

Guidelines for Community Development Planning



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund



Interreg
Central Baltic



Community development planning – includes the formulation of broad-ranging visions, objectives and actions to achieve social, economic and environmental sustainability and habitability of the community and guides future community development.

Community development plan – a plan defining the current and future development of the community (at grassroots level), as well as a form of public participation in the development of the territory. It is not developed by the municipality, but the municipality representative might be involved in the preparatory process.

Development plan – document describing problems and providing solutions, assessing the potential impacts of these solutions, setting targets and results to be achieved in the relevant policy area, and planning further action to implement policies and assess results.

Community – a geographically united group of individuals united by a social identity, territory or common interest.

Social innovation – new solutions (products, services, processes, etc.) which at the same time meet social needs (more efficient than existing solutions) create new or improved capabilities and ensure better use of resources.

NGO – non-governmental organisation.

Needs – something that is needed for acceptable living conditions.

Wants – something that one would desire yet it would be possible to exist without.

Participatory budgeting – democratic process enabling citizens to determine how a portion of the local government or state budget is spent.

Association – a group of individuals or organisations (with shared economic, political, scientific or other objectives).

Non-governmental organisation – a non-profit organisation operating independently of any government, usually aimed at addressing social or political issues.

Union – voluntary group of individuals established to achieve the aims specified in the articles of this union which are not of a profit-making nature.

Foundation – including fund, is a set of capital that is appointed for the purpose specified by the founder, which does not have a profit-making nature.

“Bottom-up” approach – an approach where the initiative comes from the local population rather than the government, for example by offering a solution to an ongoing problem in its territory.

Local action group – a local rural group represented by entrepreneurs, members of the rural population, organisations, and local governments, which operates in a specific rural area, representing the interests of the population and taking care of rural development issues at local level.

Local action group – a local rural group represented by entrepreneurs, members of the rural population, organisations, and local governments, which operates in a specific rural area, representing the interests of the population and taking care of rural development issues at local level.

Local Development Strategy – a community-led local development strategy means a coherent set of operations designed and implemented by a local action group to meet local objectives and needs which contribute to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.¹

LEADER – is a local development method which has been used for engaging local actors in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of their rural areas.²

Smart Villages – in April 2017, the European Commission approved an EU Action for Smart Villages, including the definition for Smart Villages. Smart Villages are rural areas and communities based on their existing strengths and values and on the development of new opportunities to create new added value. In Smart Villages, traditional and new approaches are searched and improved through digital communication technologies, innovation and better use of knowledge for the benefit of citizens.

Silicon Valley – high-tech region in the U.S.A., the state of California. Plays leading role with their capable entrepreneurs, engineers and venture capitalists.

Social innovation – new solutions (products, services, processes, etc.) which at the same time meet social needs (more efficient than existing solutions) create new or improved capabilities and ensure better use of resources.

¹ https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd-guidance_lsd.pdf

² https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_en#_edn1

COMMUNITY PLAN IS THE GREAT FUTURE, SHAPED BY THE HARMONY OF SMALL THINGS!

Nowadays, community development planning is understood in two ways - physically as spatial infrastructure planning and as a social process, where the community development plan is the result of a community-based vision surrounding the future of its territory and the necessary actions to achieve it.

In the context of these guidelines, a community is understood as a population that is united by a certain identity, territory, or common interest that wants and is prepared to make positive changes to the area they feel to belong to. For example, a community plan can also be developed by a city population group or community that wants to organise and develop a specific part of the city.

Involvement in community development planning opens several opportunities both for citizens and representatives of local governments (municipalities).

It is an opportunity for citizens to contribute to the development of their place of residence and to participate more actively in decision-making, as well as to bring knowledge and commitment from the local community into the planning process. The community plan developed at grassroots level may become an important instrument for expressing the interests and needs of a particular group of society to the regulatory authorities in a reasoned and concentrated manner, as well as the basis for the implementation of local initiatives. In addition, citizens' own involvement in sorting their territory and promoting its growth contributes to a greater feeling of community and sense of belonging to their place of residence, and to a better understanding of management processes and the importance of such processes. What one has created, will never be destroyed by that person.

A well-established community plan, which provides a clear vision of the population on the opportunities for development of the concrete area and the necessary investment projects, allows the local government to better understand the needs of the population, and to come up with the necessary support instruments, including participatory budgeting, thus supporting community-based initiatives. On the other hand, supporting citizens' initiatives can contribute to a greater trust in the local governance and motivation to engage in the development of their area.

The guidelines for community development planning are designed to encourage qualitative involvement of every person or group of people in fostering growth of their territory and to promote the implementation of citizens' initiatives.

The guidelines include a description of the essential stages and principles of community planning to be considered by those who want to create their community development plans. The guidelines can help citizens to formulate their needs in a logical and concentrated way and justify the necessary support, including one from their respective local government (municipality). The municipality can provide support for implementation of community development plans, but cannot demand, force or expect results from processes that are initiated from grass-roots level.

In order for the community development plan to be successful, it is important that it is initiated by the society, meanwhile getting the support also from public administrations, as a result of a fruitful cooperation between citizens and the local government.

The guidelines are developed within the framework of the Interreg Central Baltic Programme project Coast4us³ and are joint work of the organisations and institutions involved in the project under the supervision of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia. Meanwhile the development of guidelines has been a process of collective intelligence work, involving not only project partners at various stages of development, but also activists from Latvian local communities⁴. In addition, the development of the working pages of the guidelines and community plan takes into account the recommendations and proposals from experts Āris Ādlers, Daina Alužāne, Anita Seļicka, Katrīna Miška-Idū, Aspōja Fastigheter and many others.

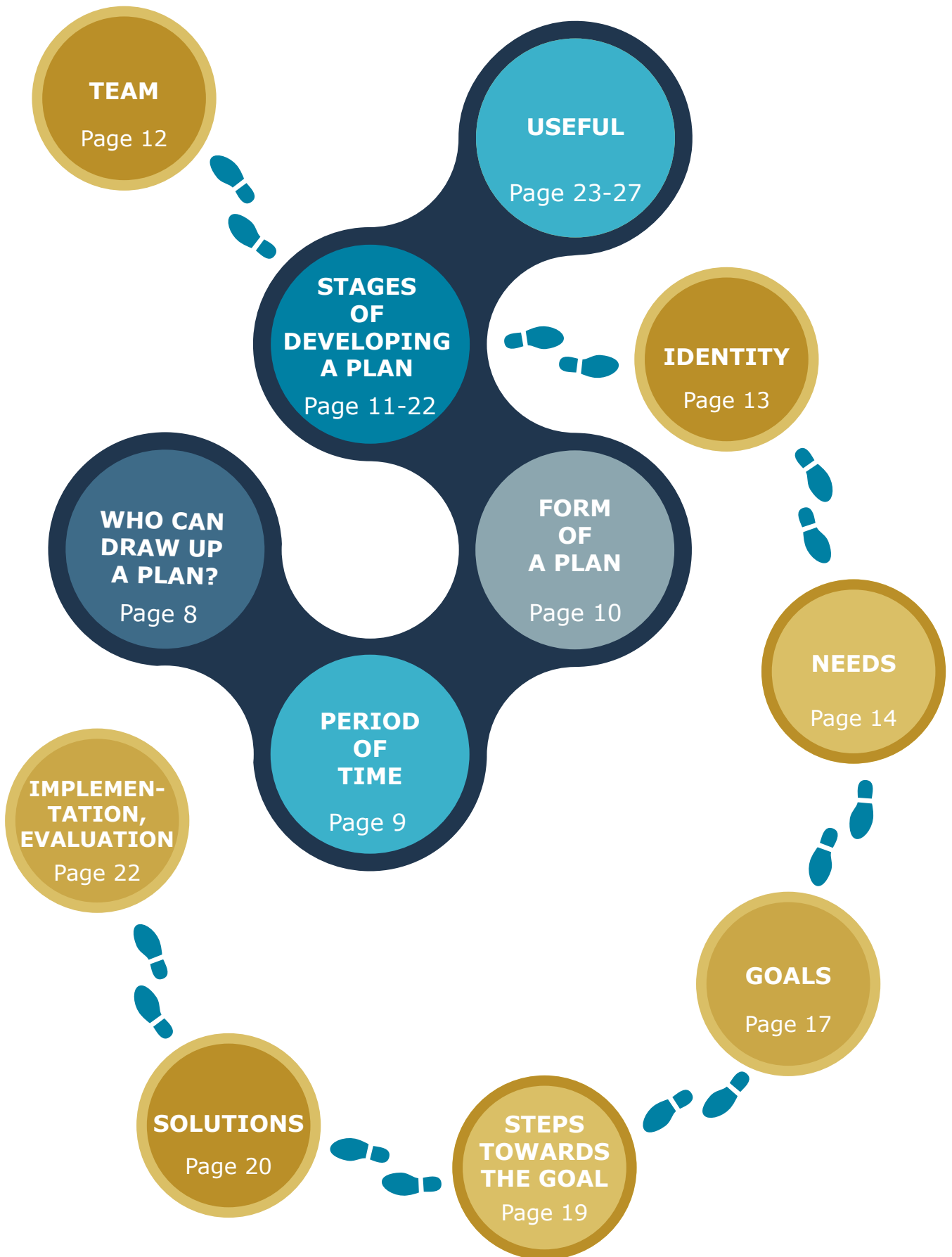
Thanks to everyone involved in providing their experience, knowledge and views in the joint production of this document and organisation of other activities of the Coast4us project!

³ The aim of the project is to develop a new, innovative and holistic planning approach for marine and coastal areas based on the needs of local communities in Finland, Latvia, Sweden and Estonia.

⁴ Municipalities, universities, NGOs, public administration institutions and other partners from Finland, Latvia, Sweden and Estonia are taking part in this project. The leading partners of the project were County Administrative Board of Östergötland, NGOs, HSSLÖ and Coompanion, whereas partners from Latvia include Carnikava and Salacgrīva City Councils, Riga Technical University and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development. In order to make the Guidelines practical and user friendly, they were discussed in 8 regional seminars and other events in Latvia with local activists, NGO's, representatives from Local Action Groups, local municipalities and planning regions.

FOREWORD	04
ROAD MAP TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN	07
WHO CAN DRAW UP A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN?	08
WHAT PERIOD OF TIME ARE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS DEVELOPED FOR?	09
WHAT SHOULD BE THE FORM OF A COMMUNITY PLAN?	10
WHAT ARE THE STAGES OF DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN?	10
Team building and community engagement	11
Awareness of the identity of the community	13
Identification of needs, analysis of causes and consequences of problems	14
Defining the goal – how to formulate the changes we want to see in the community?	17
Defining solutions or activities to be implemented / setting steps to reach the objective	19
Evaluation of the implementation of the community development plan	21
HOW SHOULD THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN BE ALIGNED WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENT PLANNING DOCUMENTS?	22
HOW SHOULD THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN BE MADE A PLAN FOR EACH CITIZEN?	23
HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN?	25
Annex 1	28
WORKING SHEETS FOR DESIGNING A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN	28
Annex 2	32
USEFUL SOURCES OF LITERATURE	32
USEFUL ONLINE SOURCES	32

ROAD MAP TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN



WHO CAN DRAW UP A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

Community development planning in Latvia is not regulated by legislative acts. The same situation is also in Finland, Sweden and Estonia, where village development planning is not regulated by laws. Consequently, in these countries, a community development plan can be drawn up by anyone or any group of society willing to initiate or pursue the development of their village or the community.

Another important factor in the development of the community plan relates to the legal form of drawing up the plan. Although the design of the plan can take place in a legally unformed way (the plan is being developed by the population), it is worth thinking about the creation of a community association. Legal forms, such as the establishment of an NGO, will help to formulate the objectives and tasks of the process and formalise the roles involved in the process (management, coordination, communications, boards and other functions). The establishment of a legal unit – NGO, involving those involved in the development of the community plan, will also help during the implementation of the plan, attracting public funding which in most cases provides support for registered NGOs, not to private persons.

For example, in Finland (with exception of Åland islands) the establishment of village NGOs is a common practice. Finland has around 4,300 villages, some 4,000 of which are registered as NGOs. They are NGOs that can be joined by anyone (a person who lives in a village; a person who owns forests or farmland in a village; a person who has a cottage in the village, etc.). Their main function is to create community development plans using the top-led bottom-fed approach. Moreover, in Finland, community-level planning is not part of the national management planning system, thus in Finland this type of planning is based on voluntary NGO activity.

However, the recommendation is not to solely focus on the legal form, as it can become a “stumbling block” both in design and implementation of the plan: it is essential not to foresee the creation of an NGO as an aim itself and not to overload itself with the formal work (meetings, reporting, etc.) instead of dedicating all the efforts to the real purpose, including the development and implementation of the plan.



Shall we establish NGO?

Before deciding on establishment of communities NGO, please consider the following aspects:

Benefits

- Legal status, autonomy;
- Clearly defined functions and responsibility – management, financial accounting, coordination;
- Greater opportunities to attract public funding;
- Greater opportunities to discuss with local governance and a higher possibility to be heard;
- Wider opportunities to attract collaboration partners.

Burdens

- Formalities, which are related to legal status – reports, meetings, keeping an account;
- Work with formalities, initially will not be paid;
- Responsibility, which in most cases will exceed the remuneration received in terms of money.

Maybe we should not?

Let's look at the organisations in the community, assessing possible cooperation and their involvement in an existing organisation.

In general, it is desirable to ensure cooperation between citizens and local governments (municipalities) in the community development planning process, given that community planning is a targeted form of society involvement, which can also be used in the planning and implementation of local governments' development strategies. Meanwhile, it is important that it is not only the municipality that is a partner for the local group. It can be other authorities, organisations, companies, EU funds, etc. that help the group to achieve and implement its goals.

WHAT PERIOD OF TIME ARE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS DEVELOPED FOR?

The planning period for community development depends on:

- The objective and importance of the community development plan;
- Previous experience of the community and available (active) resources;
- Intention to align the period for the implementation of the community plan with local government's or a higher-level development planning documents (municipality's development plan, region's development programmes, EU programming period);
- Other specific aspects determined by the identity of the community and the socio-economic situation.

The community development plan can be prepared for a short period, for example, by drawing up a plan for community development in winter for the period until the following winter. However, such short-term planning will have no place to achieve long-term vision and goals.



If the community plan is intended to be aligned with the local government's development planning documents, the period of the plan can be matched to the municipal planning document period, creating space for more ambitious objectives.

The optimal period of the community development plan is 3 years. This is a long enough period for citizens to experience the positive changes and impact of chosen development directions on community growth and identity, meanwhile short enough to be able to react on current changes both in the community and in a wider scale, preparing the plan for the next period.

The choice of time period is closely linked to the objectives and tasks set out in the plan. Most importantly, the plan should be kept up to date ("a living document") and revised as new issues are identified or when it is needed.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE FORM OF A COMMUNITY PLAN?

Given that the community development plan reflects the needs of the local population, it can have any form, if it has a logical structure and provides clear answers to the following questions:

- **Why?** (identifying the situation and community needs, common development direction, based on the identity of the community);
- **What?** (target, vision);
- **How?** (activities, actions, tasks);
- **Who?** (implementers, necessary resources);
- **How will we make sure of the changes?** (monitoring and evaluation).



There are community development plans whose form is not a document but, for example, a song, a theatrical show, an Internet site, etc., yet these kinds of development plans can be considered more as a presentation of a community development plan than a plan itself.

WHAT ARE THE STAGES OF DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

In order to prepare a high-quality, reasoned and feasible community development plan that can also be aligned with other development planning documents at a local and/or regional level, it is recommended that the subsequent stages of developing a community development plan are followed:

- The formation of a team and the involvement of the society;
- Awareness of the identity of the community;
- Identification of community needs, analysis of the causes and effects of problems;
- Defining goals;
- Defining solutions or activities to be implemented / determination of steps to achieve the goal;
- Evaluation of the implementation of the community development plan.

In the next chapters more detailed information about each of the stages is presented. In Annex 1 you can find working sheets for designing of a community development plan, which can be used, and which can facilitate elaboration of community plans.

In the community development planning process, significant attention should be paid to all stages of work with communities to identify the needs, define the target, and to seek the solutions.



If the community, for example, is “tired” or incapable of seeking solutions carefully enough, it is worth stopping the plan and relaunching it when the community is motivated and ready to act. Otherwise, the community development plan may show imbalances between, for example, a well-designed set of needs and targets and weak/inappropriate actions/solutions. In the case of a “tired” community, the solutions can be the same as the one’s that created the challenges of the village.

In the context of the new Smart Village development approach, solutions are key to the development of the modern community, which should include both social and technological knowledge. It is desirable to create synergies between the knowledge of the citizens themselves, the support of process promoters and the recruitment of specialists.

Team building and community engagement

Any process starts with its own initiative group, people who step forward themselves and take responsibility for progressing the process. At this stage, they will not be all people of the community. It is essential to assess at the beginning of planning the social and economic links, skills, and the culture of cooperation, social capital and other aspects of the people involved in the planning process, which will determine the role of these people in drawing up the plan. Given that both the design and implementation of the plan are long-lasting processes, it is worth at the very beginning of the processes to identify the community plan leaders, the roles and tasks of others involved.

The main roles are:

- **Opinion leader or local enthusiast**, an influential member of the group or community, who often expresses his or her opinion and whom many refer to for advice. They can be either self-appointed or elected by the community;
- **An authority** – a member of a group or community who is an expert on a specific matter and whose opinion may affect other people;
- **The population co-ordinators** who undertake the main work with the involvement, polling, activation of the population;
- **The facilitators of the initiatives.**

The above-mentioned roles are often carried out by one person, but this is not recommended, because it can lead to a situation where the community plan is not a collective work of the residents.

A leader or a group of leaders has a very important role in advancing the development and implementation of the plan. Identifying leaders is also an essential prerequisite for the plan to be based on the needs of the population, or for mutual agreement on the actions, priorities and implementation monitoring/evaluation arrangements as part of the plan. However, opinion leaders in the planning process often will not be leaders in the implementation of plan activities.



Building a team at this planning stage is actually the formation of a group of leaders. It is important for that team of leaders to be positively motivated to operate and able to inspire the community to engage.

It is important to be clear that these leaders are not in any way identified or appointed by the municipality. They step forward themselves and take responsibility. It is good that people are thinking locally about trying to spread the commitment to as many people as possible. This can be made possible by dividing tasks into small, manageable portions. An entrance for engagement can be to staff a person in a market stall or hand out notes in the mailbox. Based on this, a commitment can be developed to include larger tasks.

It is also desirable that those involved in the development of the community plan to be those who, after the plan has been drafted or even during the drafting of the plan, will fully or at least partially undertake its implementation. It is essential to involve as many representatives of different fields and groups as possible in the development of the plan in order to ensure that the needs of the widest possible population are reflected. It also makes it easier to implement the plan.

When drawing up a community development plan which is based on the needs of the community, the point of view of the population is the only opinion that matters. If the plan does not reflect the needs of the community and it is not an agreement among the residents, it does not constitute as a community development plan within the definition constituted in these guidelines. There are two key ways to ensure that the needs are reflected: (1) clarify the views of citizens and (2) involve citizens in the creation process of the plan. The community development plan shall be drawn up on the assumption that the main implementers will be the citizens themselves, attracting funding from different sources including funds from the local government, as a result of a successful collaboration.

It should be noted that work on community development requires a lot of energy, which is one of the most important resources. Therefore, everyone involved in the community development process shall seek for its own sources to restore the energy. Since voluntary involvement is additional duties, that will take large part of one's spare time, it would be reasonable to discuss the engagement with family members and getting family's support. For those involved in the community development planning process, it is important to define – why am I doing it? If it is done, then it will work out.

Awareness of the identity of the Community

The first task of the team of leaders is to recognize the identity of the community. At the first community meeting, answers on the following questions can be found jointly:

- **Who are we** (geographically, socially, historically and in other aspects)?
What are our strengths? How do we differ from other communities?
- **What do we want to be? What life do we see in our community in the future? What is our vision – the scene of the future? What can I give to the community and the world?**



Identity awareness is a vision. Test your relationship with the place and dream of it. This is not yet the specific objective of the plan. There is no need to define a specific deadline for implementation of the vision, but without the vision it will not be possible to define attainable and, above all, necessary objectives.

"The idea that hasn't been released through feelings is stillborn..."
/Leonardo da Vinci/

The vision at this stage is defined by a team of leaders. The vision is open to supplement in the future elaboration of the community development plan.

Trends affecting community formation and strength:

- **Marketability** – both domestically and globally. Being diverse, the community shall be able to identify itself, engage others, contrast itself with others, highlighting its advantages, its specificity, things that are proud of. It must be able to present itself by highlighting the unique and unifying, and by passing to others the message on the essential aspects of the community;
- **Ability to change** – the ability of the community to be together and adapt to changing conditions, often influenced by global processes, becoming more present today;
- **Emotional intelligence** – the ability to be aware of what we feel, to understand our feelings, meanwhile taking deliberate decisions.

Identification of needs, analysis of causes and consequences of problems

It is essential to identify the current situation at the beginning of the plan and to understand what citizens want to change or create. The most important question to be answered is – why something needs to be done (what is the point)? We should also understand what we want to do and what needs to be done.



Towards the perfect community development plan, the importance of the identity of the site must always be in mind, which will inevitably form the main development vector/direction of the community.

Developers of the community development plan should agree on one or more challenges/obstacles⁵ to be addressed during the implementation of the community development plan. The problem must be present, and it must also be solvable. However there might be some challenges which go beyond the community's ability, but still important to be identified in the community development plan (for instance, such issues as climate change, urbanisation and others) as being impactful on the community.

When thinking of the main challenges to focus on in the community development plan, it is worth finding answers to questions such as:

- What is the problem? How did it arise?
- What is the scale of the problem – how many areas of community life are affected?

- What will happen if the problem is not addressed? Why exactly do we need to address it?
- Who is interested in the solution to this problem – how wide and active society engagement is going to be in solving the problem?

It is important to look at the problem from different viewpoints and get complete information about it. When thinking about the problem, it is important to get as much ideas as possible and to see new approaches to the problem.

Besides the challenges, community's identity, strengths, success factors and growth potential shall be analysed and taken into account defining development directions and action. It is important to highlight and reflect on positive aspects of the community – what unites people and what they are proud of.

The methods of clarifying the community's views on the necessary changes (challenges and possible solutions) and involving citizens in the development of a community plan range from very simple to nuanced and complex, such as organising meetings, working groups, personal interviews, creating scenarios, hiking, drawing, photography, etc.

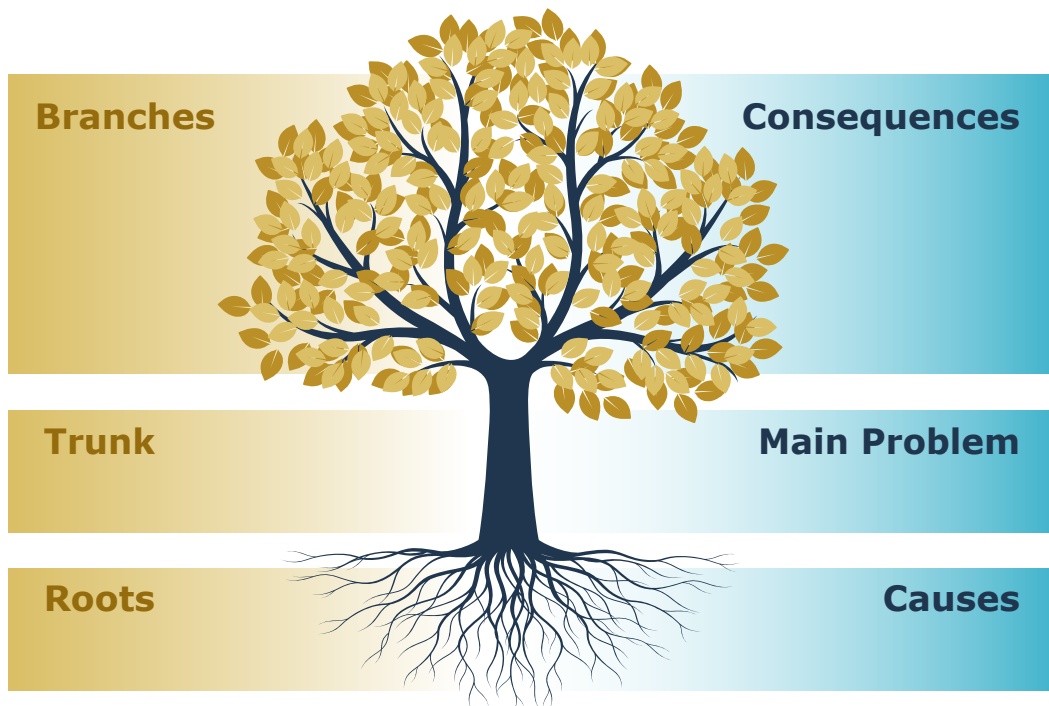
It is not possible to identify one of the best methods by which people's thoughts can be identified, objectives defined and the necessary actions identified. Furthermore, motivating citizens to engage in processes can be a challenge. Everything depends on those involved in the development of a community plan, as well as on those people who lead the community development process. There are communities that like working in meetings and the leader of which can motivate people with one email, but there are also communities where people can only work with people by talking individually. Each community is unique and diverse. Therefore, is important to use different methods within a single community in order to reach as many individuals as possible. It is also important to keep in mind that the leader does not symbolize hierarchy, but rather it is the person which guides the elaboration process of community development plan.

Identifying the needs of the community and motivating to engage is a creative process which can be carried out by the community itself, as well as by attracting experts from the side lines. In the second case it is desirable to provide enough time for the people involved to be able to understand the specifics of the community and to provide time and resources for the application of different methods.

Remote communication methods are recommended under circumstances of a pandemic.



One of the widely used methods to define the desired changes is the development of a “problem tree” so that the causes and consequences of the problems can be identified.



It is worth remembering that this method, although initially mild, is difficult to implement if there is no great motivation for those involved and no support is provided in the search for causal links and identifying the “real” problem. When developing the problem tree with determination it is likely to reveal that the problems originally identified are the cause of other, more serious problems or other causes.

For example, residents initially complained that people became passive and had begun to use intoxicating substances. Drawing up the problem tree, it turned out that it was only a consequence of a chain of causes: there is no place to spend free time in the evening; this was due to all the public places being closed on the village's central street; public places were closed because all the small shops and service providers had closed before (people no longer came to the village centre); shops and service providers closed their businesses because people did not shop there anymore; people did not shop there because they went shopping at a supermarket in the city. In the case at hand, the real problem was the change in people's habits, which had negative consequences for people themselves.

There are many other methods that can be used to define desired changes in the community, for instance:

- **SWOT analysis** which looks at the strengths and weaknesses of the test case, as well as opportunities and threats;
- **Design thinking method**, where the highest emphasis is placed on thoroughly investigating problems (tackling the right problem) and defining appropriate solutions (tackling the problem correctly). The method is based on a seven-step process: defining, researching, generating ideas – defining a problem, examination, generation of ideas – defining solutions, prototyping, making choices, implementation and learning;

- **“Orthodox method”** – that looks at traditional types of solutions in the first working process, while in the second working process “challenging” conventional assumptions/solutions, acting contrary to traditional assumptions, or different from them, in an unconventional way;
- **Local economic analysis**, open space etc.



In Kökar (an island far out in the Åland archipelago) the **Habitability Concept**⁶ was used in order to determine whether they are sustainable society or not and if the Kökar is a habitable island. They asked local people what makes the island habitable. They developed indicators, evaluation scales and objectives for their resilience with a view to the year 2030. They have tried to describe this in 7 areas (prosperous people, trust and participation, clean water, ecosystem in balance, attractiveness, renewable energy, and local economy) with 40 indicators each evaluated on a scale of 4 steps. The findings are illustrated in a polar diagram as a summary form of their habitability as of today. Based on this evaluation, they formulated their development vision, as well as defined actions and measures to compensate for their weak areas and strengthen the strong ones. These are measures that they can take themselves to develop their habitability.

Defining the goal – how to formulate the changes we want to see in the community?

Defining an appropriate target is the biggest challenge during the development of a community plan. Usually when defining the target, general phrases such as “green village”, “developed village”, “home for both old and young”, etc. are used. Such general objectives do not allow to identify the changes that will occur after the implementation of the community development plan. It will also be difficult to measure the level of achievement of the goal.

The most common difficulty in defining the goals is inability of the community to create / find an identity of its place.



A blurry, general goal is unattainable. The objective of each plan must be achievable, provided that defined actions are carried out. When establishing a community development plan, the community relies on its capabilities, resources and motivation to implement this plan, regardless of external factors. The positive effects of external factors on the implementation of the plan can only be a pleasant bonus for the implementation of the plan.

In order to define the objective, it is desirable to identify the situation in which the community is and what changes (the preferred situation in the future) the community would like to see. It can be a halt to some processes, or a promotion that depends on the community. It is best for a community plan to set a goal that is **comprehensible and close to the community**, with a set of actions to achieve that goal. The goals must be clearly defined, justified in the current situation, objectively assessable and achievable over a specified period of time. **It is important to make sure that adequate resources will be available to achieve the goal.**



To make sure your goals are clear and reachable, each one should be:

- **S**pecific (simple, sensible, significant);
- **M**easurable (meaningful, motivating);
- **A**chievable (agreed, attainable);
- **R**elevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based);
- **T**ime bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time sensitive).

/Robert S. Rubin/

When formulating the goal, it is important to identify the site (Where? On what scale?), to say the essence (What? Who? How?), identify the target group (To whom?), set the time limit (How long?). Time-limit is important for self-discipline.

The description of the current situation should not be linked to a detailed description of nature, resources, cultural and historic objectives etc. It will be enough if the developers of the community development plan agree on one or more challenges/obstacles that need to be solved (see previous section).

It is very important for community members not only to see and feel the positive changes brought by the results of the implementation of community development plan, but equally important that the actions of the plan are coordinated and contribute to strengthening the identity of the community and the place of residence. It is not possible to involve persons who do not feel belonging to the particular area, meanwhile sense of belonging is not possible without identity.

Given that the community development plan is the result of an agreement within the civil society, it is worth considering that the community development plan can contribute to addressing local, regional or national issues. It is not recommended to set the objectives that cannot be achieved by the community. On the other hand, objectives that go beyond the competence of the community create an opportunity to communicate with the local governance, entrepreneurs or other relevant authorities about the possibilities to support implementation of the community development plan. This requires more efforts, however, it might bring a greater impact on positive changes in the community.

Setting goals, that will not have a practical impact on community life in the long term, will not be appropriate due to the long implementation process. Also, there are things you do not need to plan, as they can be done without planning.

The ambition of the community development plan will be determined by the objectives and scope of activities. The lack of ambition (unwillingness to achieve something) can make the plan irrelevant/formal yet drawing up a community development plan that involves committing to unrealistic things will be inefficient. The planned activities should therefore be meaningful to the community, feasible and bring real benefits to the population.

The extent to which the objectives are set during the planning period depends on the citizens themselves. Achieving a realistic and doable target (e.g. to attract a new 10 inhabitants to the area within three years) will create a sense of satisfaction for developers and implementers of the development plan.

Setting an overly ambitious goal, that has failed to reach, can create a sense of disappointment. On the other hand, if the goal is too modest, citizens will not be satisfied with the work they have invested in planning or will consider that community development planning does not serve to meet the real needs of the population.

Defining solutions or activities to be implemented / setting steps to reach the objective

To ensure the implementation of the community development plan, it is necessary to identify the steps to be taken to achieve the objective and their sequence by defining:

- **What will be the main actions/tasks?**
- **In which order and during which period concrete actions will be done to achieve the objective and the desired changes?**
- **In what form and who will implement specific activities? How the wider community will be involved in the implementation of the plan?**
- **What are the costs of these activities? What are the possible financial sources?**
- **What results need to be achieved (they should be measurable) and what are the monitoring arrangements?** The solutions, or the activities to be implemented, are the actions needed to produce a result and achieve the objective pursued.

When defining solutions, specific, detailed activities are planned – for example, organising citizen meetings, repairing the playground, rebuilding the post office, creating remote jobs, organising social services, etc.



A complex approach can and should be developed to achieve one objective, which is based on an analysis of the problems, namely eliminating the causes of the problem and mitigating the consequences.

The main principles for defining the activities to be carried out are as follows:

- Activities should be possible to implement;
- Similar activities shall be pooled into thematic blocks and grouped in a logical order;
- For implementation of each activity, the responsible implementer should be identified, as well as implementation deadline and the achievable outcome (which must be measurable).

The following scheme might be use in order to identify activities – action plan. Action plan can be a part of the community development plan or a separate document, which might be for shorter period of time and might be updated/ revised more often that the strategic part of the community development plan (objectives).

Nr	Action/ activity (example!)	Implementa- tion period	Necessary resources	Available resources	Necessary funding	Implementers
1.	<i>Planting trees and bushes</i>	<i>April, 2021</i>	<i>Aligning (coordination) with local government. Plants, preparation of soil, working instruments, human resources who deliver the plants to the venue place and who do the planting. Food for workers.</i>	<i>People who are ready to do the work, there are available work instruments. There are people who can deliver the plants, there are people ready to organise the Vfood and the event's social part.</i>	<i>150.00 EUR ground milling and refining service (preparation of soil) 300.00 EUR purchase of plants 50.00 EUR expenses for food.</i>	<i>Jane – organises preparation of soil, buys plants; John – delivers plants to the venue place; Olivia and Mark – organises planting activity, identifying the venue time, inviting people; Millie and Emma – organises food and events social part; Lucas – prepares report, financial accounting, gets the permission from local government.</i>
2.					

You should not focus solely on activities that create a physical environment. When creating a community development plan, it is desirable to include activities which do not require financial resources, but are intended as activities for the development of the community itself, such as capacity building, consolidation activities, tours, etc. For activities that do not have sufficient community resources,

investments from other financial sources may be attracted (more detailed information in the chapter – *How to contribute to the implementation of the community development plan?*)

Community development plan should also address the impact of the planned actions on challenges in other fields in close synergy with other development processes, it is also advisable to foresee further actions after the implementation of the plan.

In the 21st century, the challenge solutions involve “inflow” of new knowledge and the ability to adapt to new circumstances. It is worth looking for solutions in other countries, in the plans of other communities, in cooperation with experts and by learning individually as well as a group. The key words for bringing new knowledge into the community include learning, exchanging experience, increasing curiosity among the community population, and building new cooperation and partnerships between community citizens and scientists, marketing specialists and other stakeholders.

Access to new knowledge may be linked to both technological and social innovation, as well as it might be simple knowledge which has not yet been provided to the population, but which can be learned. For example, residents never thought the pond could have any economic benefit because it is overgrown but cleaning it up regularly requires great time and financial resources. It turned out, however, that there were specialists who knew how to proceed in such cases and how to help make the pond a place to grow fish and not overgrow regularly.

In order to improve the current situation, if the community does not have the necessary knowledge it is important to:

- Increase curiosity;
- Foster cooperation with people who have specific knowledge;
- Support for the acquisition and application of this knowledge.

The “influx” of technological and social innovations into the community is linked to several barriers - often due to low social capital and public fears (related to lack of knowledge). However, in the context of the development of the community development plan, it is important not to think about the innovation solutions of “Silicon Valley”, but about the level of knowledge of the existing population, the capacity to apply them, and the possibilities to reproduce / increase knowledge.



For instance, there are still a lot of people who cannot pay for utilities on the Internet. Accordingly, to solve this problem, training programme on how to make payments online, organising local study groups, might be incorporated in the community development plan, as a relevant task.

The introduction of innovative solutions involves sufficient interaction between the following aspects: community population capacity, personal characteristics, attitudes, environment, knowledge, motivation (cognitive capacity, need, and emotion), behaviour, learning ability.

Evaluation of the implementation of the community development plan

From the initiation of a community development plan, it is important to remember that it is important not only to plan and implement specific activities but also to evaluate the objectives achieved, as well as the process itself.

For community development plans to be implemented, it is worth to indicate who will ensure monitoring the community development plan implementation and what will be done if the objectives of the plan are or will not be achieved. Even if the objectives are met, it is worth scheduling a discussion with the population on whether the community plan and its objectives have brought the expected satisfaction and whether there have been any genuine changes that people of the community expected.

In case of failure to reach objective, it is important to analyse the process itself from the beginning of the planning to the point where it was found that the objective was not achieved, rather than finger-pointing.

The monitoring of the implementation of the community plan may be carried out by the citizens themselves, a specially established group, which carries out an assessment. It can also be done by other people outside the community, for instance from a neighbouring community or municipality.

There is no specific recommendation on how to carry out an evaluation of the community plan – it must be a mutual agreement between those involved in the process.



It is important to remember that evaluation is an equally important process alongside planning and implementation, provided that the conclusions of the evaluation process are considered when planning the next community development plan.

HOW SHOULD THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN BE ALIGNED WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENT PLANNING DOCUMENTS?

Although the community development plan and the actions it contains are difficult to imagine conflicting with other development planning documents (but it is possible), it is worth looking into the development planning process of the community in the development planning documents at international, national, regional and local level. Most important document to look at would be the development programme of the local government, taking into account that it is always aligned with the hierarchically highest planning documents at regional, national and international level.



It is useful getting to know and examine local government's and other planning documents and programmes of higher level, as well as the development strategies of the local action groups (LAGs), in order to plan attraction of funding for the implementation of the activities of the community development plan. These documents always define development priorities, which means that activities that will be implemented within these priorities will have adequate funding available, for example, through the implementation of various NGO projects at local, regional, national and even international level.

If the community development plan complies with local government's and regional planning documents, the community development plan will be easily integrated, for example, into the local government's development programme, **if the community is willing and able to agree on the usefulness of such a step with local government specialists.** If the community development plan is intended to be integrated into the local government development programme, it is worth looking into the regulatory enactments⁷ governing the development and content of the territory development planning documents, as well as inviting the relevant local government specialist(s) to the development of the plan.

Nonetheless, it is not recommended to start the development of community plans with research and analysis of other planning documents (for instance, local government's development programmes). Community development plan is not a copy of local government's development programme for a smaller territory. It is also not desirable to include all aspects of the functioning of the community in the community development plan, however it is recommended to prioritise the needs.



The municipality should continue to provide the same services to the population and equivalent investment in areas with and without community development plans. **It is important to maintain the voluntary principle of community development plans and direct it as a society initiative.** It is unacceptable, if citizens have taken an initiative and the municipality passes all the concerns of the community as a burden on to the population. Communities shall not fulfil the functions of local

government. Meanwhile communication between the community and municipality, including regular meetings regarding current and future collaboration, is advisable and might increase mutual trust.

HOW SHOULD THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN BE MADE A PLAN FOR EACH CITIZEN?

Making the community plan a plan for each citizen is the key for a successful implementation. The involvement of each citizen is important – if not in implementation, at least in supporting the actions planned. The involvement of most of the population in planning will be a guarantee of success. However, the involvement of the population is arguably the most difficult part to achieve.

The population needs to be involved in two phases – when the plan is being developed and implemented. If this has not been possible in the first phase, a major effort should be devoted towards the reintroduction of the plan – explaining and motivating the people.



Each community will have its own ways of engaging citizens, and their choices can be based on both imaginative and inventive activities and modern technologies. Dialogue with society is already an important activity! A variety of methods can be used, taking into account the diversity of the society.

Possible methods that might be used to involve society:

- Citizen meetings. Where? In schools, libraries, shops, coffee bars, parks, where else? The venue of the meeting itself says a lot about the community, its values, and creates the atmosphere of the event as well;
- Publication in mass media. Regional newspapers, local government information letters. What else? Publications will benefit communities with high awareness, self-esteem, but they are no longer the most operational way of circulating information;
- Attractive, attention-grabbing advertisements at the top assembly sites – public transport stops, shops, public institutions, major companies etc. Yes, also at the garbage collection containers – everybody is going there, right?
- Publications on social media, setting up a social media group, ensuring its attractiveness. If the information is not binding, who will follow such a group?
- Maptionnaire⁸, eco-mapping, websites;

⁸ Maptionnaire community engagement platform, at its core are map-based tools for designing questionnaire, collecting data, and conveying information. It helps to analyse, collaborate, report, and communicate about engagement projects and plans with citizens and stakeholders. More detailed information can be found here – <https://maptionnaire.com/>

- Setting up a WhatsApp group for the operational circulation of information;
- Environmental advertising, where allowed - information posters on private transport, including bicycles, wheelbarrows, etc.;
- Spontaneous stocks, public polls;
- Individual interviews with different groups of society;
- And others.



For instance, Mariehamn (the capital of the Åland Islands) tested a variety of methods and tools, both physical meetings (including eco-mapping, workshops, study visits, as well as digital mapping tools (maptionnaire)).

It takes a mix of different tools to engage as many people as possible. The types of methods are inexhaustible. However, they must be meaningful and suitable to the particular community. Attractiveness of the method is not a goal. The awareness of the identity of the community, mentioned above, is essential here. For instance, forming a group in social networks in a community where the majority of the active population are seniors, will not be the best option. Environmental advertisements should not be placed on carriages in places where no one is driving a horse anymore.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

Community development plan is a complex document, and it is unlikely that only one specific source of resources will be applicable to its full implementation.

In order to contribute to the implementation of the community plan or individual activities of the plan, it is necessary to develop the capacity, knowledge and motivation of the population, and to ensure an appropriate environment for the implementation of community development activities.

Meanwhile for the implementation of the community development plan financial resources are needed as well.

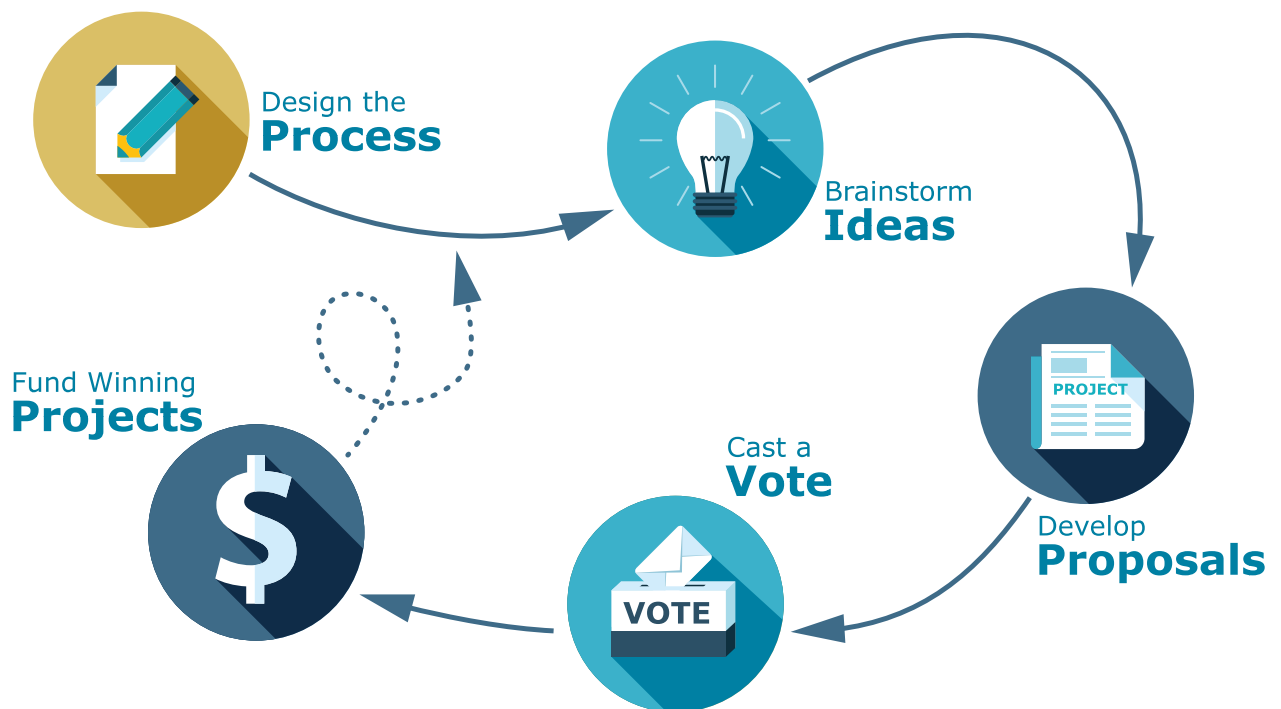
There are different possibilities in different countries to attract support for community initiatives.

In Latvia the following sources of resources are available to implement particular activities of the community development plans:

- The main support currently available in Latvia (like in other EU countries⁹) for community development initiatives is LEADER¹⁰ support;
- “NGO Fund”¹¹ programme financed by the State budget is also intended to support civil initiatives;
- Some targeted funding is also foreseen to support NGOs in many local governments;
- Community Funds have been established and operate in several places of Latvia to support the communities;
- Active Citizens’ Fund which provides support for activities to strengthen civil society;
- Participatory budgeting¹² for promoting public participation and supporting local initiatives (being implemented also in other countries).



Participatory budgeting is a process that enables citizens to determine how a part of the local government or state budget is spent. This fund may also be a source of resources for the implementation of particular activities of the Community development plan.



- At the same time, without public resources, there is always an opportunity to raise private funds by collecting donations, participating in various fundraising events, etc.



However, it should be kept in mind that the community development plan is the movement of people for their own benefit today and for the future. The Community plan is not a project application for funding.

Therefore, it is desirable, that the community development plan includes not only activities requiring financial resources but also activities which require only organisation and the own work of members of the community, which would also increase mutual uniting and cooperation, which is the essence of community existence.

When considering attraction of funding, it should be kept in mind that the real need is the intended outcome, not the funding per se.

A great future is made up of small things, a great world of small places!

⁹ There are currently 35 active LEADER local action groups in Latvia, 26 in Estonia, 44 in Sweden and 55 in Finland. For example, in the case of Finland, the local development strategies developed by the LEADER local action groups have successfully been integrated into higher level (municipal) development planning documents.

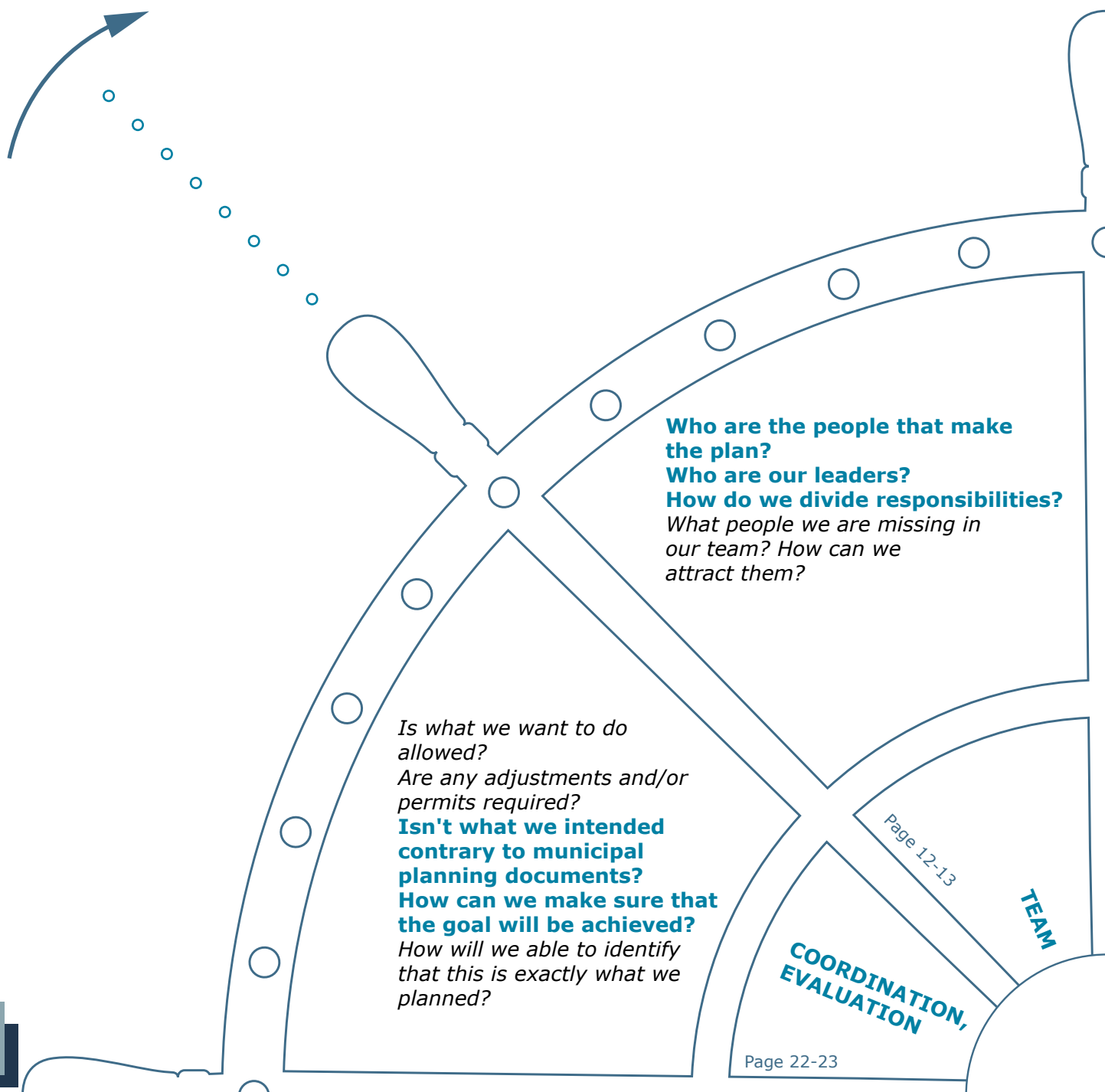
¹⁰ Funding received from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund via Community-led Local Development strategies and is applied in all municipalities of Latvia with the help of local action groups. More information: <http://www.lad.gov.lv/lv/atbalsta-veidi/projekti-un-investicijas/leader/leader-pieejas-istenosana-2014-2020/>

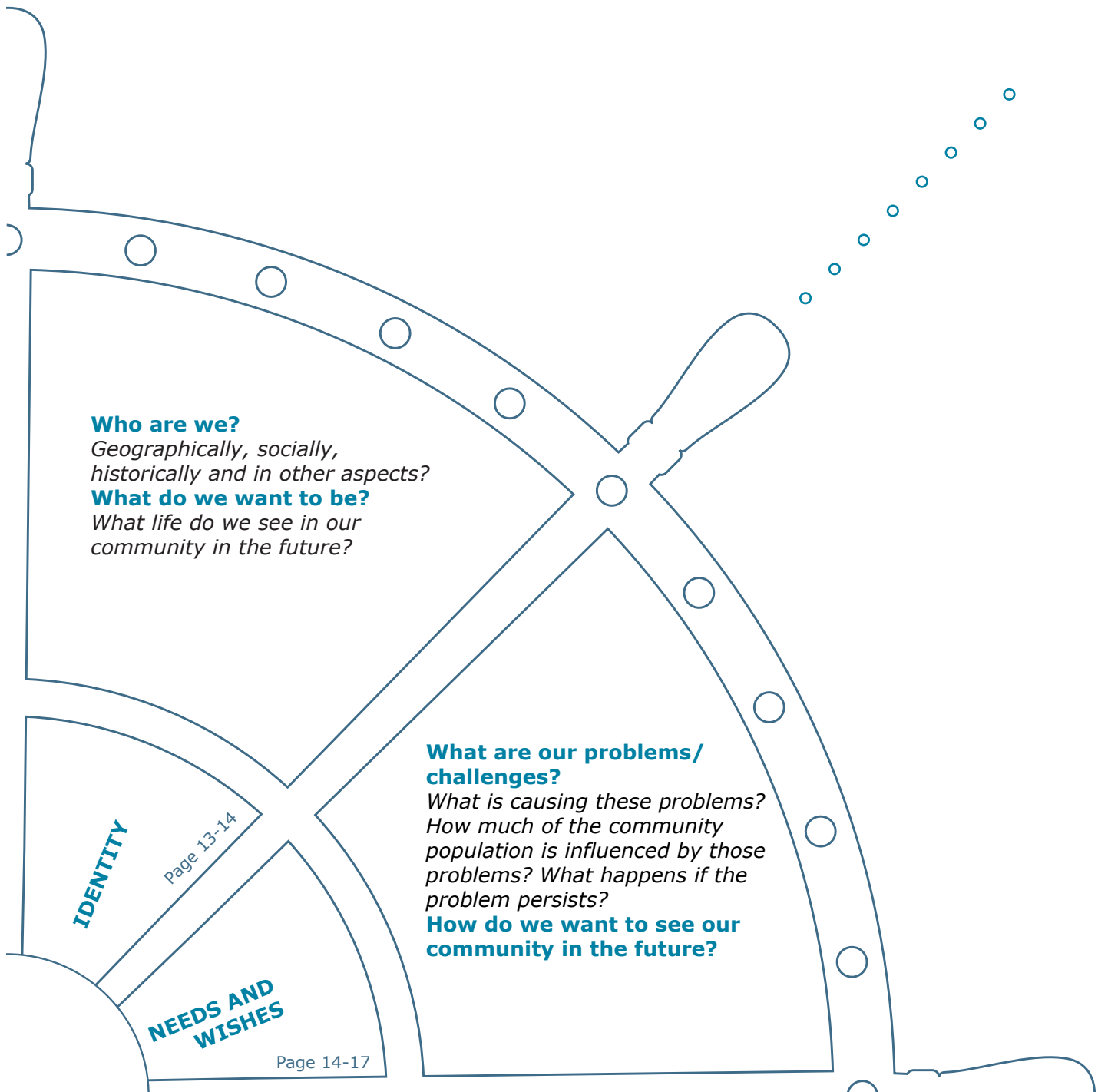
¹¹ More information: www.sif.lv

¹² Participatory budgeting is implemented in more than 1 000 municipalities worldwide, including Estonia, where it is implemented in about 20 municipalities, and in Finland, specifically, the capital Helsinki. In 2019, for the first time, participatory budgeting was also implemented in the capital of Latvia, Riga.

1

1. The development of a plan takes place from a few meetings up to months during a long process with community.
2. These sheets include the main sections described in the Guidelines and can be used as a working material to create a community development plan.
3. Print each of the 4 pages on A4 pages and stitch them together or redraw them in another format that suits you.
4. The order of sections can be changed.
5. Questions to which answers would be important to receive are marked in bold. There are also supplementary questions (in italics), which might help during the working process to get some answers.
6. The page numbers listed on these working sheets are a reference to the information in the Guidelines.





GOAL

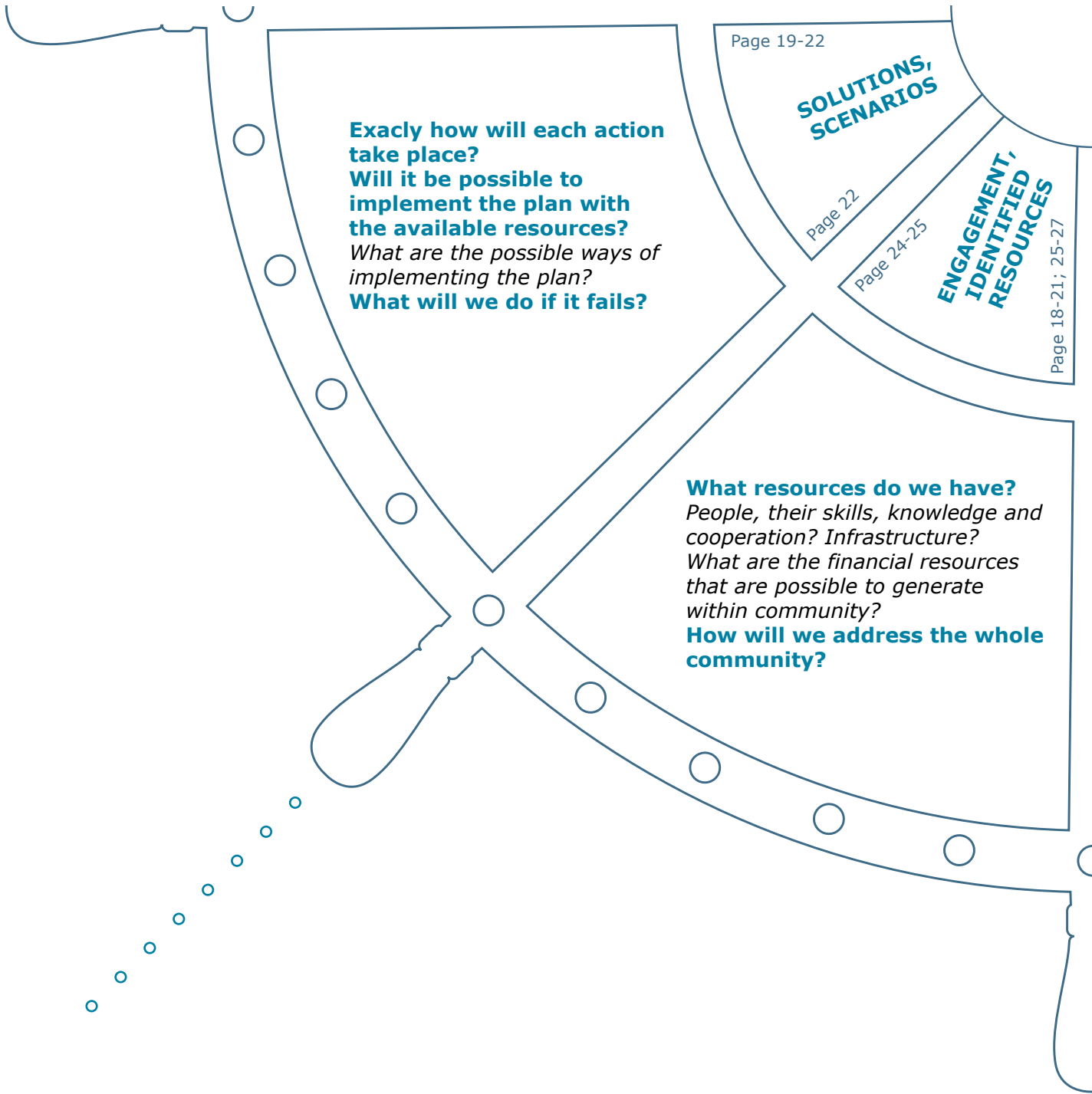
Page 17-19

ACTIONS

Page 19-21

What exactly do we want to achieve?
How do we see our community after the implementation of the plan?
Does this vision fit our identity?
Will it solve our problems?
Will the implementation of the plan meet our expectations?

What do we have to do?
In what order and in what timeframe will we do it?
In what way and who will do it?
How to engage the majority of the community?
How much will it cost?



4

DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR COMMUNITY _____
FOR THE TIME FROM _____ TO _____
PREPARED IN YEAR _____ IN PLACE: _____
CONTACT PERSON: _____
PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

USEFUL SOURCES OF LITERATURE

Arnstein, S. 1969. A Ladder of Citizen Participation.

Cunningham, G. 2011. Community Economic Literacy and the “Leaky Bucket”.

Kretzmann, J. P., McKnight, J. L. 1993. Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community’s Assets.

Mathie, A., Cameron, J., Gibson, K. 2017. Asset – based and citizen-led development: Using a diffracted power lens to analyse the possibilities and challenges.

Mathie, A., Cunningham, G. 2003. From Clients to Citizens: Asset-Based Community Development as a Strategy for Community-Driven Development.

Mattessich, P., Monsey, B., Roy, C. 1997. Community building: what makes it work. A review of factors influencing successful community building.

Wates, N. 2000. The Community Planning Handbook: How people can shape their cities, towns and villages in any part of the world.

USEFUL SOURCES OF LITERATURE

<http://eucdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2014-24-09-EuCDN-Publication-FINAL.pdf>

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-static/leader/leader/leader-tool-kit/the-strategy-design-and-implementation/the-strategy-design/en/how-to-build-up-a-participatory-local-development-strategy_en.html

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages/smart-villages-portal_en

<https://www.useful-community-development.org/community-planning-process.html>

<https://www.plannersnetwork.org/case-studies-and-working-papers/transformative-community-planning-empowerment-through-community-development/>

<https://www.thegrassrootscollective.org/introduction-project-planning>

<https://maptionnaire.com/>