

UNITY

in

COMMUNITY

**Practical handbook for inclusive
community actions**

Unity in Community

is a project conducted by four NGOs in Central Europe. Mareena from Bratislava, Slovakia; Be International from Brno, Czech Republic; Global 2000 from Vienna, Austria; and Kalunba from Budapest, Hungary. The project started in September 2019 and lasts until September 2021. The partners from Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia are involved in community projects with migrants in different areas (skill-sharing, intercultural dialogue, peer to peer learning). The partner from Austria is an environmental organisation running education programmes for community projects.

The objectives of Unity in Community were to train adult education staff and develop appropriate methods to improve their mentoring skills for community projects; to create a methodology that can be implemented by the project partners and picked up by further adult education institutions or NGOs, dealing with the topics of inclusion and sustainability and to develop trainings that will qualify people to mentor and set up community projects that can be easily implemented locally all over Europe. The participants directly involved in the project were adult educators of participating organisations, actively involved in local community building; leaders from both migrant and non-migrant background; and adult educators outside participating organisations, social workers and NGO workers. Unity in Community is a tool for motivating people to set up inclusive initiatives in their communities who have the potential of doing so, but have not identified the initial idea yet, or lack contacts to like-minded people.

In the 25 months lasting project process, the consortium set up a study in order to establish the following activities on a scientifically proven basis; developed a methodology for adult educators in order to qualify them for mentoring sustainable community projects; designed and conducted a capacity building training for qualifying people to conduct community projects on their own; and created a handbook and a video tutorial in order to make our results public and guarantee open access.

In the framework of the project, we will also implement 4 multiplier events in each participating country in order to disseminate the results to a maximum degree.

We created this handbook to offer practical tools and ideas to people interested in civic engagement and starting off a community project. Therefore, we recommend this booklet to community leaders, organizations, social workers, community organizers, and to anyone who would like to enhance social change and become actively engaged in their community.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Hello and thank you for opening our booklet! This text will tell the story of the Unity in Community project, a project conducted by four NGOs in Central Europe (Mareena; Bratislava, Slovakia, Be International; Brno, Czech Republic, Global 2000; Vienna, Austria, and Kalunba; Budapest, Hungary). We created this handbook to offer practical tools and ideas to people interested in civic engagement and starting off a community project. Therefore, we recommend this booklet to community leaders, organizations, social workers, community organizers, and to anyone who would like to enhance social change and become actively engaged in their community. Our booklet is research-based and experience-based: we gathered the results of a common qualitative research and some good practices which can serve as a starting point for those interested in community work. Since the project was a cooperation between four different NGOs in four different countries, involving both local and migrant residents, our booklet has a strong intercultural focus and poses the question of how we can live together and take part in our own community in a sustainable way - and by this, we mean social, environmental and economic sustainability. To narrow down the wide concept of 'community', the project concentrated on the notion of 'neighborhood' and what it means to the participants.

First of all, we will look through the different conditions and factors which encourage local and migrant communities to get actively involved in their local neighborhoods through a qualitative study. We will also take into account different obstacles that prevent these communities from active involvement.

Secondly, we will show you innovative methods which can increase inclusive and sustainable participation and can be used in other communities to encourage social engagement and create a strong sense of community. This will consist of two parts: the presentation of the methodology we used when organizing local community projects, and the presentation of good practices and examples implemented through our Unity in Community project. We will call these practices 'pilot projects', since they represent the attempt of each organization to put theory into practice and start to directly engage with the community surrounding them.

Finally, you can find another example of how we implemented this methodology in the description of our capacity building training which was held online in the fall of 2020. The training targeted community organizers and also everyday people who are interested in generating social change and becoming more active in their local context. This can also serve as a good example for how we can adapt different practices, trainings and community events to the online space in our world fundamentally changed by Covid-19.

We hope that you will benefit from reading our story, and that you will be able to use the practical tools presented in this booklet to reflect on your own role in your community and contribute to meaningful social change.

II. THE CommUNITY STUDY

As a part of our larger Unity in Community project the CommUNITY research study was conducted in 2019 and 2020 by the collaborative group of four NGOs in Central Europe (Mareena; Bratislava, Slovakia, Be International; Brno, Czech Republic, Global 2000; Vienna, Austria, and Kalunba; Budapest, Hungary) in order to better understand resident's understanding of community to create programming that will be suited to increased community development and interdependence in a culturally diverse context. Our main aim of the project was to develop methods in adult education that will foster sustainable community projects and empower people to become active citizens, all the while cultivating positive relationships across cultural and social divides.

Each of our four organizations carried out interviews with people both inside and outside their community that addressed the following questions: "What is the meaning of 'neighborhood' and what are the boundaries that define your neighborhood?"; "What are your relationships with your neighbors?"; "What are some common concerns you have about your neighborhood, and who would you go to to find a solution?"; and "What is your level of involvement in the neighborhood you live in, how do you perceive the importance of community involvement, and do you think it is beneficial?"

OUR RESPONDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 79 participants interviewed by four organisations. Categorised as either local or foreign based on national origin and length of residence: short term, midterm, or long term.
DEFINING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the interviewed community members, 51, noted they define neighbourhood in social terms or in terms of people you live and interact with. 21 participants said they define it spatially, by streets, bridges, parks and other physical landmarks.
RELATIONSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than half of the participants (55%) said that they do not know their neighbours at all. 19% people said they only knew people on a superficial level. Local and long-term residents were more likely to have strong relationships in the community.
MAKING A CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many participants expressed the desire for changes in their community concerning access to nature, parks and trails. Others stressed changes should occur in regulations of traffic and noise. Most participants felt that their local government should find solutions for these concerns, but some felt personally responsible or that it should be a collaborative effort.
LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36% participants felt their communities were engaged. Usually young people, young couples, and older/retired population were most involved. Locals were also more involved than foreigners were. 67% participants stated they were hardly involved in their community.

REMEMBER TO ACKNOWLEDGE BARRIERS:

- LANGUAGE
- CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
- ESTABLISHED RELATIONSHIPS
- LEVEL OF ABILITIES

From the study we have come up with 10 recommendations for you and your community.



- 1) Define your community: make sure all of your community leaders are on the same page, make a physical map, to make sure you know the scope of your work.
- 2) Create a list of actors in your neighborhood: who will be involved or affected by potential change and who could help or hinder you along the way?
- 3) Identify the long-term residents of your neighborhood: these individuals and families might be more inclined to participate with you in your community development, and provide advice about the history of the community.
- 4) Find out more about the relationships in your neighborhood: this could be some basic surveying, or maybe even longer in-depth conversations. Whatever you choose, familiarizing yourself with the relationships is vital towards sustainable change.
- 5) Identify the main centers of neighborhood life: is it the local cafe, the park, or a house of worship? Maybe it is something very unique to your neighborhood, find out!
- 6) Find out about the needs of your community: making progress will only happen if you have an initial assessment of the current gaps that are found within your neighborhood. If from your research you find that most people's rent is drastically increasing, causing them to work much more, taking away time for community engagement... you have found a need - rent regulation.
- 7) Propose an initiative that relates to your local needs.
- 8) Make sure that communication about your initiative reaches everyone in the community: although not everyone will participate, no one wants to be left out of a conversation concerning their environment, so make sure to make communications accessible to all.
- 9) Keep in mind motivation for community involvement: in order to continue the momentum, some people may need incentive to keep showing up.
- 10) Keep in mind barriers that people face to community involvement: are there a lot of young parents in your community that cannot come to meetings because they need to have a babysitter? Acknowledging a barrier and then breaking it by, in this case, providing child care at the meetings could increase participation.

III. OUR PATHWAY TO UNITY IN COMMUNITY: OUR METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE METHODOLOGY

This CommUnity mentoring methodology is based on the findings of the study mentioned above and was written by Andrej Navojsky and Miriam Bahn. It takes particular account of supporting people in:

- getting to know your neighbours, deepen relations
- picking up the ethnic mix of neighborhoods
- empowering people to make a change in their own community
- learning more about each others backgrounds and identities
- increasing the level of active citizenship and involvement in community life
- bringing new impulses to the community which address sustainability challenges e.g. contribute to green infrastructure in neighborhoods

The **target group** of this methodology are **trainers**, who ideally have some experience in working with groups already and would like to **upgrade their skills in community work and sustainable development**.

In this section you will learn **how to mentor participants of project teams** who are personally benefiting from involvement as they develop community project planning skills and deepen their relationships. Such community projects increase the level of **active citizenship and empower people** to shape their communities in a sustainable way. By **identifying common needs** you can remove barriers and foster a rich community life. Addressing issues that are relevant to people in the community is essential. We also emphasize developing goals within **community initiatives that seem attainable and socially, economically and environmentally sustainable**. The key focus of this methodology is relations, how to build them up, work with them and keep them alive.

Firstly, we provide information on our approach and provide **basic tools of working in groups** in general. Secondly, we want to share methods of analyzing the group and its members more closely. We are convinced that **before we can change the world we need to look at ourselves first and what kind of change we want**. Thus, it is necessary to start working with groups themselves, their individual identities, then moving on to a group identity, and then reflecting on what kind of change they want to bring. Once you know yourself and the group understands who they are and what they want, a group can go out into their community and be strong enough to face challenges.

Unity in Community is specifically about diversity and how to contribute to sustainable development. In our case this means putting our activities into a global context such as the Sustainable Development Goals and Active Citizenship. We also hope to develop communication and dialogue, skills that will help to know your community better.

As we want to mentor groups that start actual projects, developing project plans is the next essential step. It includes how to prepare a project itself, coming up with ideas and selecting them. Planning a sustainable community project is a group process. Hence we respond to this by picking up certain group dynamics and group issues and learning how to approach them.

Last - but not least - utmost attention should be paid to the completion of a project. If we succeed, it is important to know how we succeed. By implementing sustainable community projects we want to bring change. That is why we need to look at the beginning (our goals), collect evidence of change, make it measurable, and reflect on these things. To celebrate success also gives an essential uplifting effect to the people involved and beyond. Besides finishing a project internally, communication to the outer world should not be neglected. We should let others know what we have done and enable them to participate in the change we want to make.



THE RIVER IMAGE

This image helps visualise Active Citizens and the Unity in Community methodology as a journey on a river. The journey will take participants on an exploration of personal to local to global. Throughout the journey they will build skills and knowledge as Active Citizens to achieve their vision which will be materialized in the community project.



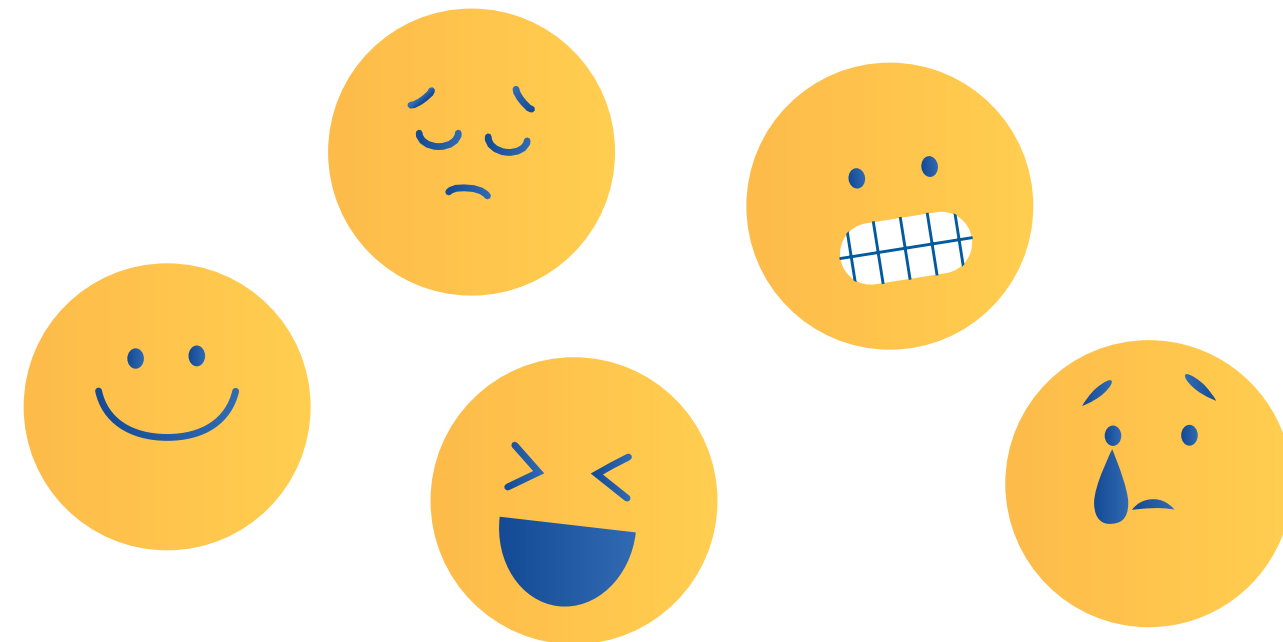
POPULAR EDUCATION

The following methods can be seen within the approach of popular education which is why we want to share a few words about it here. The term "popular education" was introduced by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. In traditional education it is assumed that the teacher holds all the knowledge of the subject. Popular education on the other hand gives the educator a different role. It assumes that all the people already hold knowledge in them. Rather than a teacher imposing knowledge upon their students, the teacher takes the role of a facilitator which enables a space in which learning from and with each other can happen. The popular education approach looks at how problems and issues affect everyday people's lives. It is not just about fostering a better understanding of the world but is also about empowering people to change the world around them.

In this chapter we provide some basic tools of working with groups in general. It consists of very useful methods to start interacting with a group or to close a group meeting (check-in, check-outs). Energizers are very helpful to keep a group process alive or reactivate a group process that drifted apart or became tired.

CHECK IN, CHECK OUT METHODS

- **Names with sounds and movements:** This is a good check in exercise on the second day of a training when the group needs to refresh each one's name. Participants stand in a circle and they are asked to think about a way to introduce themselves. The introduction has to be accompanied by a specific movement (jump, gesture, little dance etc.) and a specific way of saying their name (dramatic voice, funny voice etc.). One by one, each participant goes to the middle of the circle and introduces him/herself. After each participant, the whole group repeats the movement and the name.
- **Draw a smiley/emoji / Write a word:** Another simple check-in or check out exercise is to ask the participants to draw a smiley (happy face, sad face etc) to describe the day. Participants draw on post-its and place them on the flipchart.
 - You can repeat the same process, but instead of smiley participants write one word on the post-it.



ENERGIZERS

- **Yes let's:** This is a good energizer to support positive vibes in a group and to foster a proactive approach for the project design. For this energizer you need an empty space in the room. One participant can make a suggestion of a simple action. That could be "Let's jump around!". After this has been proposed everyone shouts: "Yes let's!". And everyone starts jumping around until another participant makes a proposal like "Let's roll on the floor." And again everyone shouts at the same time "Yes let's!" and starts rolling on the floor. Continue this exercise for some time and find a nice timing to end the exercise.
- **Pillow Race:** You need two pillows for this game, ideally in different colors. Find a clear space and ask your group to stand up, form a circle and face inwards. Explain that there will be two teams competing in the race. You as a facilitator are part of one team as well and you can explain how the team works. Grab one pillow and tell the group that every other participant is part of your group. Try to demonstrate and move the pillow from hands to hands in your team (every second person grabs the pillow and hands it to the next team member). The second team is the rest of the circle. So, there is always a member of another team right next to you. After demonstration, keep your pillow and give another pillow to the member of the second team who is standing exactly opposite to you.
 - The goal of the game is to move the pillow around the circle quicker than the other team. It is not allowed to touch the pillow of the other team. It is only allowed to hand a pillow to the member of your team. The team that first catches up their pillow to the other one wins.



STEP 1 Create a Common Ground

This step is a starting point to work with the group members focusing on their individual identities. Then, the group can move on to the topic of group identity and then reflect on what kind of change the group wants to bring.

WARM-UPS AND METHODS FOR GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

AIMS: breaking the ice, creation of a group feeling, getting to know each other, finding out about expectations

LENGTH: 60 min
We decided to use different methods which are building up on each other.

Exercise 1: People to People

To start off the process, *People to People* is a good exercise to help people arrive in the moment. Physical touch is also part of the exercise. Talk to the participants through this exercise whilst participating yourself.

Please note: When working with intercultural groups, it can happen that some people feel uneasy to touch others. Thus, when introducing this exercise, check with all group members if they feel comfortable with it. If not, skip this exercise and move on to another one.

Instructions the facilitator gives: Move through the space, walk around, try not to walk in circles. Change directions. Be attentive of the people around you and avoid collisions! Continue walking, pay attention to free spaces and try to fill the space evenly. Continue walking. There are so many other nice people around you.

Continue walking and when you walk by someone you can smile and nod to them. And now with the same attention for yourself and the others try to shake hands with as many people as possible. And continue walking.

When I say GO touch with your knee carefully as many other knees as possible. GO. And continue walking. And now with the next GO try to touch as many elbows with your elbow as possible. GO. And come back to walking. Finally I have a last challenge for you. When I say "STOP", stand still, stand on one leg and try to connect with each of your hands to another hand. "STOP". We will do this once more, but this time, add a big and nice smile to your face.

You can end this exercise with a shared applause.

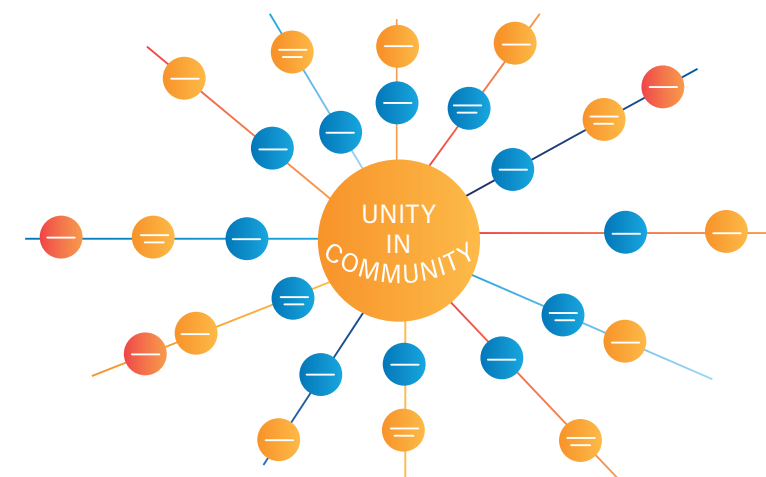
Exercise 2: Speed Dating

The participants are invited to walk through the space. On a given signal, each of them stops and looks for another person close by. In pairs, they have three minutes to answer one question. After one and a half minutes, the facilitator gives an acoustic signal as a reminder that it is the

other person's turn to answer that question. Once the three minutes are over, give a signal again. The participants mingle until they hear a signal and find a new partner with whom they discuss the second question. Proposed questions for the three rounds:

- 1.) What inspired you to join this group?
- 2.) Share one story or idea of yours which makes the other person smile.
- 3.) What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Exercise 3: Introduction Mandala



Through this exercise everyone gets the possibility to talk and share something about themselves.

Preparation: Prepare a flipchart in advance. Draw a circle in the middle and write the name of the project or meeting on it. Like rays of the sun, draw lines around the circle, so that in the end you have as many lines as participants.

Exercise: Sit in a circle. Everyone gets four round cards, each of them in a different colour. Each colour stands for another question.

- 1.) What's your name? Which pronouns would you like to be referred to by?
- 2.) What makes you feel alive?
- 3.) What is your expectation for our work together?
- 4.) Which skills, attitudes or experiences do you want to share?

The participants answer these questions by using the coloured cards. They can either write or draw/scribble on them. After a few minutes, the participants come forward one by one, and present their cards. They choose one line on the flipchart and stick their coloured cards on this line after their presentations are finished. Slowly a mandala appears with all the participants of the project.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENT

AIMS: to define a frame in which the group wants to work together, to talk about the needs for an atmosphere in which everyone feels welcome and comfortable.

LENGTH: 30 Minutes

REQUIRED MATERIALS: flipchart paper with the title "Community Agreement"

DESCRIPTION: When you are working with a group of people to develop a project together, it can be helpful to create a Community Agreement. It supports the workflow of the group and sets a mood in which people can unfold and share their strengths with the group.



Ask the participants to get together in small groups and talk about the following questions:

- What do I need to feel comfortable in a group? What do we need as a group to work together well?
- Give some examples like: respect, listening to each other, ...

Every group writes down their findings. After 10-15 minutes, come back to the bigger group. Each group shares their most important ideas. The facilitator writes down all the ideas on the Flip Chart "Community Agreement".

IDENTITY EXERCISE

AIMS: open a discussion about individual identities in a diverse group, reflect on the perception of "how I am" in contrast to "how do the others perceive me"

LENGTH: 45 Minutes

REQUIRED MATERIALS: stars with 7 corners made of paper for each participant

DESCRIPTION: When working with a diverse group, it is important to open a discussion about each participant's identity. This could prevent preconceptions, stereotypes and prejudices one can have based on visual identities (male/female, skin colour, way of dressing). We all have certain stereotypes and therefore it is crucial that everyone in the group can talk about his or her layers of identities. The activity can also help us to look at what we share and what connects us in the group and how to reflect different layers of identities and individual needs. You can also link the exercise with norms - the attribute we select often reflects labels we have as a result of the norms that exist in the society, some of our identities are socially constructed.

PREPARATION: Each participant gets a star (star shaped paper with 7 corners). Explain that these stars are participant's identities, so they express qualities, roles, beliefs, personality, looks and/or expressions that make a person a unique individual. Each of us has a different star, each of us finds different layers of identities as important in his/her current life.

Part 1: Who am I

The task of each participant is to fill each corner with one layer of their own identity. One is allowed to fill one corner only with one word. It is up to each participant to choose what is important for his/her identity, but you can make a hint or produce your own star as a facilitator. You can also stress, that the layers should not be characteristics *such as brave, lazy etc.*, but rather roles, beliefs, values, background, roots and other elements of their personality (e.g. facilitator - *liberal, feminist, footballer, musician, Hungarian, muslim*). But make sure you do not influence the categories participants choose.

Part 2: What we share

After all stars are filled, ask participants to form groups of 4-5 people. Ask each group to share identities and discuss what connects them (identities that are written on each star) and what differentiates them from the others (what is very unique and only in each star). After this step, discuss these questions with participants:

Was it hard to find seven attributes? How did you decide which was the most important for you? Does the context influence you? How?

Did you find someone in the group you share some layer of the identity with? Was there something that you did not share with anyone?

Part 3: Losing my identity

Tell participants that they have to get rid of three layers of identity by folding three corners of the star. Wait a bit and tell them that now is the time to lose two more, so only two corners are left. In the last round, ask them to fold one more corner, so each of them keeps just one layer of his/her identity (one corner of the star). Ask them to say that remaining identity out loud in the group.

- **Discuss:** *How did you feel when "losing" your identities? Do you feel complete with only one identity left?*

The discussion can be linked to stereotypes and prejudices. We can often see how people are judged by one visible identity that is given to them by other people (based on skin colour, religion, shape, ethnicity) and not by identities chosen by themselves.

Part 4: Privileged and discriminated

You can do this step either in the whole group or in small groups. Ask participants to choose one part of the identity which puts them in a privileged position and one that puts them in a discriminated position. Give them some time for discussion and then ask in what context they feel these two positions. Do not push anyone, some of the participants might not be open when it comes to the topic of discrimination. This step is rather about how privilege is used and that we can be discriminated against in different contexts.

STEP Dig in: From the SDGs to Active Citizenship



Once a **“we” is created** you can go outside with the group (e.g. do excursions, invite experts for external input) to **look at the world as a group**. In our case, by focusing on SDGs, we found what specific communities’ challenges are by enhancing relations to the outer world. Once you know the challenges, you can also think about change and start a project that addresses essential needs for sustainable development within your neighborhood.

To become an active citizen, you cannot just tell people to do something. Instead, we want to elicit **what being an active citizen means to the members of the group**.

This will be different for each group. A reflection process for the group is essential and each group will have different results. It is about dialogue, personal and community growth. The “4 words exercise” is a method suited for this purpose and gives the group room to find its definition of an active citizen. It also will help to define how group members want to communicate with each other.

Another core exercise of our methodology will be the “community mind map”. By looking at a community together geographically, we can actually create communities that become active.

A SHORT INTRO TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

On 25th of September 2015, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development was adopted by all member states of the United Nations. The Agenda 2030 entails 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The SDGs offer a new, interlinked understanding of global challenges such as poverty, environmental degradation, inequality, modes of production, consumption, corruption and others. At its core lies the understanding that many problems in fact intersect, and can be addressed simultaneously. This could mean addressing community problems that affect the global environment as well as promoting a more walkable neighborhood could impact the reduction of carbon emissions. Consequently, the responsibility for implementing the goals lies both on a national as well as on an international level. It needs concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for our people and the planet.

DIALOGUE, FOUR WORD EXERCISE

AIM: understanding the purpose, principles and approaches to dialogue, discussing what the characteristics of an Active Citizen are

LENGTH: 30 mins

REQUIRED MATERIAL: cards or sheets of paper, colourful pens

DESCRIPTION: The exercise illustrates challenges and opportunities of learning and sharing with other people. Participants think on their own about the four major characteristics of an Active Citizen before engaging in dialogue and negotiation to agree on four words as a whole group. Throughout the exercise they reflect on the challenges and opportunities of working with others. The exercise is also helpful when defining the roles in the team (e.g. *leader, facilitator, observer...*)

Tell the group that they are going to explore the key characteristics of an Active Citizen. It is going to challenge them as individuals and as a group. They will reflect on these challenges after the exercise. Ask the participants to **think of four words that are ‘the four most important characteristics of an Active Citizen!’ It is very important that the group does not use sentences or phrases. Each word should be a possible ending to the sentence: ‘A real Active Citizen should be... After the participants have four words each, put them into pairs and ask each pair to agree on just four words.**

After the pairs have done this, ask them to find another pair to form a group of four; again, they must agree on just four words between them. Repeat this process until there are only two large groups left in the room and each has just four words. Now give these two large groups ten minutes to agree on the final four words that will represent the whole group’s judgement of the key characteristics of an Active Citizen. If the group can’t reach an agreement in ten minutes, stop the exercise.

DEBRIEFING: Reflect on the exercise by using these questions (discuss with the whole group)

- How did you feel? Why do you think you felt like that? (focus on each one’s feelings, check if everyone felt included, if not, examine why)
- What were you doing in this activity? (let the group explain the process, decision making, arguing etc.) And how can you use the principles of dialogue in your community work?
- Were there things about this process or about the way you acted that did or did not support dialogue?

Emphasize that this activity also shows how conflict arises on an individual, interpersonal and group level. Note that conflict is part of human interaction and can have creative and destructive potential. Even though conflict can arise in this exercise, it is very important to focus on the question of what “good dialogue” means.

At the end of the debriefing, wrap up the exercise by writing down a shared list of things that support and put up barriers to dialogue.

COMMUNITY MIND MAP



AIMS: fostering a common understanding around the meaning of community

LENGTH: 45 mins

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Large roll of paper, colourful pens

DESCRIPTION: This mind mapping exercise is very good to dive into a topic together and develop a shared understanding of community.

Roll out the paper in the middle of the room. Write "community" at the centre of the paper and ask the participants "What comes to your mind when you think of community?". Write down words which are shared and connect them with a line to the centre. This way, the complexity and different dimensions of the word community can be explored. All the things connected to these questions should be written down in blue or green colours. Add one more question: "What makes you feel proud of living in your community?" Write the word "proud" down in orange or red. And again once a word is said write that down and connect it with a line. Once a basic skeleton of words is there, hand out pens to the participants. They can move around the paper freely and add their associations here and there using green and blue colours for the first question and red and orange colours for answering the second question. Encourage participants to move around the paper freely. Once the paper is filled with words and the writing process slows down, ask the participants to write down their last thoughts, put the pens back to the centre and stand in a circle.

Debriefing Questions:

- What do you see?
- Is there anything you don't understand and want to hear more about?
- What does community mean?
- What makes us proud of living in our communities?

COMMUNITY MAPPING

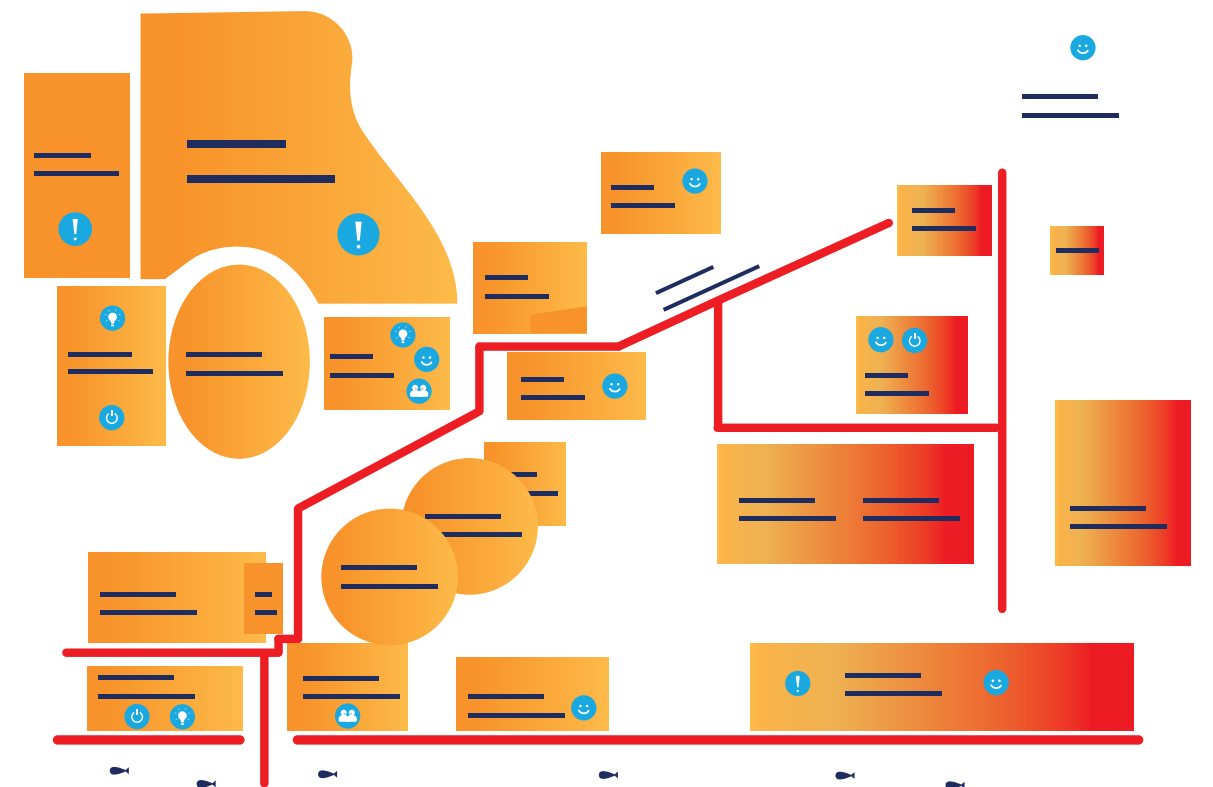
AIMS: understanding different perspectives on a community, ability to identify social development issues to address in the community and insights into needs and opportunities

LENGTH: 45 mins

REQUIRED MATERIALS: flipcharts, colourful markers or pens, example of community map, symbols (pictures below) that can be drawn or printed

COMMUNITY MAPPING

- 😊 POSITIVE PLACES
- ! ISSUES / PLACES OF CONCERN
- 💡 PLACES OF OPPORTUNITIES
- 🔌 DECISION MAKING
- 👥 POSSIBLE ALLIES



A shared visual map of their local community, including positive areas and areas of concern, with broader community engagement if possible.

The group's task is to make a map of their locality on a large sheet of flipchart paper. If the group has come from a number of localities, split them into smaller groups based on where they come from. It is important that this exercise is a mapping out of a location that is familiar to them and where they might be carrying out the community project, so it shouldn't be too big. Show an example to the group from your own community.

Step 1:

Ask each group to draw a rough map of their area: roads, buildings, parks, shops, cultural centres, public places, playgrounds – whatever is right for the scale of the area they are working in. Stress again that it doesn't have to be accurate or detailed. Use different colours for different types of units (for example, green for shops, red for housing, blue for government buildings and so on).

Step 2:

Show groups symbols prepared before the exercise and explain that groups should draw (on the area or on sticky notes) these next to places according to the instructions. Symbols represent different features of the community.

- positive places
- issues or place of concern
- place of opportunities
- decision making
- possible allies

Step 3:

Ask the group to identify some of the things they want to improve in their community. What would they like to improve in that area considering the SDGs?

DEBRIEFING: Bring the group together and ask them to share their feelings about the activity. Ask participants to bear this exercise in mind together with the key themes that emerged and can be used for community project planning. How does this help you to identify possible interventions for community actions? How might you use community mapping to plan community projects?



STEP 3 Get ready for the community project

In the previous steps we already created a common ground. We took a look at the local needs in a global context that can be addressed. Attention was also given to reflect on those first steps and we want to emphasize that it is essential for group members to take this “deep breath” before moving on with the process of implementing a community project itself.

The guiding questions for that phase are:

- What is important for myself?
- What does the community need?

Leading to the next key question to be asked:

- What kind of difference in a community does a project make?

Once ideas for local sustainable community projects are created, a proper selection process is important. Once you have chosen a project all you need is a simple plan. There are also a variety of starting methods: in our methodology we suggest simple group voting, followed by developing a project plan. For that purpose it is quite effective to have a table and, most of all, a clear idea. Keep it simple and smooth, and then go with the flow. Issues around community projects, such as communication with key players or the advocacy in a community are also taken up.

FINDING A PROJECT IDEA

AIMS: start the process of creating a project idea, present project ideas

LENGTH: 45 mins

REQUIRED MATERIALS: sheet of paper with guiding questions for each participant and a flipchart for writing down the project ideas

DESCRIPTION: In this exercise participants receive time for themselves and their thoughts about what they would like to change in their own communities, about their own visions. Let them use their imagination, and give them enough time for sorting out thoughts about the previous process.

The exercise can be done in two ways - one is to hand over “letters” with guiding questions to participants, the other one is to use flip charts and visuals you used in the previous exercises and make a gallery walk for inspiration. The outcome of both should be the same - to bring one concrete idea of a project written in one sentence.

Step 1:

Letter - Vision for changes you want to see

Prepare a letter for each participant similar to the one below. Tell them that they have 30 minutes to think about the questions they find in the letter. They can go for a walk, sit comfortably on the grass or anywhere they feel good.

Dear

you are certainly interested in your community, people you meet everyday and you wish to have a sustainable and joyful community. However there is always space for improving the environment you live in, to share your ideas with the others and creating a better community where everyone feels included and empowered to engage with others in a sustainable development of the community.

These words can help you to think about the change you want to bring. Take your time, let your imagination flow and write down your thoughts. This is your vision for changes you want to see.

What do you like the most about your community, what are you proud of?

What is your concern, what would you like to change in your community (write one issue, challenge)?.....

Think how realistic is the change and how you can contribute to it.....

And now write down the idea of the project that will bring the change, it is enough if you write just one sentence for now, a project idea that reflects the change you want to see in your community.....

Step 2:

After all participants finish their letters, gather them back in the room. Explain that they will now present their ideas to the whole group. They should be concise, present the main points of the idea, so the others understand. What they will present is "the elevator pitch" - a short description of an idea or product that explains the concept in a way that any listener can quickly understand it. Each presenter also writes down the project idea in one sentence on the flipchart.

SELECTING A PROJECT IN THE GROUP

AIMS: Select a project idea the group will later develop into the community project

LENGTH: 15 mins

REQUIRED MATERIALS: colourful sticky dots (3 per each participant) or colourful markers

DESCRIPTION: There are many ways to choose a project idea the whole group will implement. If you have enough time, you can try dialogue (see four words) or consensus (all participants agree on one project). However this exercise can speed up the process and it is fair as everyone has the same number of votes.

Give each participant 3 colourful dots (if you do not have them, use markers). The task is simple. Everyone has 3 dots / votes and he or she can distribute them in three ways:

- If one has a very strong preference for any of the project ideas - give all 3 votes to that idea
- A strong preference to one idea, but also for another one - give 2 votes to one idea and 1 vote to the other
- Preference for three ideas equally - 1 vote for each idea

After all participants distribute their votes, count all votes and the project idea with the most votes will be carried on for the later stages of the development.

In order to avoid disappointment that not all of the ideas can get chosen, point out that it is only the ideas that are chosen. The further development of each idea is up to the group and can still be shaped by all participants. Another tool can be a "parking lot" where you park neglected ideas to save them for the future.

DEVELOP A PROJECT PLAN

QUESTIONS	KEY INFORMATION	ANSWERS
• WHAT PROJECT DO YOU WANT TO DO?	AIM	
• WHY DO YOU WANT TO DO IT?	REASON	
• WHO IS YOUR TARGET GROUP?	TARGET GROUP	
• WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT?	PLACE	
• WHEN IS IT GOING TO HAPPEN?	TIME	
• HOW ARE YOU DOING IT?	PROCESS	
• WHAT MATERIALS DO YOU NEED?	MATERIALS	
• WHAT IS THE BUDGET?	BUDGET	

AIMS: get the project flowing and start it off by setting a frame and designing first steps

LENGTH: 60 mins

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Template - write down the template questions on a flipchart paper

DESCRIPTION: To support a group starting off a process it is useful to provide them with typical questions they need to answer when planning a project. Explain the template (see below) to the group. In a next step the group can answer these questions in regard to their project.

THE TEMPLATE:

Name/Title:

- What project do you want to do?/ are the aims of your project?
- Why do you want to do it? Is it relevant to your community?
- Who do you want to address? is your target group?



- Which SDGs is your project connected to? (social, ecological, economical)
- Where are you going to do it?
- When will it happen?
- How are we doing it? Think of the steps you need to take in order to implement the project. Decide on one concrete first step.

Communication:

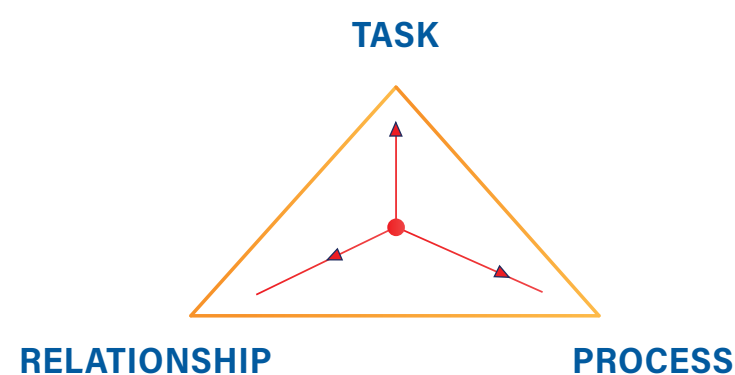
- How are you going to communicate within your group? (e.g. What's App, Signal)
- Responsibilities within the group - who is doing what?
- Resources What materials do you need? How much is the budget?

STEP Process

When implementing a project, besides organisational or logistic aspects, it is the process of group dynamics which is of utter importance.

Therefore we introduce methods on communication in this chapter in order to stay aware of such dynamics and get to know tools on how to avoid and deal with conflicts.

MODEL: PROCESS, TASK, RELATIONSHIP



Once your group is about to start working on their projects you can introduce this model. Every now and then during the process the participants can look at that model and reflect on it. The triangle shows which aspects are important to look at while working on a project.

- **The Task:** This is the outcome of the project. E.g. a community garden.
- **The Process:** This is the way to get to the desired outcome, like the project meetings, the communication with the partners etc.
- **Relationship:** This is about how the group is working with each other, what the atmosphere is like, etc.

In a project these three aspects should be balanced and looked at equally. Very often it happens that only one of the aspects is highlighted and others are forgotten. It could be for example that the whole group is only focussing on the task but on a personal level, on the level of relationship it doesn't work at all. Or a group only focuses on the process and forgets about the importance of the task. These three elements might not always be equally important but it is very good to keep them in mind. If one of them is neglected it can be addressed.

STEP 5 Finish and evaluate the project



Last - but not least - utmost attention should be paid to the completion of a project. If we succeed, it is important to know how we succeed. By implementing sustainable community projects we want to bring change. That is why we need to have a look at the beginning (our goals), collect evidence of change, make it measurable and reflect about these things. To celebrate success also gives an essential uplifting effect to the people involved and beyond. Besides finishing a project internally, communication should not be neglected as we should let others know what we have done.

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

AIM: setting up indicators and tools for a successful project on three levels

LENGTH: 45 minutes

REQUIRED MATERIALS: flipcharts and markers

DESCRIPTION: The activity helps to plan the monitoring and evaluation of the community project designed by your group(s). It focuses on evaluation of three levels of the change:

- me & my project team (how the project changed me personally and our team)
- community (how the project changed/affected our community)
- issue (what change did we bring regarding SDGs)

Each level has three columns:

- 1| The change I want to see (When can we say the project was successful? What does it imply for us?)
- 2| The evidence for the change (Indicators for evaluation)
- 3| Tools to measure/assess the change (How to evaluate the project)

Ask your participants to look back at their project (Filled template from the Activity 3.3 Development of the project plan) and tell them they have to think about the change they want to see, about the indicators for the change and about the tools/ways for measuring the change). The change needs to be planned on three levels as described above. Give participants a flipchart and ask them to make a table and fill it with their ideas.

	Change I want to see	Indicators for the change	Tools to measure the change
Me & my project team			
Our community			
The issue (SDGs)			

Give group(s) time to fill the table (about 30 minutes). In the end, let the group present the table and discuss possible challenges or comment on ideas.

COMMUNICATION AND FINISHING OF THE PROJECT

AIMS: discuss about **How to communicate your project** and **How to plan your final meeting**

LENGTH: 30 mins

REQUIRED MATERIALS: bigger sheets of paper and pens/markers, flipchart

DESCRIPTION: Communication about your project is an essential way to reach your target groups and get some attention from the wider public. There are various ways and innovative tools, but use the strength of your own group and brainstorm what fits the best for your participants. Do not limit them, brainstorming starts with any idea, even the crazy ones. The same applies for thinking about how to organise the final meeting. Brainstorming can again help you in planning the meeting. You can use the final meeting for looking back at what you have done, to reflect and evaluate, to plan some follow up activities and especially to show gratitude to your community work.

Divide participants into 2 groups. Write in the middle of the flipchart Finishing the project. Explain that groups will focus on two issues related to the last stages of the community project. Group 1 will brainstorm ideas about How to communicate the project and group 2 ideas about What could we do in the final meeting.

After 15 minutes of brainstorming, let the groups present and capture all ideas on flipchart.

EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS

AIMS: evaluation of the process, create a space in which feedback on the process can be collected, create a nice atmosphere to finish off the process with a group

LENGTH: depending on which methods you choose

REQUIRED MATERIALS: see exercise below

DESCRIPTION: We have collected a couple of methods which help to evaluate and finish a project with a team. You can use all the methods in that order or choose the ones which support your process.

Exercise 1: Feed Forward

(length 10 mins)

Build groups of three people in each group. The groups sit together in a triangle. There will be two rounds, in each round the participants give feedforward to each other. A question or open sentence guides the feedforward. A will talk about B, B will talk about C and C will talk about A. In the second round the direction changes.

Which means that A will talk about C, C about B and B about A. Each person has two minutes to talk. After every two minutes give an acoustic signal so that the participants know that it is the turn of the next person. Tell the participants, making pauses is ok too. Question/Open sentence for the two rounds:

- 1| What do you admire about the person?
- 2| I want to see more of

Exercise 2: Final Round

(length 30 mins) (with a group of 15 participants)

Required materials: a stone (around 3cms) for each participant, pens to write on the stones, candle

To finish off a process it is very nice to have a last final round in which everyone is heard. Sit in a circle. Place stones in the middle of the circle. Each participant can choose a stone and write on it what they take with them. It can be a word, an image or a symbol. While the participants are drawing, place a candle in the middle of the circle and light it. Once all the participants are done, tell them to place the stones in the centre answering the question: "How was the overall process of

project development for you?". To do that the participants imagine a line from where they sit to the candle in the centre of the circle. The closer the stone is placed to the centre the better the process went. After everyone has placed their stone one after the other each participant takes the stone and tells what they take with them by explaining the drawing or the words on their stone. There is also space to share whatever still needs to be said.



IV. PILOT PROJECTS

Are you interested in projects developed using the framework of the Methodology above?

In the following section, you can read a short description of each project realized by the four organizations involved in the CommUnity project. We call these 'Pilot Projects,' since they represent the first attempt of each organization to put theory into practice and start to directly engage with the community surrounding them. They took place in 2020, a year in which it was especially challenging to build communities due to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with the short descriptions, we included several quotes from the participants.



MAREENA

Mareenada was an event aimed at bringing the neighbors living around Jakub Square in Bratislava closer to the Mareena community. It took place directly at Jakub Square. Visitors could take part in a cake competition, book swap, a quiz about this part of the city, or listen to a musical performance by a little flutist. The whole event lasted about 2 hours (it was shortened due to bad weather) and was attended by approximately 50 people. In addition to 6 community leaders (4 were really active), 5 other volunteers also took part in the project, who were recruited by the community leaders themselves.

The participants' thoughts about *Mareenada*:

"A large amount of people came to the event despite bad weather. There was a good mood during the event and we received lots of help from the volunteers."

"I am very glad I could participate in a community event. It was hard though to do it with people I know so little, in such a short time, with different approaches and a level of responsibility from every participant."

KALUNBA



The immediate neighborhood of Kalunba's community center houses the biggest refugee, migrant and Roma community of Budapest, it is also an up and coming neighborhood with many young professionals living here, interested in gastronomy and cultural events. To bring the neighborhood together, and to fulfill many of our refugee and migrant families favorite activities, we organized a cooking event but in a special way due to COVID19. COVID19 was the reason that the municipality allowed it's private beach at Balaton to be used for free, but the inhabitants of the district knew little about it. Migrants always wish for opportunities to explore the country, and we found it important they learn about budget friendly ideas. We took a group of local migrants and their families with a bus to Balaton, hosted them for a night at the local parish's camp site, cooked a typical Persian meal outdoors, invited neighbors, and played two days at the local beach, migrants and locals together.

The participants' thoughts about the community event at Balaton:

"I felt the best part of the project was to make a connection between people, and help to know more about others. It can show a better view of humaneness and the world also accepts easier others if they have different: religions, languages, colors, or cultures."

"The best part was when we started getting accustomed to the beach, use the sandpit and play football, talk about the future while playing ping-pong, discuss school, plans, past summer camps, activities, but mainly, we are there in the present, feeling the sun and the water on our skin. It is so rare to be this happy and run all you want, the children said to me. We spontaneously started dancing a bit near the shore when two women put music on. They smiled at me and I couldn't help but join them, let go of insecurities regarding my dance moves."

"Dinner was cooked as a common effort. Lots of vegetables, meat and rice. Neighbors came over for dinner. They live at Balaton all year round and rarely see such a diverse group in the neighborhood. Their son started playing badminton with some of the kids from Kalunba, conversations started, dialogues and shared spaces were formed."

GLOBAL 2000



A group of active citizens set up a pilot project on urban gardening. They had 4 months to plan and implement the project. They were mentored pedagogically by Global2000 as well as by an thematic expert on organic gardening. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, gatherings and personal meetings were no longer possible. Instead the citizens decided to publish online content on urban gardening which can be used by people interested. This was then published on Global2000s website and online channels.

The participants' thoughts on the urban gardening project:

"As soon as we had a group which was interested in the overall theme of Urban Gardening, we made a mindmap where we wrote down every idea we had on what our project could look like."

"Since the project was done online because of the lockdown my highlight was also online. It was coming seeing each other on Zoom and showing the finished Project. A lot of satisfaction came with talking about what we accomplished as a group."

BE INTERNATIONAL



Be International conducted two Pilot Projects which were both community events. The first one was a dance/food/cultural exchange consisting of two different parts. First, an Arabic Dabke night was conducted on Tuesday, July 14th starting at Spolkovna (Faculty of Social Studies). In the beginning, participants were briefed with some information about Dabke dance: types, development, names; and instructor Ahmad Asadi taught everyone how to Dance "Dabke". At the end of the event participants tried typical Middle Eastern food, "Hummus + Falafel + Pita ". The second event "Czech traditional dance workshop" took place on Monday, 17th of August starting at Skautský institut. During the event, our dance instructors taught participants how to dance Valčík, Polka and Mazurka. In the end, participants had an opportunity to find out more about each other and try traditional Czech food.

The second part was a community-building event called "Let's make our neighborhood better". Participants got together to plant flowers and plants on the 15th of September in Vinarská dormitory garden. After energizers and icebreakers the participants planted flowers while educating themselves about SDGs and sustainability. Afterward, there was a picnic for everyone, where each participant brought their favourite food, snacks and drinks to share with others.

The participants' thoughts on Be International's community events:

"I really liked it! The purpose was to gather people from different backgrounds in one place and link them by mutual activity- planting trees. Not only everyone gets an opportunity to make new friends, share his experience and spend wonderful time on a picnic afterwards, but also to make our lovely Brno a greener place to live in."

"I had to research possible plants and seeds that would be suitable for the autumn season, as well as required equipment. During the process and implementing the event, our group helped each other on the tasks, as well as motivated one another."

V. THE CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

Another way of implementing the methodology was our 'Capacity Building Training'. This training targeted community leaders who want to get active in their own communities and develop tools to do so. It was about what you can do to build community and implement change in your neighborhood, your close surroundings. Originally, it was planned as a face-to-face training in the Czech Republic between November 16th and 20th with an online part that would have taken place a week before the training in order to prepare the participants for the learning process. However, due to the Covid-pandemic, the training was held online. Nevertheless, telling the story of this training can help us shed light on how we can implement the methodology in an online setting and make the training as inclusive as possible. Virtuality surely poses a challenge but it can also make trainings more accessible and flexible.

In the end, the training entitled "Developing sustainable community projects" took place on November 10th (preparation meeting) and then as planned from November 16th to November 20th. It was attended by 15 participants, 2 trainers and 2 technical support staff, and was conducted in English. Originally, the training had general learning topics in relation to competences the participants will develop, which were the following:

- recruit people from various backgrounds and empower them to get active,
- mentor intercultural groups and support them in implementing their community projects,
- fully understand and know how to implement the principles of sustainable development,
- raise their leadership skills,
- raise their intercultural competences,
- improve their skills in implementing active citizenship in their working field.

In relation to organizing the training online, we were aware that we would not be able to cover all these topics, redefined the objectives and formulated learning goals in relation to specific competences.

COMPETENCE IN IMPLEMENTING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP (PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT)

- Define what need analysis is and what tools can be used to conduct one.
- Try to conduct a need analysis on a predefined target group.
- Understand the importance of need analysis as a first step in project development.
- Know specific parts of the project development cycle and their correct order.
- Be able to create a project idea with help of a tool which takes them through steps of the process.
- Accept project cycle as a preferred idea framework when developing their own community activities.

PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Be aware of what Sustainable Development Goals are.
- See value in taking SDGs into account when designing community projects.

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND OWN ROLE IN A COMMUNITY

- Understand that identities are composed of different layers.
- Actively try to identify the layers their identities are composed of and critically assess them.
- Accept that being aware of your own identity is important when working with communities.

Apart from these main learning goals, we used one of the days to harvest specific learning needs of the participants. Some of them were not covered within the aforementioned learning goals. However, we still deemed some of them relevant to the overall aim of the training and decided to at least partially cover them during parallel workshops that took place on day 5 of the main programme. The topics covered were community outreach, inclusive leadership, online and offline tools for community and educational work, and time management/burnout prevention.

HOW WE BUILT THE FLOW

As a main inspiration for designing the programme flow, we used an output developed within the project – Mentoring methodology. Apart from that, the methodology also provided us with an inspiration for some of the activities which we used. In the flow, we were moving from abstract to concrete – with a general modus operandi to first provide frameworks the participants can later use in developing their own project ideas.

Here is the schedule of the training which can serve as a sample schedule for similar trainings that deals with getting involved in local communities. The structure of the training is based on the methodology.

	10.11. (Tuesday)	16.11. (Monday)	17.11. (Tuesday)	18.11. (Wednesday)	19.11. (Thursday)	20.11. (Friday)
11:00 - 13:00		Preparation for the programme - choosing pictures for presentations	Homework - approaches to need analysis research	Homework - project management, social and need analysis	Group work on projects and consultations with the trainers	Group work on finalizing the project ideas
16:00 - 19:30	Getting to know each other Reflection of pilot projects Harvesting of learning needs	Introduction to the programme Identity and my role in the community	Sustainable Development Goals introduction Need analysis and project management	SDG's in activities From community needs to concrete idea	Practical workshops Project development	Important points Action planning Evaluation

Table 1: Programme outline

After consulting the participants, we opted for having the training each day from 4pm until 7:30pm, as this was favourable by most due to their time limits. At the end of each day we conducted reflection groups very much in a way how we would do it in case of a residential training. The objective of reflection groups was to talk about learning, gather future expectations and receive feedback from the participants. Most of the days there was also homework that the participants could choose to work on during the next day in order to solidify the learning or to prepare for the next session. On day 5, the participants were also offered consultations before noon by the team of trainers in case they needed help with their project ideas.

TIPS FOR TRAINERS

The training caught us in a time of great uncertainty due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Due to restriction on travel and limits of physical meeting, we opted for organizing the training online. During the process, we learnt a lot about how to create an engaging educational activity without the need to share the same venue, building, seminar room. We would like to share some of the tips here in case you will be in the role of a trainer or facilitator of an online educational activity.

THE TEAM

From our experience, the minimum number of trainers/facilitators to run an online training is 2, optimal would be 3. Always make sure that you divide the roles within the team. We identified three main roles:

- **Leader** oversees the specific activity. She prepares and delivers the content and has a high level of responsibility and agency towards the group. She introduces the tasks, follows the process and runs the debriefings.
- **Supporter** is there to make the leader's task easier. He has the general idea of the session and can elaborate in case there is something missing. The supporter also watches the mood of the group closely and if sees that the input by the leader was not clear, he clarifies. During debriefings, these supporters watch the group together with the leader and oversee the speaking order.
- **Technician** knows when and how to divide the participants into groups. She quickly takes care of any technical issues and helps the participants who might have a tech-related problem.

Make sure your team has enough communication channels. You will often find yourselves in a situation when you quickly need to adapt and discuss a change of plans due to groups dynamic changing, timing constraints etc. Be ready for multitasking – while delivering the content, you might be also required to quickly check a text message from your teammate urging you to wrap up in 5 minutes, adapt the activity due to perceived group energy levels or announce an early break when you finish due to a technical issue that needs to be solved.

Always evaluate. Not just with the participants, but among your team as well. Take that 30-60 minutes after each day to go through it again activity by activity, feedback each other and make the next days even better.

RULES

To make everyone comfortable, make sure to announce general rules (or co-create them with the group if you have time). Among others, everyone should be on time, use a video camera if possible and be muted if they are not talking.

COMMUNICATION

Have enough communication with the participants before the training starts. Provide detailed information on time frame, topics covered, software that will be used etc. Also, provide a technical meeting 30 minutes before the official programme starts so the participants who suspect they might have difficulties with their hardware can connect and solve it with your support.

TIMING

Timing is extremely important. For this training, we opted for a 3 hours of facilitated programme + 30 minute break from 4pm to 7:30pm. We decided so after consulting most of the participants and finding a time window that would suit everyone. Mornings were then dedicated to individual work that would be facilitated by the participants themselves – therefore they could fit it into their own time schedule.

VISUALS

Make sure you use enough visual aids. Prepare flipcharts, scan them and show them via screen sharing. Create interactive documents. Use videos. Avoid being a talking head all the time.

IT IS OKAY NOT TO GET A REACTION

It's the little things that make our work more enjoyable. Anything from eye contact, occasional smiles from a learner figuring out the task, a circle full of confused faces after a failed joke or a straight outburst of laughter. These make the contact with the participants more personal, can greatly help the learning process and charge us with energy. Well, you can forget most of them while working online. Simply because when a participant stares into her screen, her brain tells her that she stares into a screen – not at another human being. You will see plenty of faces looking bored or neutral most of the time. And that is totally fine. You are doing your job well (probably), it's just that people often do not look at the screen the same way they look at another human being.

MIX ACTIVITIES

Try to avoid theoretical inputs that are longer than 15 minutes. People would probably stop listening anyway. Try to balance inputs, individual work and work in small groups. Provide case studies and simulations the participants can work on. And be aware that even though we are on computers, we are not limited by digital tools. For example, encourage participants to grab a paper and colours and create posters that map their communities. Or search their flats to find an item that represents development for them and then discuss it together in the whole group.

KNOW YOUR TOOLS

Few things are more frustrating for the participants than a trainer struggling with the tech they want to use with the group. Make sure you are aware of the possibilities, as well as limits of the platforms and software you are using. Take your time to test them with your colleagues in advance, or, if you are the more experienced one, provide safe space for you colleagues to try them out and learn how they work.

ENERGY LEVELS

Be mindful of the energy levels of the group. You don't want to work with a tired and annoyed group. Sometimes you might need to call for an earlier break if you see that people are losing attention. Or introduce an energizer when you begin and after a break. We collected several that can be used online.

MUSIC

Although not an energizer by itself, it helps to play music (through share sound option) towards the end of each break. The participants will know that the break is coming to an end and they will start appearing on screen, nodding their head to the music or perhaps even moving a bit.

SHAKING

Ask everyone to stand up and be visible on your camera. You will be counting from 10 to 1 and shaking parts of your body. Shake your right arm 10 times, then the left arm, then right leg and left leg. After the first cycle, share each part 9 times all the way to 1, when you shake your right arm once, your left arm once, your right leg once and your left leg once.

ONLINE SPACE

This one is based on working with how we appear on screen. Participants touch the sides of the camera window by their hands, as if they were locked in a room and were touching the walls. Raise your hands high to "catch the wi-fi". Move your head close to the camera to "check if it works". Drum with your hands on the person below you on screen. And whenever anyone says "Zombies!" hide from your camera so the zombies don't see you.

TOUCH THE COLOUR

A trainer chooses a colour and says: "Now touch the colour green." Everyone looks around their rooms, finds an item with the corresponding colour and touches it and then comes back to the screen. The last person chooses a new colour. Apart from colours, you can work with materials, specific items ("Everyone grab your favourite cup and bring it") or even something content related ("Everyone grab a thing that represents inclusion to you").

VI. CONCLUSION

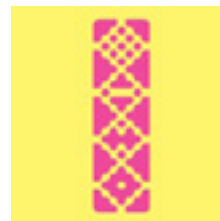


We hope that this booklet gives you inspiring ideas on how to start, develop and implement a community project based on the needs of a specific community which is sustainable and relevant globally as well as locally. If you are interested in the work of the participating organizations, feel free to contact them using the contact information below. We wish you a lot of strength and courage to become Active Citizens, to engage with your community to start a positive change. Enjoy the process!

CONTACT INFORMATION OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS



MAREENA
<https://mareena.sk/>



BE INTERNATIONAL
<https://www.beinternational.cz/>



GLOBAL 2000
<https://www.global2000.at/en>



KALUNBA
<https://www.facebook.com/kalunbacharity>

UNITY IN COMMUNITY

PRACTICAL HANDBOOK FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ACTIONS

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