COMM.ON Heritage

COMM.ON METHOD:
6 steps towards new ideas for the countryside

Innovating Cultural Heritage Toolkit

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INTRODUCTION

introduction

The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

When a Spanish director Paula Simón received the Golden Bear for her movie Alcarràs, she told the audience that »this award is to the farmers who work the land every day and farm in a way that respects the land. Theirs is a form of resistance«. The movie Alcarràs brings her personal story and the story of many Europeans – about living in the rural, remote areas, so different from the neon lights of city life. It is set in Western Catalonia, near the town Alcarràs, and tells the story of farmers who suddenly learn that the land they viewed as their own is taken away from them.
The movie Alcarràs is not just a story about farming. It's also the story of living in rural areas, about the identity of the people and their personal and community heritage. And also the story which we follow through the project Comm.On Heritage. The project aims to encourage and support community managers who wake up each day with the same question – how to bring life to the countryside?

WHY SHOULD YOU OPEN THIS TOOLKIT?

Rural and remote areas face an outmigration of people, especially felt among the younger population. They see the countryside as dull when compared to city life. On the contrary, we believe it's a cradle of innovation and creativity.
This toolkit will introduce you to the Comm.On Method, developed by the partner organisations from 4 different European countries (Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Portugal), within the Erasmus+ project Comm.On Heritage.
Based on the award-winning TBI method, we designed a simple and tested solution for recognising new ideas and creating new ideas for moving your community forward.
It will help you create an event that will unite the community and bring new ideas. A simple, inspiring journey for community managers who want to make a change!

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HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT?

You can start reading the toolkit from the beginning or explore specific chapters. We hope that the toolkit will inspire you!
This toolkit is not meant to be a theoretical book. It should be your guide for creating the same steps as we've done within the Comm.On Heritage Project.
In every chapter, search for the symbols that will help you navigate through the book.

AN OWL

This section will provide interesting hints on how to implement the activity. Having expertise in the area, we love to share our advice!

STEPS TOWARDS VICTORY

Our method is also about learning. In this section, you will find out about your learning goals!

COMMUNITY MANAGER TOOLS

We've also prepared a few tools that could help you lead the work with the local community!

introduction

COMM.ON METHOD EXPLAINED

It all started in 2014 when a group of young people from the small town of Idrija in western Slovenia met and began to work on the new method.
Their main goal was to bring new solutions to the former mining town, once in the centre of economic development and trapped somewhere in the hil-ls between the stunning and picturesque Ljubljana and the Adriatic Sea. Still being students, these young people combined their knowledge from different study fields. Recognising the power of the Erasmus+ programme, more than 10 international students came to Idrija to design a new future for Idrija. The TBI Method was born!

WHERE DOES THE NAME COME FROM?

TBI is an abbreviation of the phrase To bo Idrija (translated in English as "This will be Idrija!"). It's not just a method but a way of thinking based on the interdisciplinary future of the town of Idrija in Slovenia.
TBI Method brought 60 new solutions for Idrija and the surrounding area. Combining skills and knowledge from different fields, these ideas became a part of the adapted periodic table of elements, once designed by famous scientist Mendeleev.

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TBI METHOD BECOMING A NEW COMM.ON METHOD

Within the project Comm.On Heritage 4 partners from 4 different areas in Europe worked further on the TBI Method. The main question was, how can we make it work in various rural areas in Europe?
Using modern digital tools and peer-to-peer international approach, a Comm.On Method was developed!
The goal of the new method is to find new ideas for the local community, which are developed by community managers and other activitists.

HOW IS OUR COMM.ON METHOD DIFFERENT FROM OTHER APPROACHES?

Although there are many approaches to finding new ideas in rural areas, our Comm.On Method is unique. Why?

1) INSPIRED BY PLACES

Within the method, we place the main focus on the places which we call innovation centres. We see rural areas as creative and innovative!

2) DEVELOPING NEW STORIES

Our method is based on the stories. The identity and cultural heritage of the local community are placed in the centre of the activity.

3) TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

All 6 steps of the social innovation spiral are based on the transdisciplinary approach. We believe that the future of rural areas needs to include experts from different fields.

4) INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Our method includes work with and for vulnerable groups and is based on the intergenerational and intercultural inclusion.

WHY SPIRAL?

The spiral is everywhere and symbolizes creative force, which makes it a great choice for the Comm.On Method. It's based on the spiral, initially defined by Nesta and Youth Foundation

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WHO IS A COMMUNITY MANAGER?

Community Managers are key figures who work with the community (and not just for the community), facilitating the participation and collaboration processes,exploring new needs and aspirations, building relationships and projects, especially in the field of cultural heritage.

To learn more, read the guide “Comm.On Path for the Cultural Heritage”, developed within the Comm.On Heritage project.

HOW TO USE COMM.ON SPIRAL?

Use it as you want. You might follow it step-by-step or only follow specific sections or steps. As you know, organising an event is not always a linear process. Sometimes it works, mostly it doesn't as you wish. If you don't find the next step on your path, may our spiral be your guide!

THE COMM.ON METHOD SPIRAL

01 – EXPLORING

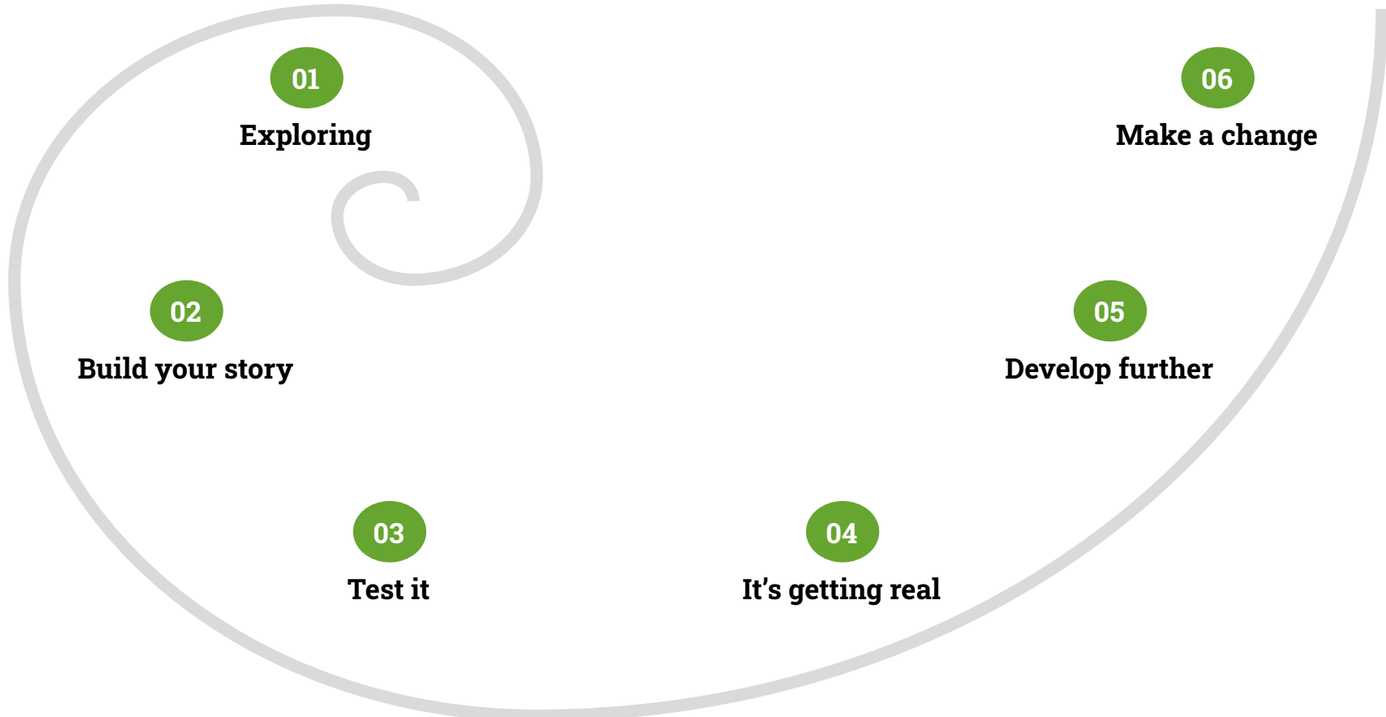
Discover your area. Define challenges. Find stories. And search for the partners!

02 – BUILD YOUR STORY

Be a visionary! Create a working plan and start changing your community!

03 – TEST IT

You don't want to find unexpected surprises. Don't wait for disaster to happen. Anticipate it!



introduction

04 – IT'S GETTING REAL

The event is near. Don't leave participants hungry, and bring state of the art equipment to your village!

05 – DEVELOP FURTHER

After the main event, don't search for the cheapest ticket to reach the Bahamas—support participants developing their ideas.

06 – MAKE A CHANGE

Don't expect Bill Gates to knock at your doors the next day, but you will create a change if you believe. Learn how to measure it!

FOLLOWING THE SPIRAL

1 EXPLORING

In this section, you will discover:
- what are innovation centres, and how to define your focus area
- how to find out who the target group of your event is
- why you need to think about the challenges

INNOVATION CENTRES

Organising an event, you probably know that rural areas are creative! But … Your goal is to also convince other people about the creative power of the tiny village you are fond of. Follow the checklist, don't forget to dream!

1) ESTABLISH A FOCUS AREA

It might be a small village or a big municipality. It doesn't matter as long as it represents a coherent whole with its centre, interesting point, (un) recognised cultural and natural heritage.

2) SELECT INNOVATION CENTRES

Define places that unite people in different ways – these are the places they meet, work, relax, or have any other special relationship with them. These will be your INNOVATION CENTRES! There should be max. 5 innovation centres in the focus area!

3) CONNECT INNOVATION CENTRES

Each innovation centre has its history, pace and stories. Can you find out how these places relate to each other? What do they have in common? What is different? Focus on cultural heritage of each innovation centre!

4) FIND CALLERS

Each area should have its »caller« - the person who will facilitate the new ideas in the area. We recommend that this person knows the innovation centre and is emotionally attached to it.

5) DEVELOP STORIES

Every place, every corner of the world, has its stories. Explore how the humanity shaped your selected places. How do you or other visitors perceive the area? Search for the visible and hidden heritage and imagine stories!

TARGET GROUP

Who will be participants at the event? Who will create new ideas for the innovation centres? If you don't know where to start, create a persona! Upon your research, you create a fictional character to represent the different user types. Use our template for easier planning!

Use the Persona tool, developed within the Comm.On Heritage Project to find about your target group!

FIND PARTNERS

Before the event, search for the partners to support the development of your idea. Some ideas: public institutions, activists, tourist organisations. These organisations can also provide callers for innovation centres!

CHALLENGES

Prepare the list of challenges of the innovation centres, based on the Comm.On Challenges. You can also use the Challenge Wheel tool!

1) Think out-of-the-box.

2) Understanding the challenge will help you know the right path to the solution.

3) Think about the challenges in a broader way, not just the specific innovation centre but also the whole area. E. g.: Can the work on your innovation centre solve the particular challenge of the entire focus area?

Especially when the event is covered with public funds, it's a common mistake to see public institutions as the main target group. Avoid this by focusing on the specific main target groups (e.g. community managers and vulnerable groups).

2 BUILDING THE STORY

In this section, you will discover:
- how to localise your event
- why promotion is important and how to do it
- the approximate agenda of your event

WHY DO YOU NEED A "MAIN EVENT"?

In order to get good ideas, try to focus on organizing an event, where you can invite your target group (look at the first step EXPLORING for more details). As you will be working with volunteers and other activists, try to organize the event with a lot of networking and socializing opportunities. If possible, invite musicians or other artists and don't forget to order food for all participants!

AGENDA OF THE EVENT

When you send invites to the guests, prepare an agenda. The common fear of many participants is that they will need to participate in a dull event without any orientation points. Be clear about how long the event should last and be on time with all activities.

You can extend or shorten proposed agenda. It depend on the motivation of your participants. If you think that the programme is too long, include some additional ice-breakers or any other activities.

PROPOSED AGENDA OF THE EVENT

9:00 – Welcoming the participants. Snack & Coffe time

9:30 – Introduction

Introduce participants to the programme, challenges and innovation centres. If possible, invite the mayor or other decision-maker to welcome the guests. Prepare a short presentation with the stories about innovation centres that you made as a part of the promotion.

10:00 – Brainstorming

Place all participants at the tables. There should be as many tables as you have innovation centres. Each table should have its caller dedicated to the specific innovation centre. Participants should then move from table to table. As the recommended number of innovation centres is 4, participants should move every 20 minutes to the new table. In this way, each participant will visit each innovation centre table. Callers should not move and stay throughout the session at the same table.

11:30 – Conclusions of the brainstorming

Each group should present conclusions for each innovation centre.

11:45 – Lunchtime & break

Participants should have enough time to eat lunch and have a short break (walk or talk) – a networking opportunity!

13:00 – Working on a solution

After the break, participants should work further on the innovation centre of their choice. You can provide a time for decision during the break or let participants choose it right after the start of the afternoon session. Participants should then work in groups on the 1 final proposal for each innovation centre with the caller as a group facilitator.

15:00 – Presentation of ideas

Finish your event with the presentation of each group. It should be no more than 3 minutes long per group. You can include representatives of the public organisations who can give quick feedback on the feasibility of the solutions.

PROMOTE IT!

Start building on the promotion of the event. It's essential to make a buzz about the project. Not just to attract the target group but also to reach a wider community and journalists who will spread the word about your event.

1) STORIES

Use the opportunity to share explored stories of the places (Step 1), which will raise interest in the event. By building on emotions, you will bring more people to the event. But don't exaggerate, as it can get negative consequences.

2) DIGITAL

Focus your promotion on the digital world, especially social platforms. But don't forget face-to-face communication in promoting and disseminating the event.

3) GENERATIONS

Don't forget to target younger and older groups. If possible, Facebook and Instagram also use social platforms used by Generation Z (e. g., TikTok, Snapchat).

USE THE COMM.ON TABLE

Visit common-heritage.eu and find existing solutions for rural areas in Europe, uploaded in our Comm.On Table. These might be helpful for the participants in preparing their solutions!

WHY PERIODIC TABLE OF ELEMENTS?

You might be thinking, what the periodic table of elements is doing in rural development? Don't worry, Comm.On platform doesn't use it to make a new scientifical breakthrough. By using it, we want to stress that rural areas need new innovative, transdisciplinary ideas using a playful and experimental appro-ach. Find more about the periodic table of elements, history, and use on the Comm.On Platform!

3 TEST IT!

In this section, you will learn:
- why it's important to test your ideas!
- how to implement the testing

Think just about the tests astronauts do before they jump into space. Of course, organising an event in your rural area is much more straightforward and less dramatic. But still, find time to test design of the main event. You might find that things don't work as planned.

HOW TO DO THE TESTING?

1) Ask your team to do the mini-version of your main event. You can modify the activity to focus on the challenges within your team!

2) Simulate all parts of the event. If manageable, test the whole programme plan. If not, shorten it to adapt to your working schedule and your team's energy.

3) Have a short evaluation session. What did work and what did not? Redefine the plan if needed.

4 IT'S GETTING REAL!

In this section, you will learn:
- what are the details you need to care about when planning the event
- what equipment do you need for your final event

FINAL DETAILS OUTLINED

After preparing the main agenda of the event, work on the details:

1) PLACE

Select a familiar place to the participants and big enough for all participants to work in.

2) CATERING

Snacks & drinks are very important when preparing for an event. The participants will appreciate good local food. It will bring good energy to the place and event. You can provide food in the nearby restaurant or canteen or offer it in the same area. It depends if you have enough place and hands to clean it. It's not nice if the place stinks after you finish eating!

3) TECHNICAL DETAILS

Don't forget the technical details: prepare a projector and screen, heat or cool the place if needed. You might get a microphone and larger speakers. Participants will need at least 4 tables and basic tools for writing and sketching.

4) DEFINE FAQ AND RISK PLAN

Anticipate that participants will search for more information about the event. Consider developing a special Frequent asked questions (FAQ) list.
For your safety, prepare a risk plan. Many things can go wrong. If you anticipate it, it's much easier to navigate through it when it happens.

5 DEVELOP FURTHER

In this section, you will learn:
- how to work further on your ideas
- what additional activities can you bring to the method

UPLOAD IDEAS ON THE COMM.ON PLATFORM

After the main event, it's time to upload the results on the Comm.On Platform. Follow the instructions on the main page and fill out the survey for each idea.

DEVELOP IDEAS FURTHER

The main event is over. Let's go partying. Yes, you can! But don't forget what the primary goal of the event is. You're searching for working opportunities, not just ideas. Work further with the participants, support and motivate them. Schedule the meeting with the mayor or other important decision-makers. Equip them with financial opportunities. Prepare them for a change!

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

You can also think about some additional proposed activities after the main event. You can organise an exhibition with all ideas, additional panel discussions, a reunion 1-year later, a printed version of the solutions etc.

The decision on how to develop ideas further is completely up to you. Learning from our experience, participants will need some support to develop their ideas.

6 MAKE A CHANGE

In this section, you will learn:
- what are the details you need to care about when planning the event
- what equipment do you need for your final event

The main goal of any activity is a change. As soon as you start thinking about the impact, participants will come. Compared to organizing an event, it's much more demanding to bring an impact to the local community. A needed change that all anticipate.

The change can happen in innovation centres or can be more systematic. It's not simple to measure it.

A CHANGE TOOL

Within the Comm.On Heritage project, we've prepared a simple impact tool, which can help you collect the impact of the method in your area. It follows the storyboard template and might help you understand it from different aspects.

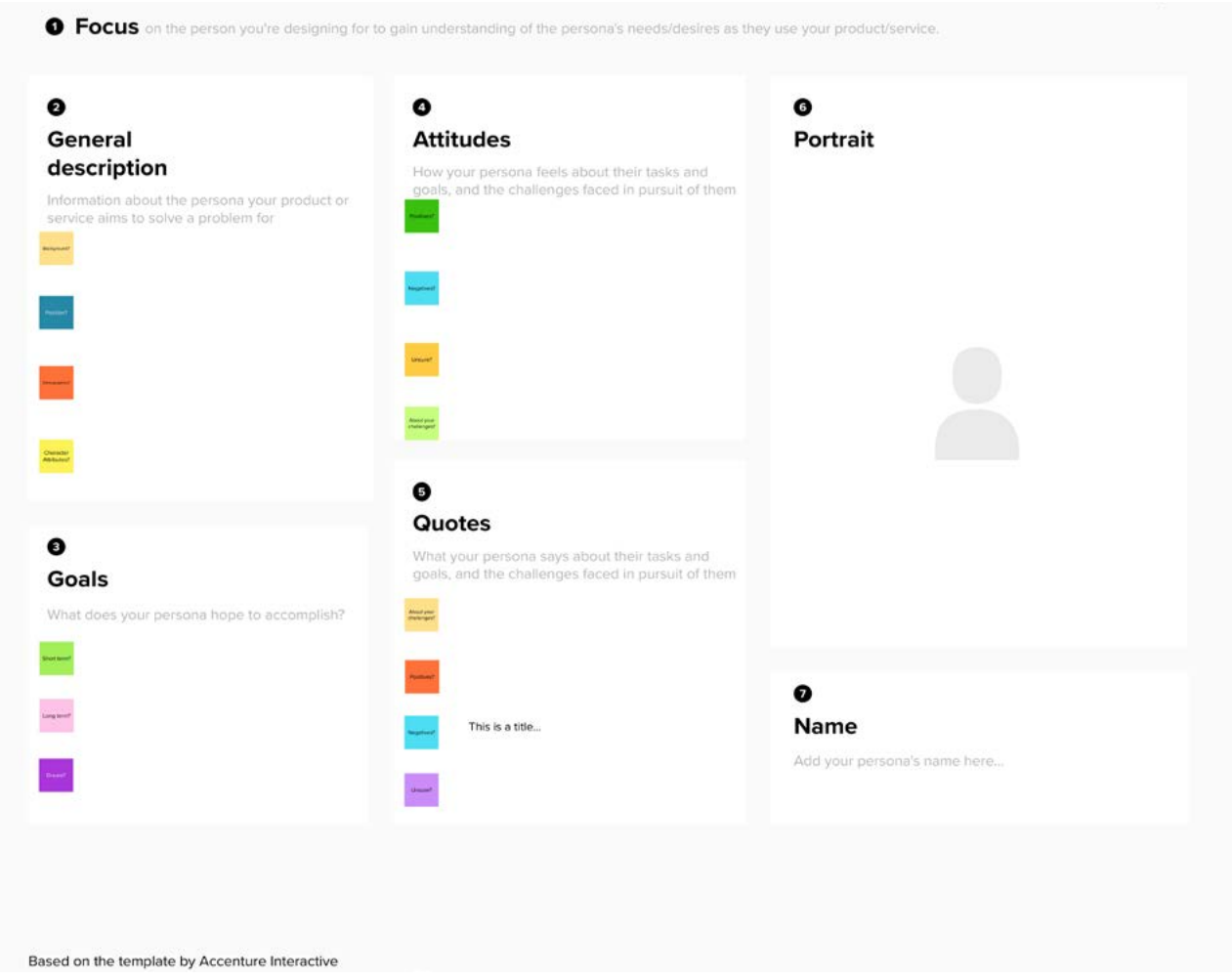
COMMUNITY MANAGER TOOLS

PERSONA TOOL

Use the persona tool to find out about the target group of the Comm. Onmethod. Each rural area has some specifics. Explore what the fictional person from your target group might think, feel or experience!

30 min 2-5 people

Download the PERSONA TOOL template

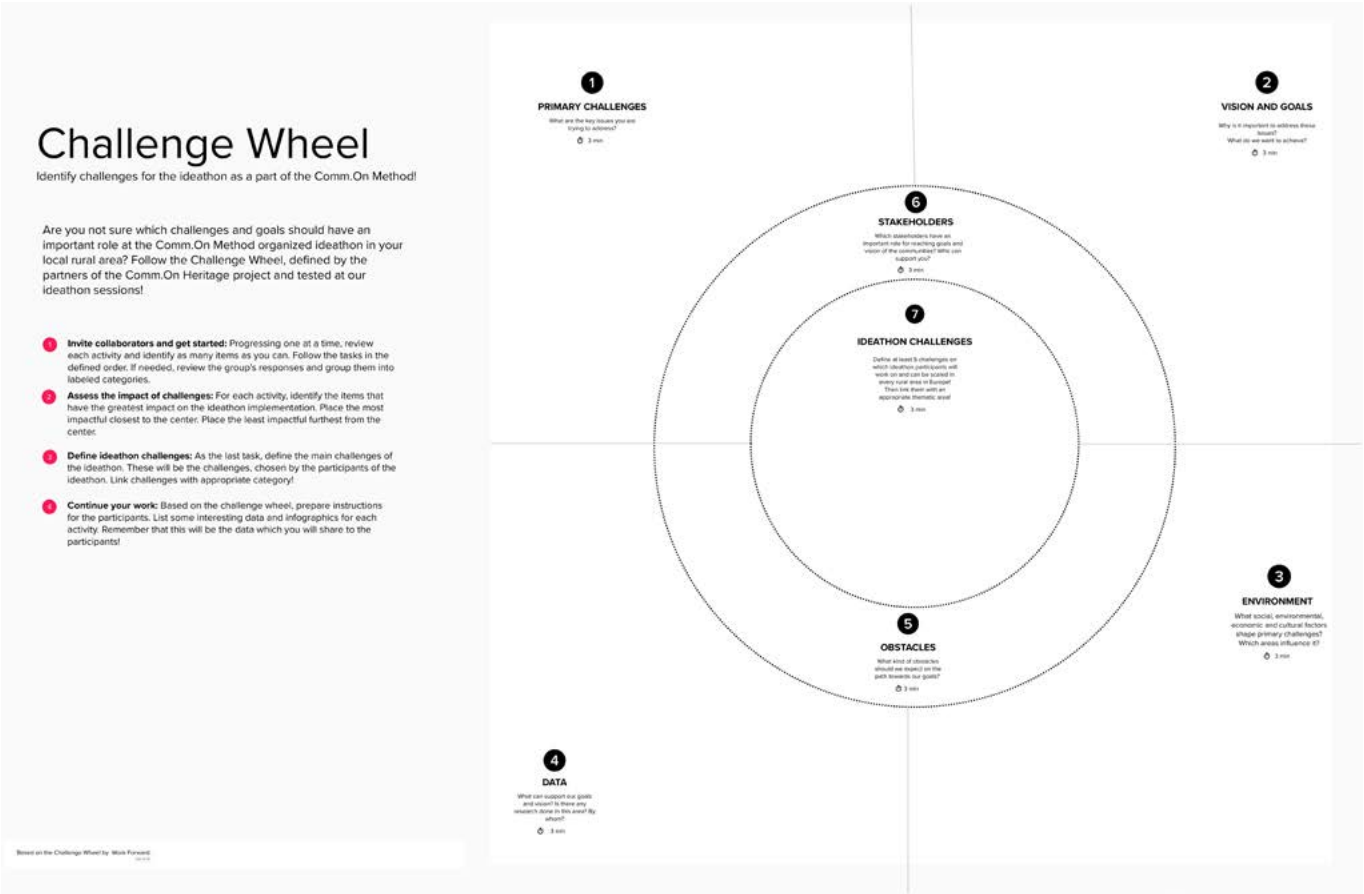


CHALLENGE WHEEL

Are you unsure which challenges and goals should have an important role at the Comm.On Method organized ideathon in your local rural area? Follow the Challenge Wheel, defined by the partners within the Comm.On Heritage project and tested at our ideathon sessions!

30 min 2-5 people

Download the CHALLENGE WHEEL template



FEEL THE CHANGE!

We've also prepared a simple tool to help you discover the impact of your ideas. You can share them with the participants or contact them after a few years to realize what results and impact have the idea produced!

20 min 2-5 people

Download the FEEL THE CHANGE tool

FEEL A CHANGE

Measure the impact of your idea in a different way. Think about it as a story and find out about the change, its impact on the place (innovation centre), and its function!

If needed, visualise it, and share your thoughts and feelings!

BEFORE	TRIGGERS	AFTER
What were people doing at your place before the change? What did they think about the place?	Think about the change as a story. What were the most important milestones? Think about it as a video screenplay! 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	What are people doing now at the place? How do they feel about the place? Who supported/loved the change? Who was afraid of the change? Try to measure the IMPACT* (0 – no change; 3 – major change) SOCIAL 0 1 2 3 ECONOMIC 0 1 2 3 CULTURAL 0 1 2 3 ENVIRONMENTAL 0 1 2 3 *For more info on the impact of cultural heritage on the local community, check the guide »Comm.On Path for the Cultural Heritage« (p. 54)

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HANDBOOK FOR THE CALLERS AT THE MAIN EVENT

WHY THE HANDBOOK?

By attaching the following handbook to the toolkit, we want to help organisers create a powerful and creative event in their areas as a part of the Comm.On Method. It can be adapted and then used by the callers at the main event.
If the event does not occur in English, you can freely translate it into the wished language.
The first part of the handbook covers the brainstorming session, focused on the world caffé method. The second part takes part is focused on the afternoon session.

BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Upon arrival at the venue, each caller should sit at its table (one for each caller or innovation centre). In this workshop, you are not only a caller but also a bit of an innkeeper. Your task is to lead an interesting discussion and try to give the floor to each of the participants.

Programme

Participants will be randomly seated at 4 different tables representing individual innovation centres. After 20 minutes, participants will change tables. In this way, each participant will visit each innovation centre (table). In the case of 4 innovation centres, the workshop will last 80 minutes (4 x 20 minutes). The organizers should take care of the change. The callers stay at the same table throughout the workshop and do not change locations!

Topics

At the beginning of the workshop, you will get a paper where each table will draw a mind map. Each caller should fill it with the support of participants. Each group should answer 4 different questions or topics. Don't worry if you cannot answer all questions in a single exchange.

4 topics to lead the conversation

1) My place

We suggest that you start with this topic, where you will find out about each participant's attitude to the place (innovation centre). By telling their memories and feelings, participants will create an emotional connection to the innovation centre and become much more relaxed. Try with simple questions:

- How are you connected to the place?
- How do you feel about the place?
- Do you have any specific memories connected to the place?

This part is crucial for the success of the activity. It will create an intergenerational connection that should last throughout the whole event.

Use also the stories that were used as part of the introductory presentation and promotion!

2) Future of the place

In this part, think about WHY the place actually needs this debate – why it deserves a future for young generations. Think about the role and meaning of the place for the wider area, and what are the activities that could be developed.

3) The best ideas

This is a key part of the activity - how to shape the future of the space? We are looking for ideas that could provide something new, something that would enrich the area (e.g. events, more minor urban interventions). Try not to focus on any significant architectural solution, as they might be too hard to implement— stress on inclusion and networking (multicultural, intergenerational).

4) People

Who would be the target group of your ideas? Try to define age, location and other components. Do not forget to focus on the vulnerable groups.

WORKING ON A SOLUTION

After lunch, participants should work on the best solution. This part of the event should be much more relaxed. However, we recommend that you follow the guidelines.
Participants should be free in choosing an individual table. To distribute them equally, try to limit the number of participants at specific tables.

Choose the best idea

Choose first the best idea among all explored ideas. When doing so, follow this criterium:
- The idea should be understood and motivational to participants
- Feasibility of the idea (also financially)
- Impact of the idea on the local environment

The caller doesn't need to guide the team in the second part and can choose someone else. It depends, of course, on the motivation of each member.

Create a mind map

Start working on the idea! Prepare a more detailed mind map. We suggest following these points:

1) Name

Think about the creative name for your idea. If you cannot find a good one in the beginning, leave it for the end.

2) What?

Define what your idea is about. If you have time, go into the details.

3) How?

Think about how you will implement the idea. Try to define specific steps.

4) Who?

Divide this question into two parts – firstly, find out the people who would help implement the activity. Secondly, think about the target group of the activity. In both cases, don't forget about inclusion.

5) Why

In this part, participants will explore the background. Which challenge (based on the Comm.On Challenges) does idea want to solve?

6) How much?

Consider how to raise funds for the implementation of idea.

Create a story

The last part of the afternoon workshop should focus on creativity! Participants should put themselves in the role of a director and create a trailer where they present the idea in a few scenes.

Participants should prepare a storyboard with up to 10 scenes. Here are tips to make it as easy as possible:

Think about the steps leading to the event. What are the key moments you want to capture with the camera?

Imagine what emotions should be associated with the video? Which themes do you want to amplify? Is it joy, belonging, socializing, freedom, creativity?

You can also enrich your script with drawings!

Based on our experience, storytelling really helps participants to immerse in their idea. They imagine being a famous director or any other storyteller, which helps them perceive the idea more deeply and emotionally.

Presentation

In the final part of the event, each group should present their final ideas. The presentation should be short, max . 5 minutes.

How to present your idea?

Start with your personal story. Introduce the team members and tell others how you feel about the place.
Be specific. Don't focus too much on the data. Financial construction is important, but not bother too much with it during the presentation.
Present idea through the story. Use the material from the storyboard workshop. Using this approach, participants will quickly understand your idea and identify with it faster!

COMM.ON METHOD: 6 steps towards new ideas for the countryside

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www.ovile.coop

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Find more information about the Comm.On Heritage project!

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