

CRETHINK - Co-creative RETHINKing for sustainable cities

IO2: Toolbox on democratic co-creation methods for sustainable development

DRPDNM Best practice 1

Definition of good/best practice

A good/best practice is defined as an initiative (e.g. technique, method, process etc.) which has already proved effective in delivering a given result with the potential to be transferred to different contexts and geographic areas. Proved effective is where the best practice has successfully established methods to engage all stakeholders throughout the course of the development process.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Title of the practice	Civic Observers for Health and Environment: Initiative for Responsibility and Sustainability (COHEIRS) – Europe for Citizens Action 1 Active Citizens for Europe
Name of the institution/organisation responsible for the implementation / hosting of the initiative using co-creation methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA)
Country / Region / Municipality involved	<p>Implementing partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Euro Mediterranean Scientific and Biomedical Institute (ISBEM), Italy Foundation For Partnership And Civil Society Development, Croatia Coalition of youth organizations SEGA, Macedonia The Mountain Community Iezer Muscel Association (MCIMA), Romania International Development Alliance (IDA), Bulgaria Birgu Local Council (BLC), Malta Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto (ADVW Novo Mesto), Slovenia Centre for Research Cooperation and Development (CRCDD), Albania <p>Expert partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> French Society of Environmental Medicine (ISDE-France), France Italian Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE-Italy), Italy <p>Dissemination partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RECREATURA_arts&culture, Spain Amministrazione Comunale di Lecce, Italy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality of Monfalcone, Italy • Patto Territoriale Soc. Cons. A.r.l. Oristano (P.T.O.), Italy • Central and Eastern Europe Citizens Network (CEE CN), Slovakia • Civil Kollégium Alapítvány (Civil College Foundation), CKA (CCF), Hungary
Geographical coverage	At a local and European level
Timescale: when did it take place and for how long	Project duration: 15 th April 2013 – 14 th April 2014

2. DESCRIPTION (no more than 1000 - 3000 characters)

Sustainable thematic area	<p>Environment, society</p> <p>Environmental and health related issues, environment friendly policies, the condition of the environment by paying special attention to those violations and misconducts directly or collaterally threatening the public health: sustainable food production, water supply, air quality, enhancing citizen participation in the environment and health field, urban sustainable development, green spaces and public health, waste management and public health, agriculture and public health, air pollution and public health, water pollution and public health etc.</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To empower citizens to play a full part in their communities' life • To foster citizens' participation through volunteering • To foster citizens' sense of ownership of the EU • To tackle environmental and health related issues both at local and European level • To encourage environment friendly policies • To promote intercultural dialogue • To contribute to an inclusive society
Actions carried out	<p>8 steps, having impact both at the local and at the European level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory phase • Local workshops and set up of citizens' panel • Training of multipliers (Its aim was to develop multipliers' capacities and skills to act as "promoters" of environmental and health protection) • Establishing of information and coordination units at the local level • Local thematic workshops • International thematic workshop • Local dissemination events • Dissemination campaign
Methodologies used	<p><u>COMPOSITION:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a wide range of profiles and focus on the whole spectrum of society (volunteers, teachers, NGOs representatives, professionals and experts, disadvantaged people, elderly people, youngsters, etc.)

TARGET GROUP, ACTIVATORS & MULTIPLIERS:

- Target group: citizens not often engaged in the public life or European projects but willing to do so. All citizens over 16 years of age from different walks of life fall into the target group.
- Activators: citizens already engaged in the public life or European projects, with different profiles in terms of demographic, social and professional background. Their main role is to activate and facilitate the engagement of the target group.
- Multipliers: the European project COHEIRS has introduced the role of multipliers as specific actors within the group of activators. Indeed, multipliers act not only as facilitators but also as resource persons. And have been trained specifically for this purpose in topics of concern to the project (health and environment).

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS & ACTIVATORS:

Citizens' panels participants and activators are selected by applying the following procedure:

1) Selection of citizens' panels activators

Citizens' panels activators are identified and selected by the partners among civil society and local authorities' representatives, already active at local level and preferably come from different walks of life; special attention is given to the involvement of leading citizens of different demographic, social and professional background. Their main role is to activate and facilitate the engagement of the target group in the public life or European projects

2) Training of activators

The goal of the training is to provide the activators with the necessary information and tools to act as facilitators and resource person. In order to ensure their full participation in the training, the activators should preferably have a working level of English.

The European project COHEIRS further developed **the methodology of citizens' panels** by introducing the role of multipliers. Each partner identified and selected 5 multipliers within its group of activators. A tailor-made training programme is set up to enable the multipliers to acquire relevant information and tools on promoting civic engagement as well as a more scientific knowledge on the addressed topic. Therefore, multipliers act not only as facilitators but also as resource persons. They spread the information and tools previously acquired within the group of activators, thus leading and improving their capacity of addressing the target group

3) Selection of citizens' panels participants

The activators will put into practice the information and mechanisms acquired during the training on civic engagement. Citizens' panels participants are selected on a voluntary basis; their selection follows two different strategies in order to involve the highest number of citizens from different walks of life: - through the activators, who are asked to involve 10 persons each - through an open call, publishing the event on an extensive basis at the local level.

DRAFT OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Following the selection process, the citizens panels' participants will draft recommendations to be submitted both to local, national and European authorities:

1) Local and national level

In a series of local events, citizen panel participants will identify the issues and actual needs of their own community and will exchange views and opinions on how to tackle them. The ideas will be collected and will be channelled into the form of recommendations to be addressed to their local and national authorities.

2) European level

After the local events, the gathering of all partners is of special importance for the citizens' panels. It represents both an incentive to take part in local activities and an opportunity to exchange views and opinions with other citizens' panels from other countries.

It grants a real European dimension to the work of the panels and will allow the drafting of common recommendations to EU institutions, based on those drafted at the local level.

ROLE OF CITIZENS' PANELS ACTIVATORS:

Citizens' panels activators have a key role to play:

- information providers
- facilitators
- motivators
- bridges between local authorities, European institutions and citizens
- guide
- communicators
- network providers
- among the activators, 5 multipliers are also resource people on the addressed topic

ROLE OF PARTNERS:

Partners have a fundamental role to play in supporting and facilitating the setting-up and the work of the citizens' panels (logistics, materials, advice, etc).

CITIZENS' PANELS AND POLITICIANS:

Politicians and elected representatives may be involved in the process and in citizens' panels meetings as resource people. The framework and aims of their interventions and contributions should be clearly defined.

CITIZENS' PANELS AND EU INSTITUTIONS:

Representatives from EU institutions shall be informed and invited to participate both in local and international activities, in order to allow citizens to directly interact with them.

FUNCTIONING OF THE CITIZENS' PANELS:

A neutral place should be provided for the meeting:

- municipalities may provide their meeting rooms
- educational institutions
- NGOs sites Meetings should preferably take place during the weekends or in the evening (Tuesday-Thursday) so as to reach a higher number of people.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology of citizens' panels leaves room for widening the civic engagement through ICT tools. ICT applications are being studied to provide all members of the target group not directly involved in the drafting of recommendations with a concrete means to express their opinion on the addressed topic.

Tools used or created

A handbook and recommendations were created.

3. IMPACT (no more than 1000 - 3000 characters)

Number of participants / co-creators and their background (e.g. professional, cultural, gender)

Transnational activities:

- training of multipliers (June 2013, Brussels): 55 participants from 12 different countries in Europe
- Final International Conference (March 2014, Mesagne, Apulia Region): more than 60 international participants and 50 locals

Local activities:

	- local workshops in 8 European countries: more than 200 people were involved
Difficulties founded	Finding participants
Success factors	The local workshops were successful: the methodology used (world café methodology) was productive and it has set the direction for further actions of Civic observers and the Novo mesto information and coordination unit.
Weak elements	Participation
Transferability	These methods can be used in other projects as well.
Achievements/Tangible outputs (please include a link, if any)	Project's handbook: https://www.alda-europe.eu/public/doc/537-e-handbook_Coheirs-1.pdf

4. INNOVATION & OUTCOMES (no more than 1000 - 3000 characters)

Degree of Innovation (governance, recruitment process, fundraising, financing instruments, marketing, processes, service, etc.)	The European project COHEIRS further developed the methodology of citizens' panels by introducing the role of multipliers. Each partner identified and selected 5 multipliers within its group of activators. A tailor-made training programme is set up to enable the multipliers to acquire relevant information and tools on promoting civic engagement as well as a more scientific knowledge on the addressed topic. Therefore, multipliers act not only as facilitators but also as resource persons. They spread the information and tools previously acquired within the group of activators, thus leading and improving their capacity of addressing the target group.
What are the innovative points of the methodological approach used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a wide range of profiles and focus on the whole spectrum of society (volunteers, teachers, NGOs representatives, professionals and experts, disadvantaged people, elderly people, youngsters, etc.)
Evidence on the impact and outcomes achieved	At the end of the project, the activities and outcomes of the projects were gathered in a handbook: https://sites.google.com/site/coheirsalda/resources/e-handbook Recommendations: https://sites.google.com/site/coheirsalda/resources/recommendations

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Website	https://sites.google.com/site/coheirsalda/home

Social media	
Dissemination actions	DRPDNM's website: http://www.nevlnadnik.info/si/novice/?id=9331 http://www.nevlnadnik.info/si/novice/?id=8668
Network (if any were set up)	
Contact information of best practice: Name & Email address	https://www.alda-europe.eu/newSite/project_dett.php?ID=43 COHEIRS Contact person: Aldo Xhani Email: aldo.xhani@aldaintranet.org