

THE MAIN TAKEAWAYS OF MAPPING THE NEEDS AND CHALLENGES OF MUNICIPALITIES AND COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS

THE PROCESS OF MAPPING OF NEEDS

The collection and analysis of information is the cornerstone of every activity the organisation is planning to undertake. It gives the data and information to create meaningful events that respond to the needs of the stakeholders. While exploring the necessity of collaboration between municipalities and youth organisations¹, mapping of needs of municipality and community based organisations was carried out by five partner organisations².

The main aim of mapping of needs is to identify in detail the existing situation regarding the actual needs, challenges of the stakeholders, as well as to highlight already existing practices, build on them and create specific tools that can be used for building partnerships. Mapping of needs is a complex of gathered information that presents the overall situation of how youth individually, youth organisations, youth social enterprises cooperate with municipalities in partner countries. Five partners in five different European countries explored the situation in one pilot municipality. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used to gain a better understanding of the overall situation. There were surveys, interviews, online and face to face meetings, as well as discussions organised. Mapping of needs analyses the actual collaboration models, defines cooperation gaps and identifies challenges. The overview of diverse partner countries shows a great variety of cooperation models, different approaches allowing partners to learn from each other.

¹ The mapping of needs was done in the framework of the project "LOCAL-Y-MPACT" in Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Portugal and Cyprus. The project is co-financed by Erasmus+ programme.

² Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia, Geri Norai, Social Entrepreneurship Forum, CXJV Conexão Jovem Associação, Synthesis Center for Research and Education Limited.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Benefits for the municipality:

- To promote the visibility of the municipality, help the municipality with PR (posts that they can re-share, publish on their web-site),
- Explain how the outcomes can be used,
- Making sure that the results are published on the municipality web and updated regularly,
- Suggest integrating project results into municipality's work (add a presentation of a database during their event, etc),
- Follow up if municipality has some new projects/ orders from some organisations from the list,
- Follow up with the municipality in a few months.

Benefits for community based organisations:

- Promote the visibility of community based organisations, make visibility on social media, good practices shared with other organisations on social media,
- Organise networking events for the organisations mapped, share the main conclusions with other local organisations, exchange with data,
- Follow up if new cooperations are established,
- Advise them to get in touch with other organisations, create new projects together, get inspired, receive needed help etc.,
- To make this information easily available to more than just the organisations involved in the data collections - making it a go-to document to create synergies.

Benefits for intermediate organisations:

- A possibility to establish good relationships with municipality and community based organisations in a certain region,
- Learning about different activities of community based organisations and understanding the priorities of municipalities,
- Valuable outcomes of the process that can be used in other municipalities,
- New partnerships established,
- Ability to improve cooperation processes in general.

HOW TO ORGANISE THE PROCESS OF MAPPING OF NEEDS?



Understanding the need of the process:

identifying the goals and objectives and thinking about the result



Good management of the process:

plan the process, make it clear, structure it, provide sample documents, communicate the process internally with the team and externally, regular follow up



Well-chosen area of work - the municipality or region:

thinking about reasons to choose a certain place (a place of your activity, interest in the region, there are challenges you want to help to solve)



Good contact with stakeholders:

motivated municipality and active local organisations, finding a contact person and active leaders, direct contact with stakeholders, signing a contract with municipality if necessary, having in person meetings, publicly available information

It is important to understand the aim of the process, as mapping of needs is a time consuming process, it should correspond to the priorities of the organisation. It can be performed more effectively if you assign a person from your team who will be responsible for the process. Work with public bodies takes more time as the processes are bureaucratic, moreover, the workload of municipality employees is high, it is necessary to plan ahead and foresee extra time. Being an intermediate between municipality and youth organisations and social enterprises asks for clear communication to all the parties explaining the process and its importance. Even if everything is planned properly, there are always some unexpected situations that might occur, be open and ready to react accordingly.

WHAT TO KEEP IN MIND DURING THE PROCESS?

- Identify main gatekeepers, involve many municipality representatives, however, appoint one key contact person,
- Regular communication is the key,
- Follow-ups are essential to gain the info needed,
- Involve partners who are really interested,
- Identify various sources of information, ask from the stakeholders for the existing resources, however, it doesn't mean that they are up to date,
- Organise discussions, meetings, events, organisations enjoy meeting each other,
- Visit the municipality to see events and activities organised there.

HOW TO INVOLVE THE STAKEHOLDERS MORE EFFICIENTLY?

The most effective way to involve the stakeholders is to explain the idea, need of the process and practical use of it. You can see if the process relates to the plans and strategy both of municipality and community based organisations. Present the importance of cooperation, explain the benefits to get to know other organisations in the area and cooperate with each other and show the learning possibilities.

Good communication with the main contact persons is the key for a smooth and successful process. Ask the main decision maker in the municipality to delegate this task to a specific person, however, involve other municipality employees from different departments to have a broader perspective. Contact local community based organisations, get in touch with the active local gatekeepers, they can help to reach other active people in the region.

Meet the stakeholders, physical non-formal meetings and events help to establish real connections and give a real sense of partnership. Besides meetings, use diverse channels like surveys, interviews, newspaper and internet resources.

Offering specific benefits to the stakeholders might motivate them to involve more. You can create a PR campaign for the municipality or at least separate communication activities, give the stakeholders the possibility to present their work to an international audience if possible and organise networking meetings.

The results of mapping of needs is an important starting point for the pilot municipality, expected to increase the potential partnerships in the long term between the municipality and youth organisations and social enterprises. Moreover, it gives the ideas for community based organisations to address the municipality and other organisations to collaborate.

The mapping of needs in the framework of the project "LOCAL-Y-MPACT" is a compilation of:

- database of youth organisations and social enterprises in five pilot municipalities;
- report "What are the needs and challenges to develop successful partnership between municipality and community based organisations?";
- examples of cooperation models among municipalities and youth organisations.

The objective of the project "LOCAL-Y-MPACT" is to strengthen the cooperation between community based youth organisations and social enterprises and local municipalities, and promoting social entrepreneurship as an effective tool for reducing economic inequality, promoting social inclusion and integration, creating resilient society and fostering active participation within local communities.

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