer works with a group and explore possible future work practices and job opportunities
	Need	Meeting room, writing material and trainer
Networking	Purpose	To introduce people and share ideas
	How	Stakeholder meetings facilitated by a trainer who uses games to introduce people
	Need	Meeting room and trainer







DEVELOPMENT TOOLS		
TOOL	USE	DESCRIPTION
Peer-to-peer Learning	Purpose	To enable the sharing of complex social knowledge and experiences in a safe environment
	How	A trained leader brings the small group through the social engagement process, with a view to stimulating inquiry and understanding into aspects of life
	Need	Trained leader, meeting room, writing materials
'Living library'	Purpose	To facilitate exploration of different topics by storytelling and reviews of books and other media
	How	Group invites guests to meet and tell their life experience stories, group in preparation review key issues
	Need	Meeting room, leader, guests
Public 'Slut' Walk	Purpose	Builds confidence in group by creating an event to occur in a public space
	How	Through group work a topic is explored, the group identify possible methods, after rehearsing the event the group uses a public place to engage in the activity
	Need	Trained facilitator, meeting space, props, writing materials
Public Speaking	Purpose	Build confidence in individual to put forward their voice and contribution in public space
	How	Group workshops build up public speaking confidence of participants, then organise a public speaking event
	Need	Trainer and meeting space



IDEA WORKSHOPS		
TOOL	USE	DESCRIPTION
Buzz Group	Purpose	To explore and advise on social enterprise ideas and develop business plan
	How	A participant works with a trainer regarding social enterprise ideas, each participant is then linked to a mentor from enterprise and the ideas are developed for testing.
	Need	Trainer, meeting room, volunteers from enterprise
Mini Buzz Group	Purpose	Explore and develop social enterprise ideas
	How	During a conference or seminar, a group of participants work with mentors from enterprise to discuss and develop their business ideas.
	Need	Trainer, meeting room, volunteer from enterprise
Ideas Forum	Purpose	To explore business ideas with municipalities, business and participants with a view to identifying local needs and opportunities
	How	A meeting of local stakeholders is organised, the ideas forum is facilitated and the ideas are record, a report is developed for future consideration
	Need	Large meeting space, writing materials, facilitator
Brainstorming	Purpose	Identify specific ideas around a topic
	How	Small group of participants are facilitated to explore ideas about a topic, a brief summary report is then developed.
	Need	Meeting room and writing materials

SOCIAL MEDIA		
TOOL	USE	DESCRIPTION
Facebook Group	Purpose	To develop a social media site to allow communication and sharing of ideas between a group
	How	Using Facebook develop a closed community site which only participants can access.
	Need	ICT equipment and access to Wi-Fi
Instagram	Purpose	Develop an informal group to promote their community visually
	How	Photographs and images of the local community are shared with other
	Need	ICT equipment, Wi-Fi
Twitter Group	Purpose	The sharing of local notices and events
	How	Establish a group to upload community notices
	Need	ICT equipment, Wi-Fi

TOP 36 TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

#	TOOL or TECHNIQUE	WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO USE IT	THE TOOL IN ACTION Contains both images from project activities (with permission) and from generic sources
1	Systematic online survey <i>Iceland</i>	An initial online survey among young people across small towns and rural areas is one useful way to identify key issues of concern to them before designing a project proposal. The sample should be representative of ages, profiles and regions.	
2	On-line/phone interview <i>Iceland</i>	Interviews are useful after analysis of survey results in further identifying key issues and in gaining in-depth understandings of attitudes, opinions and experiences when designing interventions for young people.	
3	Peer-to-peer learning <i>Iceland</i>	Peer-to-peer learning is a technique by which young people of broadly the same profile share information and knowledge, and discuss their life options and choices. It is a powerful tool to build competences in self-awareness and self-empowerment.	
4	Training for Peer-Learning Leaders <i>Iceland</i>	Leaders of peer education techniques need to be trained in its unique methodology. Leaders need to undergo the peer education process themselves so that they are sensitised to the likely challenges, risks, outcomes and follow-ups required. Topics of importance to young people participating in the Opposing Force project activities included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. gender stereotyping of both males and femalesb. societal expectations of sexual behaviourc. isolation and mental well-beingd. alcohol abusee. integration of new-comers.	 <small>Picture 6 Peer educators and students of UNU-GEST: United nations University Gender Equality Studies, in Nyheimar share experiences and views.</small>
5	Public walk <i>Iceland</i>	A public walk by young activists is an event designed to draw attention to what they perceive as an important social, environmental or political issue. The example here is of young women drawing attention to stereotyping of girls in modern Icelandic society, scheduled to coincide with the centenary of votes for women. Such a walk should be carefully planned so that participants are empowered and enhanced through participation.	 



6	'Living Library' - exploring sensitive topics through literature, book reviews and discussion <i>Iceland</i>	This technique can be used to explore issues of exclusion or difference in society by young people reading and discussing published literature on the topics, led by experienced adult facilitators. A "Living library" was held where the focus was on the difference in humans. Library guest choose human books of interest and discuss the speciality and background of the book, such as: Origin, age, disability, profession and sexuality. People gathered to talk to each other and ask questions about each other lives. The event was well sought.	 A poster for the Living library event
7	Inter-active games <i>Iceland, Sweden and Romania</i>	Interactive games can be used with any age group provided they are appropriate in both content and methodology. They can be used for individual self-empowerment and to explore complex strategy and planning tasks.	
8	Role play It is an effective technique on rehearsing real-life situations such as enterprise development - and in exploring complex and sensitive societal issues such as gender roles and racial stereotyping.	Role-play is a standard technique in youth work, schools and colleges. It is an effective technique on rehearsing real-life situations such as enterprise development - and in exploring complex and sensitive societal issues such as gender roles and racial stereotyping.	
9	Debates, presentations and public Speaking <i>Iceland Sweden</i>	Speech-making, debating and public performance are key competences for engagement in civic society and in running a successful business. Peer learning leaders, youth social activists and young entrepreneurs need such competences as they encourage rational thinking, argument structure and appropriate engagement with more powerful persons, systems and structures.	
10	Focus group method/ Group interview	A focus group, or group for a common interview, is selected on the basis of a shared interest and profile. The process used is carefully planned around structured discussion questions aimed at a particular output. The purpose is generally to inform future actions.	
11	'Me and my money' - interactive game to identify personal attitude to money management <i>Romania</i>	This interactive game is appropriate for young adults to become aware of their own attitudes to money management and to experience a range of differing attitudes among their peers. It is designed to make young entrepreneurs aware of the monetary risk involved in business.	
12	'Jumping frogs' - interactive strategy and risk-taking game <i>Romania</i>	This is an interactive team game to explore each participant's attitude to risk and strategic thinking, both as an individual and as a member of a team. Feedback is then given by observers. This is useful to build self-awareness when designing a business partnership or start-up with others.	

13	'Visioning the future' - planning exercise <i>Romania</i>	This is facilitated workshop methodology where young people of similar profile generate ideas for possible businesses or projects and receive feedback on them.	 
14	Brain-storming business ideas	This is facilitated workshop methodology where young people of similar profile generate ideas for possible businesses or projects and receive feedback on them.	
15	'My business idea for feedback'	This step is where individual young people sketch out their own business idea.	
16	Exercise in business proposal writing	This is a practical exercise in following a proposal planning template for a new business idea.	
17	Buzz groups with business mentors	This is the stage of business planning after a draft proposal has been written to a standard template. The proposer works through the proposal with an expert mentor who provides developmental feedback.	
18	Follow-up meeting with young entrepreneur <i>Sweden Romania</i>	Enterprise development training has several steps or phases. One important phase is following up young starter entrepreneurs with their mentors to check how well things are going, what challenges are being met, and how any problems might be addressed. It is good for young people with business ideas to meet more experienced entrepreneurs and to learn the reality of running your own business or taking over an existing business.	
19	Ideas Forum <i>Sweden</i>	An Ideas Forum can be organised on several topics. A formal ideas forum for a Municipality is usually facilitated by the local administration and supported by businesses, civic leaders and NGOs. The process involves intensive workshops, presentations and feedback.	 







20	Rotating ideas method <i>Sweden</i>	The Rotating Ideas method is a variation on the Ideas Forum. The variation is that the ideas are presented to small groups using the BUZZ Group method.	
21	Mini buzz groups at conferences or large meetings <i>Sweden</i>	Using Mini Buzz Groups at large gatherings such as conferences or AGMs is a more inter-active way of disseminating information and getting feedback than a poster presentation or a leaflet. It is also efficient as the audience is already convened by another organiser! Mini buzz groups around small table - perhaps with coffee - on specific topics allow young people to present their ideas to interested adults in a comfortable environment and to get instant feedback. They are also good networking events for young people to make contact with interested activists who might be able to support their ideas in the future. If young people under 18 years are involved they need appropriate adult mentors and leaders involved in the process.	
22	Radio broadcasts <i>Iceland</i>	In the Opposing Force project in Iceland explored the use of social media options in collaboration with students in media studies at the local VET college. The outcome was a specific radio programme called 'Ung rodd Young Voice'. A well supervised radio slot for and by young people facilitates skills development across a range of areas and can be a very powerful tool when appropriately designed for specific ages and target groups.	 <i>Ung Rödd (Young Voice logo)</i> 
23	Newspaper articles <i>Iceland</i>	Producing newspaper articles to publishable quality is a significant transversal competence for young people. It also develops self-awareness and civic responsibility skills. It is a useful online tool to maintain youth groups at a distance from each other in rural areas and to combat isolation.	
24	Networking with large organisations and enterprises	Trying to combat lack of employment opportunities- or self-employment opportunities -in rural areas will invariably involve liaison with local enterprises and employers. They can provide experienced mentors as well as internship and apprentice opportunities. All Opposing Force enterprise development activities included local employers and business leaders.	  

25	Liaison with the municipality <i>Iceland Sweden</i>	The level of liaison with local governance and administration structures will depend on the target age group and profiles of young people. Younger age groups are more likely to need knowledge and understanding of 'how things work'. Older age groups will invariably be interested in participating in local governance and in influencing policy and provision that impact on them. This level of involvement requires considerable phased capacity building among young people as well as an attitudinal shifts among older political leaders and administrators. Civic and political leadership training may be required.	 
26	My community - countryside movements, norms and cash <i>Sweden</i>	Involving adults of any age in rural community development is a complex process in any country. Encouraging young people to be actively involved is also challenging. The approach in Sweden is to take an integrated approach to rural community development which involves the personal, the collective and the economic. Knowing that activism can lead to cash investment in an area with good development ideas is a powerful motivator for involvement.	
27	Youth platform <i>Sweden</i>		
28	'Four gates' - methodology to integrate young migrants and unaccompanied minors <i>Sweden</i>	Movement of people across geographic areas for political, personal or economic reasons is not a new phenomenon. However, when movement inward is significant in numbers it can challenge traditional communities on many levels. It is often an interface of opposing forces. Communities with large numbers of young new-comers need tools and techniques to enable understandings on all sides. The 'Four gates' tool is an awareness-raising and action-oriented approach to managing smooth transitions into small communities both for local residents and for the new residents. It involves story-telling and role-play techniques, best facilitated by external professionals.	



29	'How difficult can it be? From identification of the problem to possible solutions' <i>Sweden</i>	<p>This is a brain-storming and solutions exercise to help young people to think through a problem in logical steps:</p> <p>Step 1: articulate a problem as they experience it Step 2: brainstorm possible solutions Step 3: evaluate the solutions collectively Step 4: decide on actions.</p> <p>The technique can be used with quite young children as well as with adults.</p> <p>It is preferable to invite competent external facilitators both for objectivity and for trust-building.</p>	
30	'The country inside' - folk theatre and story-telling to explore sensitive topics <i>Sweden</i>	<p>Young people in any society are likely to experience role-conflict within family structure, in communities and in society as a whole. Rural areas and small towns may pose particular challenges around inter-generational expectations, religious restrictions, norms for personal behaviours and public mores for those who choose to stay.</p> <p>In particular it may be difficult to deviate from norms of sexual identity and accepted life-styles. Using role-play and theatre as tools to address such issues can be effective if competent external facilitators are involved.</p>	 
31	'The cash is here' - practice applying for state funding for projects <i>Sweden</i>	<p>Applying for funding from state or commercial sources is a complex task which requires considerable training and capacity building.</p> <p>The Opposing Force project included formal training in such skills for both individuals and groups.</p> <p>External expertise is essential in such training.</p>	
32	Facebook groups <i>Iceland</i>	<p>The use of 'standard' social media will be inevitable in youth leadership training, and in community development.</p> <p>Creating a focused and 'protected' facebook group, or equivalent, can be an efficient and empowering tool for any age group, provided the parameters are agreed and adhered to.</p>	
33	Making good use of national rural development platforms	<p>Partner countries in the Opposing Force project have very different structures for rural development, for youth development and for supporting new enterprises. All countries and areas undertaking similar activities will invariably work with what exists already.</p> <p>Resource available will vary considerably</p>	 

34	Internships/ Apprenticeships for new enterprises and for take-over and running of existing enterprises Suggested by young adults in Iceland, Sweden and Romania	<p>All enterprise training activities for the Opposing Force project identified the need for appropriate types of apprenticeships or internships for new start-ups and for take-over of existing enterprises.</p> <p>While it was outside the scope to the project to provide these opportunities, the need for them was well flagged with local governance and business interests.</p>	 
35	Enterprise study visits <i>Romania</i>	<p>The practical aspects of business start-up theory if often best addressed through study visits to successful enterprises and through interviews with owners.</p>	
36	Distance/online learning clusters in local Learning Centres Suggested by young people in Iceland, Sweden and Romania	<p>The rationale for the Opposing Force project included existing evidence that one of the main forces drawing young people away from rural areas and small towns is to attend university or specialist training elsewhere.</p> <p>One way to oppose this force for those who choose to stay and to continue family businesses or to start their own business is to bring specific education and training to them in their local learning centres.</p> <p>While economies of scale and real costs would prohibit physical outreach across many dispersed rural areas, there is no good reason why local Learning Centres could not facilitate online learning for both individuals and clusters, though the participants themselves are likely to pay for it. This was suggested by young adults in all partner countries.</p>	





PART 4: REFLECTIONS
AND LEARNING

REFLECTIONS AND LEARNING

Did the Opposing Force Project ask the right questions?

The main aim of the Opposing Force project was to design and test tools and techniques for the following:

- » *youth leadership skills to engage in local democratic and development processes,*
- » *enterprise development and enterprise succession/take-over,*
- » *wider usage of social media for mutual support,*
- » *increased flexible access to higher education and training locally, so that young people who choose to stay, work and participate in civic life can do so.*

The desired impact of the project and its outputs was that young adults will find more sustainable social, political and economic support from the surrounding community so that they can choose to stay, live and work locally.

Activities centred on getting answers to the following questions:

- » **Question 1:** *How can the unemployment levels of young people in rural areas be reduced by enterprise training and providing supports to start a new business or to take over an existing business?*
- » **Question 2:** *How can training and education opportunities be brought out to rural areas so that young people which choose to stay can have access to them?*
- » **Question 3:** *Is there a role for social media in addressing the main challenges faced by young adults who wish to stay, live, and work in their local area?*

It is fair to say that the questions had different significance and priority in the different countries and among different age groups.

For young adults from 18 to 30 years of age enterprise training and access to locally delivered higher education, or at least using learning centres for distance learning clusters, was a top priority. Depending on the context, this age group was also concerned about active involvement in decision-making in their local areas which impacted on their options to stay or to leave.

For younger people from 14-18 years of age the top priorities were more around inter-generational gaps regarding expectations and life-styles and gender roles. The concerns of young migrants and unaccompanied minors were referred to in two instances but not progressed within the questions.

There was no great interest among the young adults in exploring the role of social media, possibly because they were familiar with it already. But in two instances the value of Facebook Groups was evident and two such groups were established.

What Worked Well

What worked well was the approach that any intervention, tool or technique should be specifically tailored to the local situation and what would work there. Local development activists and adult educators are best placed to know what will be 'culturally acceptable' locally and what would be unacceptable. Formal training in enterprise development skills is essential to support young entrepreneurs to start a business in their local area or to take over an existing one. Young adults had an opportunity to get involved in processes that assisted them to develop their own solution to issues and concerns regarding, education, training, enterprise and self-development.

Based on the feedback from young adults participants in the workshops it is also clear that the training and engagement tools and techniques were very successful for groupwork and workshops. The participants considered the tools and techniques facilities knowledge sharing and social interaction. Through the groupwork process the young adults had time to explore in-depth their issues and concerns and ideas. This assisting them to map out future plans.

It is clear that there was an identified need for enterprise training and for access to business mentors, given the high unemployment rates and high immigration rates. Where enterprise training was provided it seems to have been very successful and sustainable for now. How it is to continue after the life of the project is unknown.

The project showed in some instances, there is likely to be greater involvement of young adults in local administration and policy-making through youth platforms and fora. How well these tools will survive in the long-term will depend on the local circumstances, local leadership and resources allocated to them.

What Worked Less Well

It is clear that providing further and higher education opportunities locally was beyond the scope of the Opposing Force project. While some countries already have good infrastructure and long-standing provision for distance and online learning some do not. It would have been interesting to have convened a forum with universities and young adults to explore tools and techniques for flexible delivery in cases where it does not already exist. This is something the individual partners are exploring for future work.

Ways need to be developed to bridge the gap in social capital and capacity-building for members of the partnership/ project Youth workers and development organisations depending on the resources and funding available to them locally, nationally and internationally. Small organisations can do very good work in a local area, as evidenced in the Romania Opposing Force activities. It seems very different in Sweden where there are already several umbrella organisations, established networks and NGOs which have built capacity over time. These differences need to be taken into account when considering the impact of activities.

The Buzz Group method demonstrated some potential business successes, but more funding would be required to keep the method going and to expand it to a wider community of young people. It was also clear that a project cannot provide employment, internships or apprenticeships. But it would have been good to make more progress on this.



It is now clear that there was no need for a full question about the role of social media. But finding this out was useful. Young people in rural areas in the partner countries already seem to have great knowledge of, and are comfortable with, social media. In that respect there seems to be an equality with young people from urban areas. It was important for the project team to understand that young adults use social media on a daily basis and it is a natural communication tool for them.

Some Areas for Future Consideration

Social Isolation

The results from the Icelandic implementation of the Opposing Force Project show how teenagers and young adults in rural areas can feel disconnected from their local society, particularly with regard to societal expectations about life-styles. Using age-appropriate activities such as theatre, library readings and public walks can be useful in exploring these 'disconnections' and in bringing them to the attention of older adults and those in positions of authority.

Generation Gap

There is a 'connection loss' or a 'generation gap' between young adults and the older adults. The younger adults do not feel a demand for their participation or function in conventional social life, or in the social structure within the community. Young adults have created their own social life which may not be linked into the community norms or mores: this is normal in teenage years. Due to lack of engagement or encouragement to get involved young adults may feel they have a limited role as participants or developers of the society they live in.

Belonging and Involvement

The importance of belonging and meaningfulness in the context of a satisfying life, and its relationship with the drain of young people cannot be underestimated. For people to want to live in a particular place there has to be a sense of coherence and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1996). If one does not have this, it is unlikely that one has deep roots or responsibility towards that place or society. Therefore, we think this is necessary information and a message for those managing municipalities and organisation that there has to be a role developed with consultation for young adults as well as older members of society.

Knowing How Local Governance Works

It is also important to improve the flow and access to information about possibilities and opportunities available for young adults. According to our research young people can form varying ideas about how society works and what is expected of them: this is normal in all societies. Those ideas seem to be based on relatively low levels of involvement in communal activities, and perhaps a lack of structured opportunities locally through voluntary organisations. To stop the drain of young adults it might help if there was better structured and age-appropriate access to information for young people to form their own views and opinions of society. One way to achieve this is to use the social media tools already being used by young people, though a reliance on social media for this purpose could be risky.

Employment Opportunities

In the discussion about employment opportunities and the possibility to take over and run a local enterprise, there is also a noticeable lack of knowledge and opportunities. There is

a sense that opportunities are confined to certain privileged groups based on family ties, networks and economic connections. Young adults from families with high social capital and cultural capital can be more advantaged and gain more opportunities than others. Again, this is normal in most societies. The challenge is to lessen the gap between young adults who have access to opportunities and those who do not through positive discrimination and strategic allocation of resources.

Social Barriers to Business Start-up

In general, social barriers to starting up your own business were identified by participants as lack of access to finance, family reputation, lack of social support, lack of education and training, lack of business advice and opportunities. Young people experience low levels of motivation with regard to enterprise start-up. To experience that you can be involved, can participate and can contribute to your local society makes you feel like you belong (Minkler and Wallerstein 2005, in Community organizing and community building for health), helps you to find meaning and strength in life (Antonovsky 1987) and engage in local communities where supports were not accessible, visible, or not available. For young people already in the labour market there seem to be more positive attitude to running a local enterprise in their rural area. However, for young unemployed people there are additional barriers to overcome. They also identify education as a key factor to enable self-employment and job creation.

Reasons for Migration: Access to Higher Education

It is obvious that one of the main motivations for migration of young adults from rural areas is to acquire higher education qualifications.

While it is not always possible to locate university outreach campuses in all regions, there are options for distance and e-learning facilitated by local education centres and colleges.

Tips for Users of Tools and Techniques

- a. *As with any task, there are suitable tools and techniques. So, as with any good worker, it is always best to use the most suitable tool, even if it is an old, tried-and-tested one! The main advice is to use the tool that is fit-for-purpose in the local context. Some activities are suitable in a given cultural context, others are not.*
- b. *Inter-active tools and techniques should be used by competent trainers/facilitators who are comfortable in using them.*
- c. *The likely impact of any tool or technique on individual young people should be considered carefully in advance, particularly where the topics may be sensitive.*
- d. *Involving older adults with high positions as mentors, counsellors, BUZZ group participants etc. is always a good idea, provided they are well selected and can adhere to appropriate confidentiality guidelines.*
- e. *Tools and techniques need to be age-appropriate. It might not always be good to mix very young people with 18-30 year olds.*
- f. *Use venues that are appropriate to the tool or technique, regarding access, privacy, and space.*
- g. *Plan how to follow-up from an activity. If expectations are raised, then the organisers should meet those expectations.*
- h. *Always evaluate and debrief appropriately among participants and among organisers.*





**PART 5: ABOUT THE
PROJECT PARTNERS**



The project group gathered outside the Parliament Building with Senator Gerard Craughwell during a meeting in Ireland March 2015. **Photo:** Tommy Clancy

THE PROJECT PARTNERS

Partner	Main Actives	Location	Role in Project
Hälsingeutbildning	Education and Training Provider	Sweden	* Coordinator * Participant Organisation * Research
Hela Sverige ska leva (Swedish Village Action Movement)	Community Education	Sweden	* Participant Organisation * Research
Teachers' Union of Ireland	Trade Union, Social Partner	Ireland	* Evaluation * Research
Soros Educational Centre Foundation Education Centre Foundation (SEC)	Education and Training Provider	Romania	Participant Organisation
Nyheimar Knowledge Centre (NK)	Education and Training	Iceland	Participant Organisation
Landsbyggdín Lifi (LBL)	Community Development	Iceland	Participant Organisation

THE PARTNERS' ACTIVITIES AND LOCATIONS

Partners in Sweden

Hälsingeutbildnings ekonomiska förening (HUTB) is a collaboration between the six municipalities in the county of Hälsingland (Ljusdal, Ovanåker, Bollnäs, Hudiksvall, Söderhamn, Nordanstig). In HUTB the six municipalities co-operate around education and training on various levels of adult education and vocational training for adults. The municipalities within HUTB organise education and vocational training for about 5,000 students a year. HUTB makes it possible for the six municipalities to offer a broad spectrum of courses that each municipality by itself would be unable to offer due to financial reasons. The cooperation also focuses on R&D about for example distance learning using ICT technology and appropriate pedagogical methods. HUTB was established in 1997.



Hela Sverige ska leva (The Swedish Village Action Movement) is an NGO on national level. HSSL support local development towards a sustainable society. We stimulate co-operation, advice and support local groups, and furnish them with tools to help them succeed in working with local development. Our objective is also to influence public opinion and rural policies - in order for all Sweden to live.

The Swedish Village Action Movement consists of about 5,000 village action groups, and the number continues to increase. We estimate that roughly 100,000 individuals are involved directly in village action groups and that their work affects three million people - a third of the Swedish population. We also have 48 member organisations supporting our work.

The mission of Hela Sverige ska leva is to support local development towards a sustainable society. We stimulate co-operation, advice and support local groups, and furnish them with tools to help them succeed in working with local development. Our objective is also to influence public opinion and rural policies - in order for all Sweden to live!

Hela Sverige ska leva co-operates internationally. We are one of the driving forces in **Hela Norden ska leva ("All North shall live")**, as well as a part of the **Village Action Movement** in Europe, and we collaborate with European rural networks, as ERCA, PREPARE and ELARD, for example. We will implement the result from the first **European Rural Parliament**, which was held in November 2013 in Brussels.



Hälsinge Utbildning (HALSINGEUTBILDNING) and Centrum för flexibelt lärande (Centre for Flexible Learning) in Söderhamn

Area Profile: Forestry and fishing industries have always been central to the economy of the Municipality and still accounts for circa 24% of employment. Manufacturing engineering is currently a significant sector especially the manufacture of hand tools and heavy vehicle trailers.



Unemployment rates among 16-25 year olds is high at 25%. Many new-comers are among the highest numbers of unemployed.



Municipality: local politicians, local officials, and business representatives - with young people under 25

Partners in Iceland

Nyheimar Knowledge Centre was established as an umbrella organization for various institutions and agencies working in education, research, innovation and culture. Its central role is to facilitate co-operation between the various sectors within and as a part of the Municipality of Hornafjörður.



One of its main aims is to co-operate with the society as a whole in Hornafjörður, not only within the region but also including neighbouring rural areas.

Another vital objective is to promote closer co-operation of individuals, businesses, organisations and public entities with a special emphasis on the integration of culture, education, innovation, and research. The Centre's ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life of people in rural areas.

Landsbyggðin lifir - LBL, is a civil organisation of people in Iceland which wants to stimulate and strengthen the population throughout the country. Emphasis is placed on linking people together and helping each other to form a strong umbrella, a forum for individuals and civil groups, which are committed to strengthening and enhancing their local community and thus contribute to the development of regional harmony throughout the country both economically and culturally. Landsbyggðin lifir - LBL is part of Hela Norden ska leva and looks to other civil organisations in Europe for good work and ideas for rural development. Landsbyggðin lifir is working on a national development policy as well as a youth project, with the aim of looking into what rural areas must have for young people to want to live there, basic service, employment opportunities and their responsibility in that future.



Location: South East and coastal Iceland

Area profile: South East Iceland is world famous for its glacial landscapes, skylines, and unique topography which attract tourists, scholars and thrill-seekers. Tourism and the craft industry are economically important as well as sea fishing and fish processing.

Partners in Romania

Soros Educational Centre Foundation (SEC)

The mission of the Soros Educational Centre Foundation (SEC) is to promote open society and develop the region through education-related services and projects. SEC offers non-formal courses and training for various target groups, including SMEs, local NGOs, involving disadvantaged members of the community too.



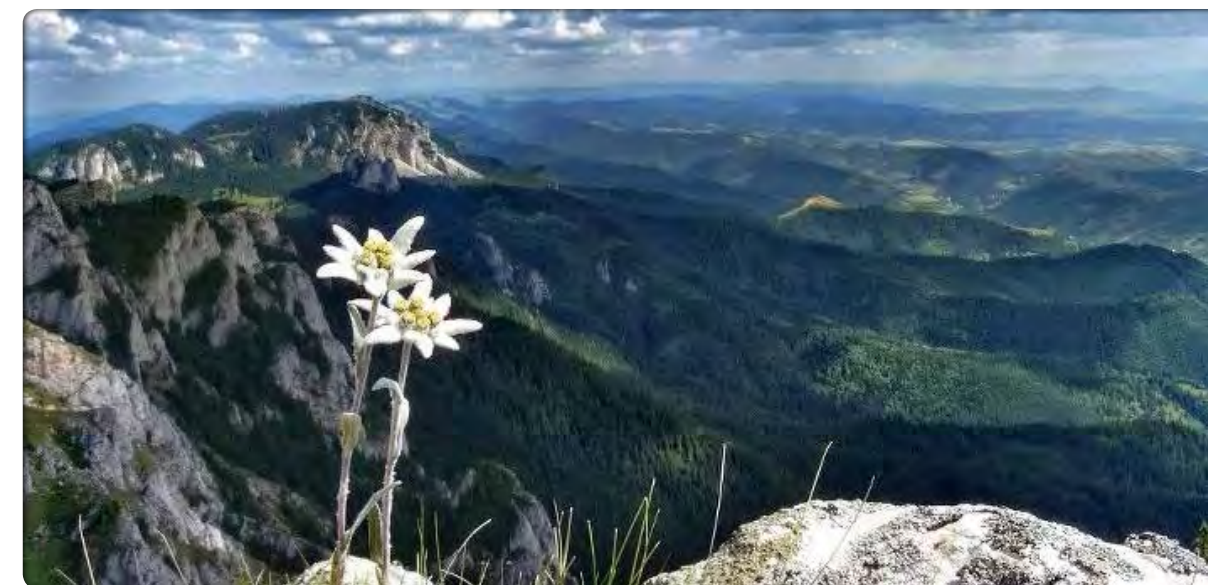
As our region is an economically less developed area of Europe, development and empowerment of small communities must be facilitated through lifelong learning and transnational exchange of experience. Therefore, for more than ten years, we have been participating at various Grundtvig, Leonardo and Transversal lifelong learning projects that aim of development of local communities. Highly qualified AE professionals (full time staff 6, part time staff 15), experienced in European Project management take part in project activities.

Location: Harghita County, Transylvania, Romania

Area profile: Harghita County is located in north-central Romania. It is a mountainous area of scenic beauty. The census of 2011 show that the population is circa 302,432 with density of 46 persons per square kilometre. The population is predominantly of Hungarian origin - 85%, with Romanian constituting 12.9% and Roma and others forming the remaining 1.76%. It is an area of relatively high unemployment and low wealth. Young people tend to leave the County and Romania itself to work and live elsewhere.



Consiliul Județean Harghita
Harghita Megye Tanácsa
Harghita County Council



Partner in Ireland

Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)

The TUI is a recognised trade union which represents the interests of over 15,000 teachers, lecturers and researchers who work in post-primary education and training sectors in Ireland. TUI members also work in Further Education, Higher Education, Adult Education, Secondary schools, Vocational Education, Youthreach and a variety of other specialised centres.

TUI engages in direct negotiations with government on the terms and conditions of employment of teachers, lecturers and researchers. TUI is party with government and other state agencies to collective agreements relating to the working practices of members.



TUI engages collaborative projects with other trade unions in Ireland, Europe and internationally. TUI is an affiliated member of The Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the European Trade Union Council, and Education International.

TUI engages in the policy development of the Department of Education and Skills, the Teaching Council, The Higher Education Authority, Institutes of Technology Ireland, Education and Training Boards, SOLAS and numerous other education and training bodies in Ireland.

TUI contributes to the development of education policy by engaging in conferences, seminars and networking events with government, European Commission, OECD, UNESCO, ILO, and other bodies.

TUI has expertise in a wide range of education research and policy areas and organises continuous professional development conferences and seminars for members. TUI members are qualified teachers and lecturers who voluntarily contribute to the activities of the union in the greater interests of education, students, learners, citizens and society.



What Each Partner Did Within the Opposing Force Project

The project started with four common, thematic issues to be addressed, as follows:

1. *Reducing unemployment levels of young people who wish to stay in their rural area by providing enterprise training and capacity building to start their own business or to take over an existing business.*
2. *Bringing education and training opportunities to local areas to prevent the drain of young people to cities.*
3. *Increasing the capacity of young people to participate in local development, in local governance and in shaping attitudes to social mores in general and to gender stereotyping in particular.*
4. *Exploring the potential role of social media in supporting young people in rural areas.*

Initial fieldwork in each country indicated that there was little enthusiasm among young people to explore the role of social media as a starting point for activities. Young adults seemed more keenly interested in enterprise development and in wider involvement in civic and social society in their areas. They were also concerned about the inter-generational gap and assumptions about their own roles in traditional society.

While the older age group was interested in easier access to higher education through local delivery, or through distance learning clusters in local Learning Centres, it was outside the remit of the project to make this happen. However, the need has been well noted and it is likely that flexible access to training to meet local needs will be actively explored in the immediate future.

There was both commonality and localisation because each of the three partners responded to the identified needs of their local areas and the different age groups concerned. The Opposing Force partners followed the logic of those needs in the activities they choose to pursue.

Project Activities of Each Partner

ROMANIA

Soros Educational Centre Foundation Education Centre Foundation (SEC)

- » *Focus groups with young adults to identify themes and topics*
- » *Pilot projects to explore the main project questions*
- » *Consulted young adults from 17-27 interested in starting their own enterprise or taking over an existing business.*
- » *Developed two training programmes on enterprise skills for young adults*
- » *Organised networking events*
- » *Organised roundtable meeting with enterprise and stakeholders*
- » *Organised workplace visits*
- » *Organised and ran Buzz groups*



SWEDEN

Hälsingeutbildnings ekonomiska förening (HUTB)

- » Interviews with young adults
- » Focus groups with young adults to identify themes and topics
- » Pilot projects to explore the main project questions
- » Young adults' events and seminars relating to enterprise and business
- » Developed training programmes on enterprise skills for young adults
- » Organised networking events
- » Organised meetings with stakeholders and politicians
- » Organised and ran Buzz groups

Hela Sverige ska leva (Swedish Village Action Movement)

- » Focus groups with young adults to identify themes and topics
- » Pilot projects to explore the main project questions
- » Participated in events for young adults
- » Think and Talk Buzz Group
- » Participated in Rural Parliament

ICELAND

Nyheimar

- » Systematic survey of young people in small towns and rural areas in North and West Iceland.
- » Interviews with 6 individuals
- » Interviews with 4 groups
- » Training programmes exploring Leadership Skills for young people on Youth Councils, 42 young people aged 13 to 20 participated
- » Participated in a conference and video about the training methods
- » Articles published about the project
- » Additional activities and events as a result of the 2 training programmes
- » Seminar in Nyheimar on rural youth and emigration
- » Social media site - Young Voice
- » Website: www.ungrodd.fas.ic
- » Public 'slut' walk to draw attention to gender stereotyping of girls on the 100th anniversary of votes for women
- » Gay community established
- » Feminist community established
- » Living Library of diversity literature event

Landsbyggðin lifir - LBL

- » Carried out interviews with young adults
- » Carried out survey of young adults
- » Young people for 16 -19 as peer learners
- » Young adults 13-20 and members of Youth Councils, for leadership training towards political activism and lobbying

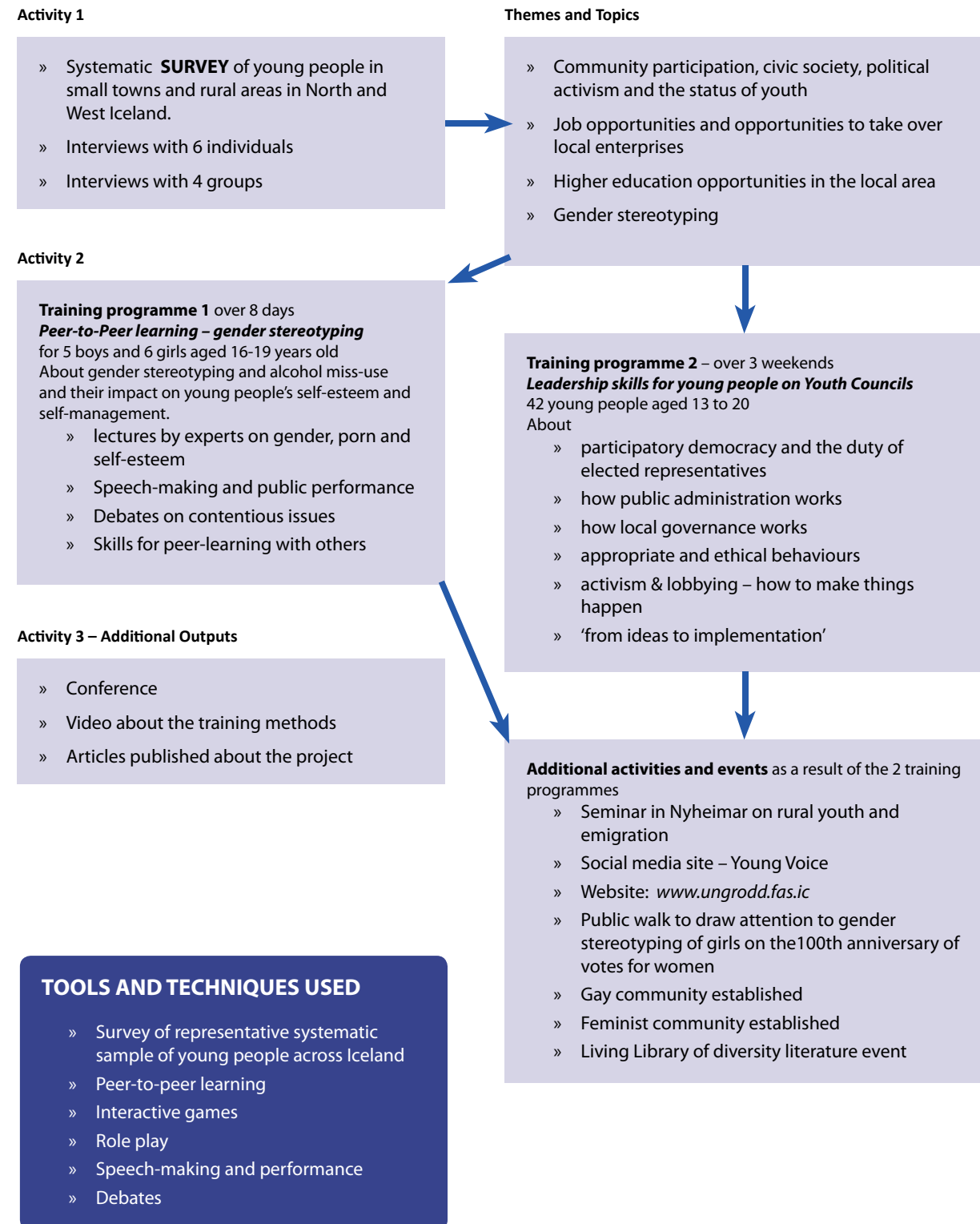
IRELAND

Teachers' Union of Ireland

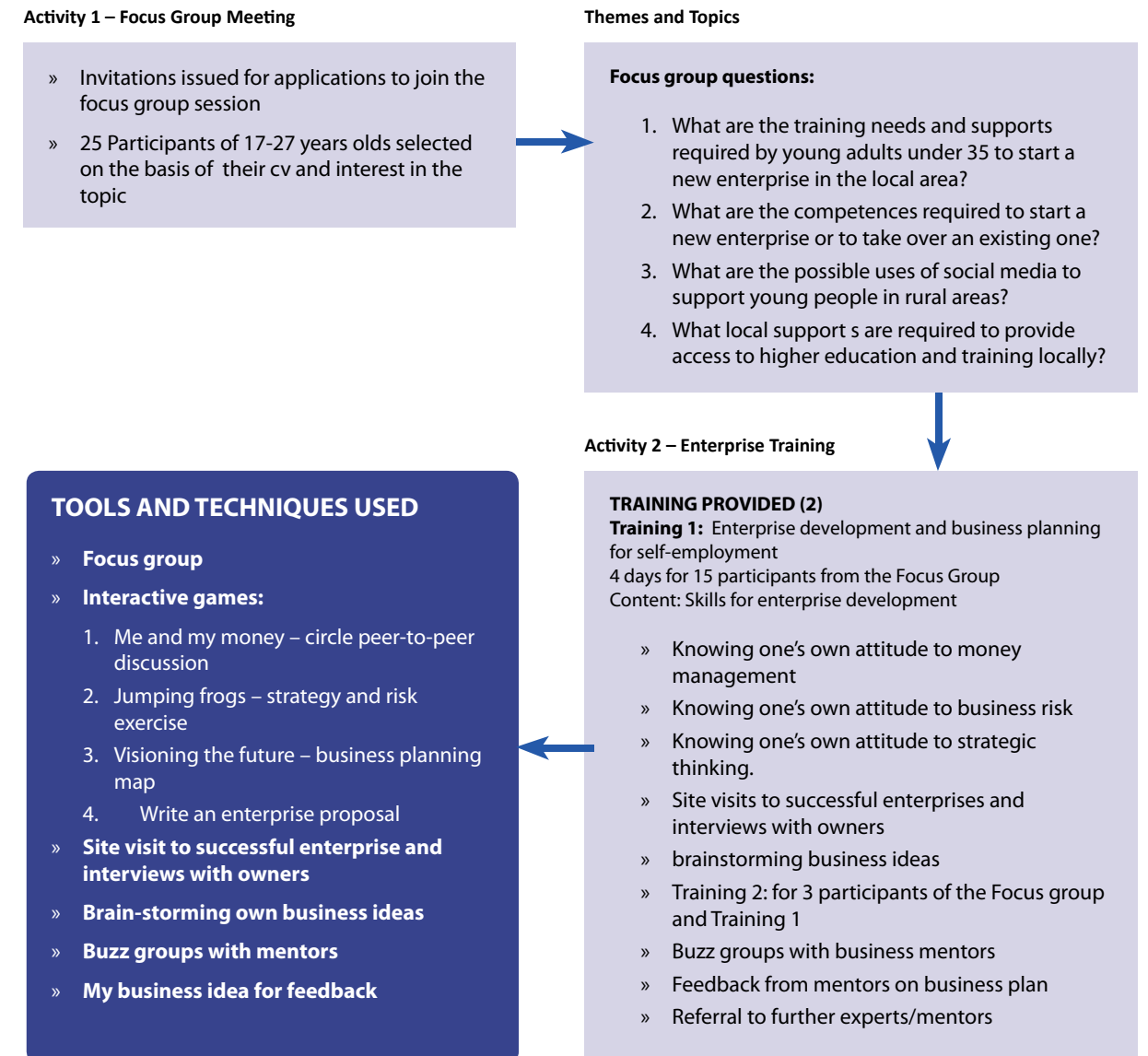
- » Advised on research approach
- » Advised on ethics and safety when working with young adults
- » Advised on Data Protection requirements
- » Developed evaluation template
- » Advised on reports and handbook development
- » Advised on dissemination approach
- » Assisted in the organisation and management of meetings
- » Assistant in the record keeping of meetings
- » Advised on effective running of meetings



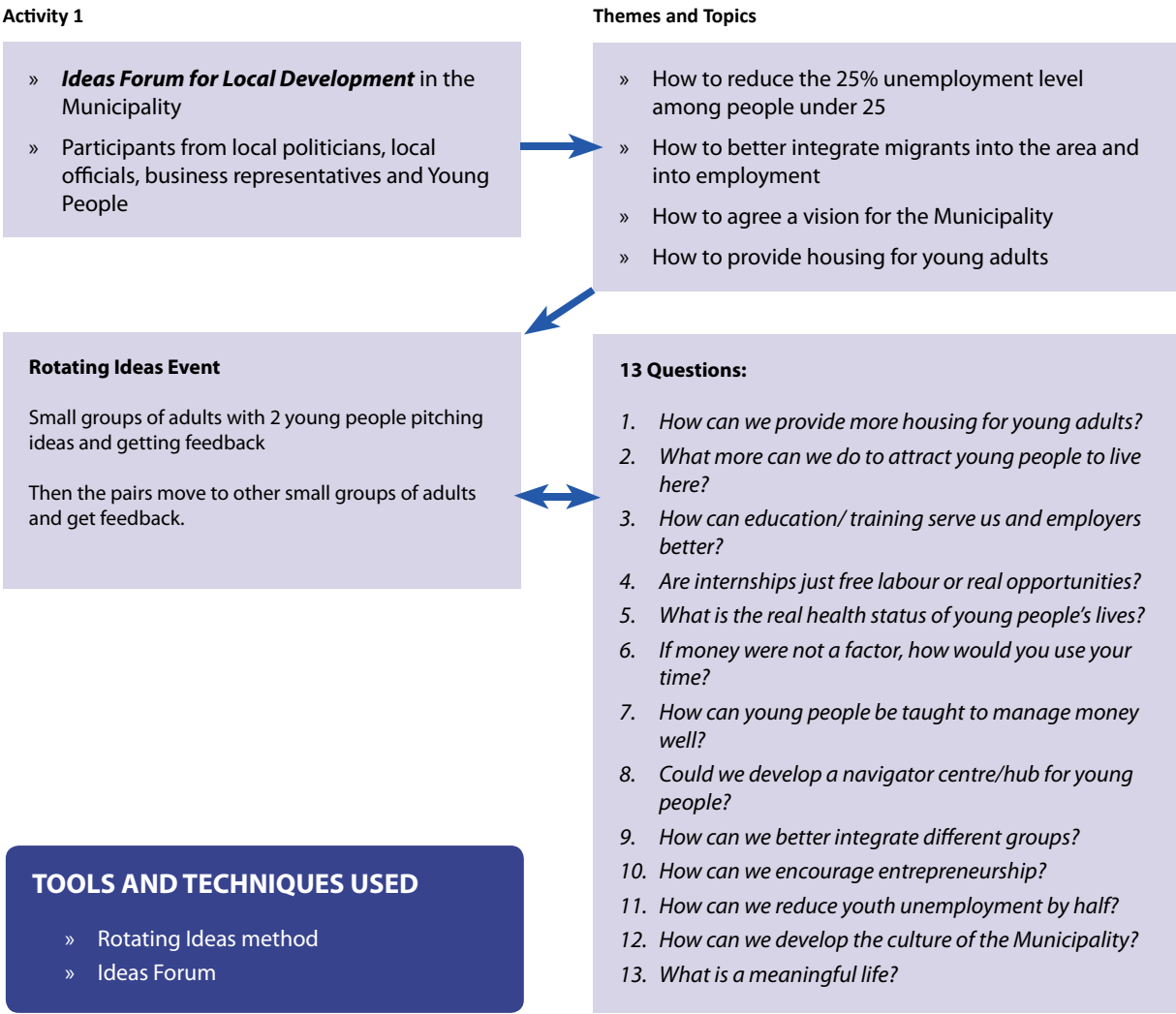
ICELAND: PROJECT ACTIVITIES, THEMES AND TOPICS, TOOLS & TECHNIQUES USED



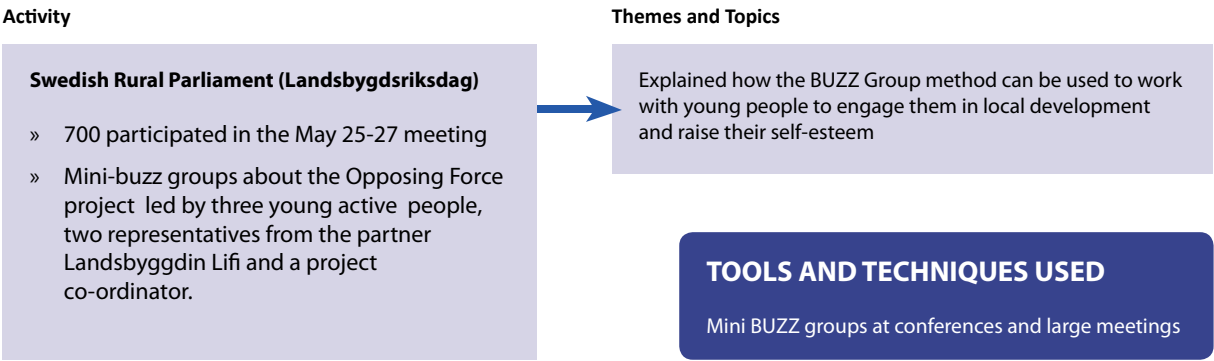
ROMANIA: PROJECT ACTIVITIES, THEMES AND TOPICS



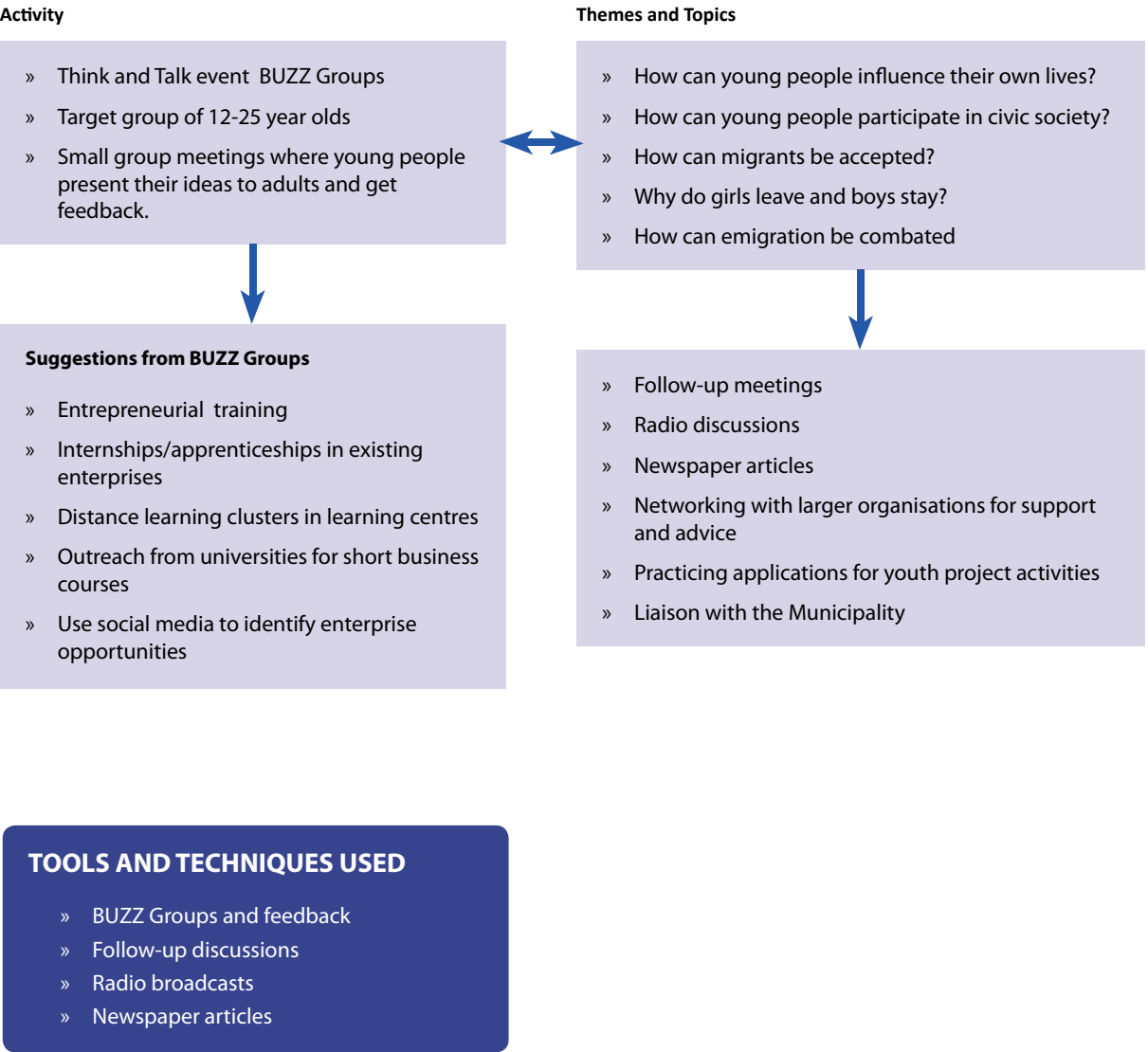
SWEDEN 1 – BOLLNAS:
PROJECT ACTIVITIES, THEMES AND TOPICS



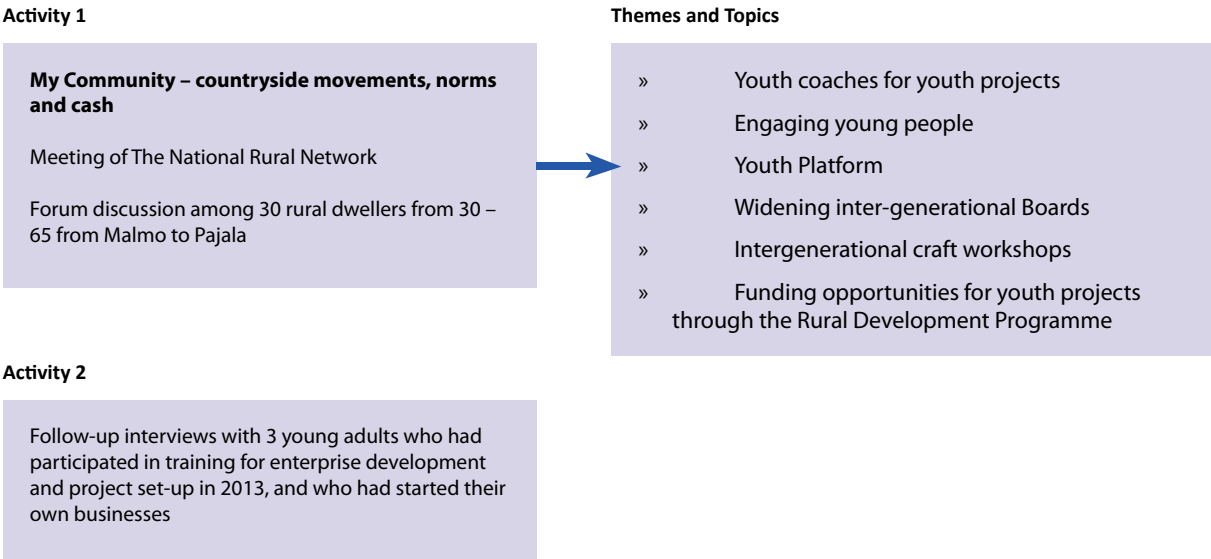
SWEDEN 2 – VISBY, GOTLAND:
PROJECT ACTIVITIES, THEMES AND TOPICS



SWEDEN 3 – TORNEDALEN:
PROJECT ACTIVITIES, THEMES AND TOPICS



SWEDEN 4 – HUDIKSVALL:
PROJECT ACTIVITIES, THEMES AND TOPICS



TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES USED

- » Youth Platform
- » **‘Four gates’** to engage young migrant people and unaccompanied minors
- » Ideas generation methodology – **How difficult can it be? From problem identification to solutions**
 - » The country inside- folk theatre performance and story-telling on sensitive topics such as gender identity in traditional rural areas and involving local young people
 - » **The cash is here!** – practice applying for state funding
 - » New Facebook group formed

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Dr. Lotta Svensson Hälsingeutbildning ekonomiska förening (HUTB)
Ms. Lena Husen Hälsingeutbildning ekonomiska förening (HUTB)
Ms. Maj-Lis Persson Gladh Hälsingeutbildning ekonomiska förening (HUTB)
Ms. Josefin Heed..... Hela Sverige ska leva (HSSL)
Staffan Bond Former General Manager
Claes Becklin Project Coordinator
Josefin Heed Coordinator
Isabelle Axelsson Rapporteur
Sofie Skalstad Rapporteur
Anna Toumas..... Project Manager Ung i Tornedalen

Romania

Ms. Szofia Pál Fundatia Centrul Educational Soros (SEC)

Iceland

Mr. Davíð Arnar Stefánsson Thekkingarsetrid Nyheimar (NEC)
Ms. Margrét Gauja Magnúsdóttir Thekkingarsetrid Nyheimar (NEC)
Ms. Hugrun Harpa Reynisdóttir Thekkingarsetrid Nyheimar (NEC)
Ms. Guðrún Gísladóttir Landsbyggðin lifi (LBL)
Ms. Sigríður Svavarsdóttir Landsbyggðin lifi (LBL)
Ms. Stefanía Gísladóttir Landsbyggðin lifi (LBL)
Björgvin HjörleifssonChairman from Dalvíkur
Guðrún Torfhildur Gísladóttirfrom Reykjavík
Guðjón Arnar Kristjánsson Vice Chairman from Ísafjörður
Sigríður Svavarsdóttir, Treasurer, from Húnavatnssýsla
Stefanía Vigdís Gísladóttir.....Secretary, from Kópasker
Vigfús Ingvarsson.....from Egilsstaðir
Sigurður Ingi Jóhannsson Prime Minister and former Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture
Íris Dröfn Magnúsdóttir, engineering student who helped us with the internet survey for LBL.

Ireland

Gerry Quinn President, TUI
John MacGabhann General Secretary, TUI
Jane OSullivanAdministration, TUI
Dr Aidan Kenny Project Co-ordinator, TUI
Dr Anne Murphy Consultant
Terence Hyland Designer
Supporter Senator Gerard Craughwell
Sponsor TUI Credit Union
Sponsor Cornmarket Insurance
Printed by Data Print



USEFUL RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

Hälsingeutbildning Websites

<http://www.hufb.se/>
<http://www.halsingeutbildning.se/2.2d483eaf122161c259b80002464.html>

TUI Website

<http://www.tui.ie/>

Hela Sverige ska leva (HSSL) Website

<http://www.helasverige.se/kansli/hem/>

LBL Survey results

http://www.rha.is/static/files/Rannsoknir/2015/landsbyggdin_lifi_busetuskilyrdi_rha_2015-loka.pdf

LBL Website

<http://landlif.is/>

Thekkingarsetrid Nyheimar

<http://nyheimar.is/thekkingarsetrid-hlytur-styrk-fra-byggdarannsoknarsjodi/>

APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



OPPOSING FORCE PROJECT

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

As part of the initial project work for Opposing Force an EU funded project the team are seeking to undertake initial interviews with young people and young adults relating to their opinions on three main topics: Social media, Enterprise and Supports.

The gathered information will be used only for the purposes of the project. Participants contact details will not be shared with any other parties or used for any other purpose. The project partners will store the information in a secure place and only for the lifespan of the project. At any stage of the project a participant can request to have their consent withdrawn.

I understand the purpose of this interview and consent to participate.
My consent is for the following:

USE	TICK
Comments used for writing reports	
Publishing of photo with me in it	
Publishing of video with me in it	

Print Name:

Signature:

Date:

PLEASE NOTE: *If you are under 16 years of age you will have to get your parent/guardian to give consent.*

Parent/Guardian Name:

Name of Person Responsible:

Date of Interview:





OPPOSING FORCE PROJECT

TRAINING CONSENT FORM

As part of the initial project (insert name of project) the team are organising Training Workshops to gain opinions from young people and young adults relating to the development of project tools.

The information gathered will be used only for the purposes of the project. Participants' contact details will not be shared with any other parties or used for any other purpose. The project partners will store the information in a secure place and only for the lifespan of the project. At any stage of the project, a participant can request to have his/her consent withdrawn.

I understand the purpose of this workshop and consent to participate. My consent in for the following:

USE	TICK
Comments used for writing reports	
Publishing of photo with me in it	
Publishing of video with me in it	

Print Name:

Signature:

Date:

PLEASE NOTE: *If you are under 16 years of age you will have to get your parent/guardian to give consent.*

Parent/Guardian Name:

Name of Person Responsible:

Date of Interview:



Please complete and return this form after the workshop/meeting. While your individual response is confidential, a summary report will be developed from all the evaluation sheets. The results will assist in the planning of other meetings/workshops. Thank you for your assistance.

The evaluation scale is from 1 to 4 with 1 been the lowest score and 4 the highest score

Poor = 1

Fair = 2

Good = 3

Excellent = 4

ITEM	STATEMENT	POOR 1	FAIR 2	GOOD 3	EXCELLENT 4
Venue	The meeting venue was appropriate with suitable facilities				
Agenda	The agenda contained all the items of importance which were addressed at the meeting				
Time	The allocation of time for the meeting was appropriate				
Information	The information supplied before the meeting assisted making arrangements for the meeting				
Format	The format and style of the meeting were appropriate				
Participation	The meeting facilitation/chairing allowed for my active participation in the activities of the meeting				
Objective	The meeting served the objectives as set out in the project proposal				
Planning	The meeting advanced the planning of the project				
Tasks	The meeting addressed the main tasks of the project and designated the work tasks				
Outcomes	The meeting identified clear outcomes and timeframes				
Social	The social activities enhanced networking and bonding of the project team				

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

In your opinion what went well during the meeting?

In your opinion what could have been improved?

What lessons should be incorporated into the next meeting?



