



Should I Stay Or Should I Go?

D2.2 SOS Booklet



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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Introduction and description of the project

Should I Stay or Should I Go? promotes the active participation of young people in the valorisation and sustainable development of rural and remote areas in Europe.

The project addresses depopulation and territorial abandonment by strengthening young people's skills in leadership, participatory research, and digital storytelling. Through training pathways, the production of geo-localised podcasts, and cooperation among youth organisations, the project fosters new future visions and encourages dialogue between young people, local communities, and institutions.

Objectives

- To strengthen the role of young people as protagonists in the valorisation and regeneration of rural areas, counteracting depopulation and influencing public decision-making through participatory pathways focused on migration and local resources.
- To develop young people's skills in community leadership and participatory research, collecting local stories to build a shared narrative of rural and remote territories.
- To improve the attractiveness potential of rural areas through the valorisation of local resources and experiences related to territories and migration, while improving young people's skills in leadership, social research, and audio production through the development of geo-localised podcast based on participatory narrative mapping.

To facilitate synergies between youth organisations in rural and remote areas in Europe, and provide opportunities for mobility, training, and active engagement for young people by actively involving members of local communities, with the

aim of influencing decision making and policies concerning rural and remote areas in a way that is more informed by the needs of young people, for effective change at European level.

- To promote the project's approach and methodologies with a view to replicability and sustainability and ensure wide dissemination of the results achieved.

Partners

- Coordinator: [Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci – ETS](#), Italy
- [Right Challenge](#), Portugal
- [Re-Act](#), Bulgaria
- [Active Youth Institute](#), Lithuania
- [Institute of Entrepreneurship Development \(IED\)](#), Greece
- [Fundación Santa María la Real \(FSMLR\)](#), Spain

Activities

- International training courses and local workshops to develop skills in leadership, participatory research, and digital storytelling.
- Collection of stories and participatory mapping of experiences related to migration, return, and territorial regeneration.
- Creation of geo-localised podcasts sharing the voices and memories of local communities.
- Establishment of the European Youth Council for Rural and Remote Areas to promote policy recommendations and proposals.
- Communication and dissemination campaigns to enhance project results and raise awareness of the vitality of rural territories.

Target Group

- Young community leaders (18–30) from rural / remote areas
- Young researchers in SOS Youth Teams
- Creative team members who will support community activities
- Youth workers and staff from partner / associated organisations

Impact

The project foresees the following impact:

- Direct involvement of 48 young people with fewer opportunities from partner territories, actively participating in training, exchange and community-based activities.
- 24 young people trained through the Community Activation Camp and 24 young people trained through the On Air Camp, developing skills in leadership, civic participation, participatory research and digital communication.
- Production of replicable training and communication tools, including a shared training package, supporting materials and digital audio content focused on migration and local heritage.
- Engagement of local communities, youth organisations, stakeholders and local decision-makers through events, awareness-raising campaigns and dissemination activities, increasing awareness of local needs and of young people's active role in territorial development.
- Strengthened cooperation between young people, youth organisations and local authorities, improving capacities for co-design and participation in local decision-making processes.
- Consolidation of a transnational network of rural youth organisations, contributing in the medium and long term to more inclusive policies, increased attractiveness of rural areas, and stronger social cohesion and youth participation.

Methodology

Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is closely linked to the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, whose critical pedagogy has inspired community education and social research around the world. Freire worked mainly with adults in marginalised rural and urban communities who had been denied access to education and political participation.

Rather than treating them as “ignorant” or passive recipients of knowledge, Freire saw them as subjects of their own history, capable of reflecting on their reality and acting to transform it. His approach emphasised:

- Dialogue between educators and learners as equals.
- The connection between reflection and action (praxis). The development of critical consciousness, that is, the ability to read the world, not only the word.

Building on these ideas, PAR emerged in Latin America and other regions as a form of research that is carried out with and for communities, rather than on them. In PAR, community members are co-researchers who help to define the questions, choose the methods, collect and analyse data, and use the results to plan collective action.

In the context of SOS, PAR offers a framework for youth and community members to study their own realities of staying, leaving and returning, and to build evidence that can support local initiatives and policy proposals.

The Reciprocal Maieutic Approach

The Reciprocal Maieutic Approach is a dialectical method of inquiry and popular self-analysis developed by Danilo Dolci and still practiced today by the *Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci - ETS*. Rooted in the idea of Socratic maieutic (from the Greek *maieutikós*, “the art of the midwife”), it views education not only as a drive for social change but also as the act of bringing to light the inner potential of each learner, not by transmitting knowledge but by making it emerge through dialogue.

Unlike the unidirectional Socratic method, Dolci’s approach emphasizes reciprocity: knowledge arises from shared experiences and collective exploration, and it is co-created by the group of people involved. It is a group-based process in which one person poses questions, others respond, and together they deepen inquiry, creating a cycle of mutual learning, analysis of issues and proposal of solution and social change.

This methodology fosters responsibility, creativity, and co-education, encouraging individuals to reflect on their experiences, express their insights freely, and collaboratively validate ideas. A maieutic workshop requires participants to open themselves to others and engage in a common journey of research, analysis, experimentation, and creative co-learning.

What is this Booklet?

This booklet (D2.2) is the concise, accessible companion to the SOS Training Package (D2.1). It condenses the training content – the Community Activation Camp – into a short, practical guide for implementation of the methodologies and approach at its centre: it summarises the key concepts and offers concrete examples of how to apply the techniques in real settings.

It is built around the four pillars of the SOS training experience:

- **Community engagement** – involving local communities as active partners rather than as an audience;
- **Leadership** – supporting young people in taking initiative and shared responsibility;
- **PAR (Participatory Action Research)** – researching *with* people, not *about* them, and turning findings into collective action;
- **RMA (Reciprocal Maieutic Approach)** – the dialogical method developed by Danilo Dolci, in which knowledge is not transmitted from one person to a group but emerges reciprocally through structured questioning and shared reflection.

The booklet is not a substitute for the full Training Package: it is a working tool, something to keep at hand before, during and after an activity.

Where does it come from?

The booklet was developed within the project **SOS – Should I Stay or Should I Go?** co-funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ programme European Youth. Its content draws directly on the Training Package and on the experience gathered during the training activities and community workshops carried out by the partner organisations, so that what emerged in practice – what worked, what needed adapting, what surprised people – is reflected in the guidance offered here.

What is its objective?

The booklet has three main aims:

- to make the SOS methodologies easy to understand and to reuse, including for people who did not take part in the training;
- to allow the **replicability** of the training experience in other contexts, countries and organisations, by making community engagement, leadership, PAR and RMA transferable beyond the partnership;
- to serve as a reference document for future training initiatives.

How can it be used?

The booklet is a public resource, freely available for download on the project website. It is addressed to participants in the SOS training, youth workers, trainers, facilitators, youth organisations and anyone designing activities with and for young people. It can be used:

- as a **preparation tool**, to grasp the rationale and structure of the methodologies before designing an activity;

- as a **field guide**, consulted during workshops for practical examples, tips and adaptations;
- as a **dissemination tool**, to introduce the SOS approach to colleagues, partners, local stakeholders and young people themselves;
- as a **starting point for adaptation**, since every activity should be tailored to the group, the local context and the resources available.

Agenda

The main agenda of the Training which was at the basis of the development of this booklet and that was adapted to the logistics of the context was the following one. In the next pages, a description of each session will be provided, as guide to implement activities:

Time	08.06.2026	09.06.2026	10.06.2026	11.06.2026	12.06.2026	13.06.2026
8 – 9:00	Arrival of participants	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Departure
9:30		Welcome, introduction and Ice-breaking	Community Engagement – Theory & Practice	Narrative Data – Theory & Thematic Analysis	Podcast Storytelling – Theory & Drafting	
11:00		Coffee break	Coffee Break	Coffee break	Coffee break	
11.15		PAR – Theory & Non-Formal Exploration	Participatory Leadership – Theory & Non-Formal Activity Advocacy Campaign – Group Presentations & Feedback	Narratives for Social Change – Theory & Practice	Project Showcase & Final Presentations Final evaluation and next steps	
12.45		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
14:00		RMA – Theory & Non-Formal Exploration	Visit to Palermo and to a Youth Centre	Cultural Storytelling – Theory & Creative Workshop	Free time!	
15:30		Coffee break		Coffee break		
15:45 – 17:45		PAR & RMA – Integrated Practical Session		Narrative Prototyping & Peer Exchange		

		Advocacy Campaign – Introduction & Design	<i>Dinner</i>			
20:00	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Intercultural Evening</i>		<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Farewell Dinner!</i>	

Photos



Activities

Day 1

Title of the session	Welcome, Introduction & Ice-breaking
Introduction	The session was designed as a 'situated welcome': rather than a frontal institutional presentation, participants arrived with the body as well as the mind – walking the Borgo, sitting in a circle, and building a living map of their communities. The welcome introduced: 1) who we are (CSC not as an office but as a community, carrying forward the work Danilo Dolci began in 1952 when he arrived in Trappeto and chose to listen – 'Tell me about your life'); 2) where you are (a historical place – Borgo Danilo Dolci – built on that gesture, where change happens through territory, relationship and listening, not through classrooms); 3) and why you are here (the SOS project's belief that rural young people are not a problem but a resource, and that this week builds the tools to make that visible). Ground rules and expectations were co-created by the group from sticky notes, and the facilitator explicitly named that this bottom-up process – starting from people's own needs and producing something shared rather than imposed – is already the logic of the RMA method explored in the afternoon.
Objectives	• Welcome participants in a situated, embodied way, connecting them to the place and its history. • Foster mutual knowledge and group cohesion around the shared question of rural youth ('Should I stay, or should I go?'). • Co-create ground rules and collect expectations, experiencing bottom-up co-construction as a first taste of the participatory method.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the session participants will: • feel welcomed and connected to the training place as a meaningful learning environment, not a neutral venue. • know each other's names, communities and the main challenge young people face in each territory. • Have a visual, shared awareness of the transnational network ('the living map') and of the common question running through all communities. • set round rules and define expectations to be revisited on the final day.
Main steps of the activities	Activity 1 – Welcome and situated introduction (10 min). No PowerPoint. Speaking warmly and directly, with eye contact around the circle, the facilitator introduces the main

	concepts behind the historical roots of the place, the objectives of the training and an invitation to think about the reason behind the participation. Activity 2 – Icebreaker 'The living map of where we come from' (20 min), in four phases. • <i>Phase 1 - setting up the space</i>: chairs aside, the room is oriented (North/South/East/West) and each participant positions themselves according to where their community is located in Europe – approximate is perfect, with 2–3 minutes of gentle negotiation. • <i>Phase 2, reading the map together</i>: the group observes its own shape and holds one question in mind – 'Should I stay, or should I go?'. • <i>Phase 3, introductions from where you stand (12 min)</i>: thirty seconds each, standing in place – name, community and country, one word for the main challenge young people face there; the facilitator starts, modelling the format. <i>Phase 4, closing gesture</i>: noticing who is geographically close and who is far – 'this week, those distances collapse; the map stays alive in the room, even without the paper'. Activity 4 – Co-creating ground rules (20 min). No pre-written list: each participant writes on sticky notes what this space needs to really work – what they need from each other and from the facilitators. Notes are read aloud, clustered on the 'Our Ground Rules' flipchart and agreed collectively; the list stays visible all week and can be changed at any point if proposed and necessary. Activity 5 – Expectations and bridge to the programme (10 min). One sticky note per person: one thing they hope to learn or take home from the four days. Notes are read aloud, grouped by theme and displayed on the 'Our Expectations' flipchart, to be revisited together on the last day – looking at what was met, what surprised, and what took a different shape. Brief bridge into the agenda and the first module.
Suggestions for the implementation	Keep the spoken welcome under 3–4 minutes per part, with eye contact around the circle and no slides. In the living map, don't rush the positioning phase: the 2–3 minutes of gentle negotiation ('wait, are you further north than me?') is itself a form of connection – let it happen. If the space is small, adapt the scale (one side of the room = North). Keep people standing during the introductions: speaking from one's place on the map adds something that sitting in a circle doesn't. In the ground rules, if key items are missing (active listening, confidentiality, phones on silent), prompt gently with an open question ('Is there anything missing about how we listen to each other?') – guide, don't impose. Don't try to address every expectation in detail: a brief connection to the agenda is enough. What matters is that people feel heard before the training starts.

Title of the session	Participatory Action Research: The Epistemology, Principles, and Practice of Paulo Freire's PAR Methodology
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Introduction	This training session, developed under WP2 (SOS Training and Community Workshop), provides a comprehensive exploration of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as an emancipatory and political-epistemic paradigm. It contextualises PAR through its dual historical foundations: the Anglo-Saxon pathway established by Kurt Lewin's scientific step-by-step cycles, and the Latin American pathway pioneered by Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda. Grounded in Freire's transformative pedagogy, the session challenges academic elitism and traditional "banking education" by framing research not as a neutral academic exercise, but as a collaborative tool for human liberation, conscious dialogue, and structural transformation.
Objectives	• To deconstruct the historical and global foundations of Action Research and its evolution into a paradigm for social justice. • To analyse the three core pillars of PAR: systematic Research, deliberate Action, and horizontal Participation. • To understand Freirean epistemological principles, including the political dimension of education, the dialogue of knowledge (ecology of knowledges), ethical humanisation, and horizontality. • To differentiate between passive "banking education" and problem-posing "liberating education".
Learning outcomes	By the end of this session, participants would be able to: • Identify and contrast traditional academic research dynamics with the horizontal, collaborative educator-learner relationship of PAR. • Critically analyse local community issues by transitioning from passive awareness to a systemic understanding of socioeconomic structures (Conscientisation). • Apply the Praxis framework to balance critical reflection with structured, deliberate community interventions, avoiding empty theory or blind activism. • Facilitate the process of Decodification by translating localized contradictions into accessible visual or narrative formats for group analysis. • Co-design localized intervention plans alongside community actors, ensuring they remain the central protagonists of their own developmental processes
Main steps of the activities	The practical application of the theory is structured around the "<i>Circle of Decodification</i>" activity, which follows five core methodological steps: • Codify: Small working groups are presented with a localized visual or textual contradiction representing a real, concrete community issue. • Deconstruct: Groups dissect this representation using structured critical prompts (e.g., "<i>Why does this occur?</i>", "<i>What are the hidden root causes?</i>") to move past surface-level observations.

	• Synthesise: Teams extract a singular Generative Theme that encapsulates the deeper, structural challenge identified during the deconstruction • Design: Participants formulate an actionable, localized intervention plan where the affected community members act as the primary protagonists. • Evaluate: Groups present their practical action plans in a plenary session, demonstrating a unified loop of Praxis (the fusion of deep reflection and concrete action).
Suggestions for the implementation	• Careful Selection of Codifications: Ensure that the visual or narrative materials (photographs, short local testimonies, case studies) chosen for Step 1 are highly relevant and genuinely reflective of the participants' or target community's lived realities to guarantee immediate engagement. • Fostering True Horizontality: Facilitators must actively step back from the traditional "<i>teacher/expert</i>" persona to prevent falling back into "<i>banking education</i>" methods. Use open-ended, problem-posing questions rather than providing pre-packaged answers. • Time Management for Praxis: Balance the agenda to ensure that groups do not get stuck entirely in the "<i>Deconstruct</i>" phase (which risks turning into empty verbalist theory). Allocate sufficient time for the "<i>Design</i>" phase so that the session successfully materialises into clear, structural commitments to action. • Material Setup: Provide plenty of physical materials (large chart papers, coloured post-its, markers) or collaborative digital whiteboards to map out the connections between the immediate problems and their wider systemic causes.
Participants feedback	Between "<i>banking</i>" and "<i>liberating</i>" education, noting that it allowed them to self-reflect on their own biases as project managers and external trainers. The Circle of Decodification activity was praised for its highly practical structure, with most of the attendees stating it provided them with an accessible, step-by-step tool to use directly during future community focus groups. Some participants requested more time to detail the micro-action. Overall, the evaluation forms highlighted that the session successfully bridged complex sociological theory with everyday project implementation

Title of the session	RMA — Theory & Non-Formal Exploration
Introduction	This theoretical session (Module 3, Part 1) introduced the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach, the methodology at the heart of the SOS project, before participants experienced it in practice in the following session. The session starts from a person: Danilo Dolci, who in 1952, at 28, arrived in Trappeto, a small fishing village marked by extreme poverty, feudal land structures and Cosa Nostra. He had studied architecture and could have brought plans, projects, solutions; instead, the first thing he did was to listen. From that choice comes the

	definition of RMA offered to participants: a structured collective dialogue in which knowledge is not extracted from participants but generated together – no single expert in the room, no right or wrong answers, silence as thinking time rather than a problem to be filled, and a synthesis produced by the group, not the facilitator, with the aim of being an agent for social change. The word 'maieutic' (which in Greek stands for "midwife") captures the idea: knowledge is already present in people and needs the right conditions to surface. The second part of the session clarified the relationship between PAR and RMA, complementary tools, not alternatives: PAR is the overarching research framework (define a question collectively, gather data, reflect, act, revise), RMA the specific dialogue methodology used inside it, particularly in the Community Listening Sessions. In PAR the facilitator is a co-researcher; in RMA, a dialogue holder. RMA is the primary method participants will use in their Community Listening Workshops.
Objectives	• Introduce the origin of RMA through the figure of Danilo Dolci and its principles. • Give participants a clear definition of RMA as structured collective dialogue in which knowledge is generated together. • Clarify the relationship between PAR and RMA: PAR as the overarching research framework, RMA as the dialogue methodology used within it (co-researcher vs dialogue holder). • Frame RMA as the primary practical tool participants will use in their Community Listening Workshops, preparing the ground for the practical session that follows.
Learning outcomes	By the end of this session, participants would be able to: • Explain what RMA is and where it comes from and name its core principles in their own words. • understand the radical shift RMA implies compared to traditional meetings, interviews or focus groups • distinguish the roles and purposes of PAR and RMA and know when to use each in the community engagement process. • Use the practical RMA session with a shared conceptual ground.
Main steps of the activities	• Step 1 – Theoretical input: What is RMA? (plenary mini-lecture, 20 min). The story of Dolci's arrival in Trappeto in 1952 as the anchor: what he found, and his choice to start from listening. Definition of RMA as structured collective dialogue where knowledge is generated together; what these changes in practice (no single expert, no right or wrong answers, the facilitator genuinely does not know what people will say, silence as thinking time, synthesis, call to social change and so on). Framing of RMA as the main practical tool for the Community Listening Workshops. Short space for questions.

	• Step 2 – PAR vs RMA comparison (facilitated discussion, 10 min). Addressing a frequent confusion: are PAR and RMA the same thing, or competing methods? Reading the comparison table with the group, not for the group: PAR as the scaffolding of the whole community engagement process, RMA as the methodology for sitting in a circle with community members and generating knowledge together. The line that best captures the difference is the facilitator's role – co-researcher in PAR, dialogue holder in RMA; the same person can move between both roles, but not at the same time. Two or three participant reactions, kept tight, then the bridge to the practical session: <i>'Let's now experience RMA from the inside.'</i>
Suggestions for the implementation	• Spend real time on the story of Dolci's arrival in Trappeto – it is the strongest anchor of the whole session; if available, show the short video about Dolci (under 3 minutes) during or just after the biographical part. • Avoid reading the RMA principles from a list: name them and move on – they will be experienced in the practical session rather than explained here. • Don't over-explain the PAR/RMA table: read it with the group – two or three questions from participants are more valuable than a through lecture on the differences. • Keep the theory tight and pointed towards practice: the real learning happens in the exercise that follows.

Title of the session	PAR & RMA – Integrated Practical Session: <i>'Voices from the Territory'</i>,
Introduction	The core of this session is the exercise <i>'Voices from the Territory'</i> . It is an invitation to experience RMA through the practice, by making participants sitting in a circle and working around a generative question.
Objectives	• To make participants experience a real RMA session from the inside, as participants and as future facilitators. • Practise the core disciplines of maieutic facilitation: holding silence, restraint from steering, open non-directive questioning. • Produce a genuine collective synthesis owned by the group, showing what a Community Listening Workshop could generate. • Build participants' capacity to replicate the method in their own territories through guided meta-reflection on the facilitation choices observed.
Learning outcomes	At the end of the session, participants would be able to: • lived an authentic maieutic circle – including held silence and group-owned synthesis – and can reflect on its dynamics. • observe and analyse concrete facilitation choices (not filling silence, restraint from steering, returning the synthesis to the group) that they will replicate locally.

	understand RMA <i>'not as a concept, but as a practice'</i> and feel prepared to facilitate Community Listening Workshops in their territories.
Main steps of the activities	Framing (before the session begins). This is not a simulation but a real RMA session – the question is genuine and the experiences shared will be treated with full respect. Chairs arranged in a circle, no tables, everyone able to see everyone else. Ground rules built together: speak from your own experience, using 'I'; listen actively – when someone speaks, we are present, not planning our response; respect silence – it is thinking time, not a problem; what is shared in the circle stays in the circle. The generative question and the dialogue (>35 min). A genuine pause according to the needs of the participants, inviting each person to be in the process. Then the question: <i>'Can you tell me about a specific moment – a concrete memory – when you felt that your community was either full of possibility, or in danger of disappearing?'</i> The facilitator does not rush and waits for the first voice to come from the group; each person speaks after the other, following the circle. Transition from dialogue to collective reflection: looking at everything shared, what are the main themes that emerged? What surprised you? What felt significant? What may still be unspoken? The facilitator names what was produced: these themes, tensions and words are the material a Community Listening Workshop generates. Meta-reflection (final 15 min). The facilitator explicitly steps out of the role to reflect on the RMA process together with all the participants. Questions which can be posed can be: <i>"as participants, what did it feel like to be inside that dialogue – not what was said, but what was felt? Then as future facilitators: what opened the conversation, what might have closed it?"</i>. The discussion connects to specific moments experienced during the session.
Suggestions for the implementation	- Be honest from the start that the exercise is real, not a role-play, and treat what is shared with full respect: the framing itself builds the trust the dialogue needs. - The exercise may produce emotional content: handle any difficult moment with full presence and without rushing to resolution – do not redirect, allow the space to hold what emerges. - In the meta-reflection, anchor the discussion in specific observable moments of the session rather than general impressions: this is what turns the experience into transferable facilitation skills.

Title of the session	Advocacy campaign: Introduction and Designing Local Advocacy Campaigns
Introduction	This session introduces the concept of advocacy in local communities through a participatory approach. Participants explore different types of advocacies, analyse

	real-life examples, and apply the concepts by designing a simple advocacy campaign addressing a challenge from their own community.
Objectives	• To understand the concept and purpose of advocacy. • To identify different advocacy approaches and target groups. • To design a simple advocacy campaign based on a local community issue. • To connect advocacy with participatory methodologies and storytelling.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the session, participants would be able to: • Explain what advocacy is and distinguish between its main approaches. • Identify community challenges suitable for advocacy actions. • • Develop the basic elements of an advocacy campaign (problem, target group, action and expected change).
Main steps of the activities	1. Introduction to advocacy through participants' prior knowledge and well-known advocacy campaigns. 2. Presentation of advocacy target groups and different advocacy approaches (policy, community, narrative and grassroots advocacy). 3. Reflection on a local community issue using four guiding questions: a) <i>What is the problem?</i> b) <i>Why does it matter?</i> c) <i>What should change?</i> d) <i>What is the key message?</i> 4. Group work to design a short advocacy campaign including title, problem, target group, proposed action and expected change. 5. Presentation and discussion of the proposals.
Suggestions for the implementation	• Encourage participants to work on real challenges from their communities. National groups facilitate the identification of local issues, while international groups can enrich the discussion by bringing different perspectives. • Keep the design process agile and focused on concrete, achievable actions.
Participants feedback	Participants appreciated the practical nature of the session and the opportunity to transform local challenges into concrete advocacy proposals. The activity also helped them understand how advocacy complements participatory research, storytelling and community activation.

Day 2

Title of the session	Community Engagement and Outreach
Introduction	This session focused on understanding the barriers to community participation in rural areas and developing practical outreach strategies. Participants explored how to engage diverse and underrepresented groups through inclusive and context-sensitive approaches.
Objectives	• To identify barriers to participation in rural communities • To map key stakeholders and underrepresented groups • To develop practical outreach and trust-building strategies • To design context-sensitive engagement approaches
Learning outcomes	At the end of the session, participants would be able to: • Identify key stakeholders in their communities • Recognise the main barriers to engagement • Propose inclusive outreach strategies adapted to local contexts • Reflect on trust-building and community dialogue
Main steps of the activities	The activity can be structured in the following way (please, check the Training Package for further information): • Introduction to community engagement, barriers and trust-building, to provide the same level on knowledge on the key topics of the session. • Scenario-based group work on real rural engagement challenges, thus allowing participants to put in practice what has been shared with a ready-to-be-used case. • Group presentations and collective debriefing on outreach strategies and inclusion, thus sharing the results among groups and providing collective feedback.
Suggestions for the implementation	• Encourage participants to start from examples that they identified in their own communities. • Ensure enough time for presentations and collective reflection as these discussions generate valuable learning.

Title of the session	Participatory Leadership: Transformative Leadership for Inclusive Group Facilitation
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Introduction	This session explores participatory leadership as a tool to foster inclusive participation, shared responsibility and community engagement. Through experiential activities and group reflection, participants analyse different leadership approaches and discover how leadership can empower others to take ownership of collective processes.
Objectives	- To understand the principles of participatory and transformative leadership. - To reflect on different leadership styles and their impact on group dynamics. - To explore practical models for distributed leadership and meaningful participation. - To strengthen participants' facilitation skills in community-based settings.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the session, participants would be able to: - Explain the key features of participatory leadership. - Recognise the importance of shared leadership and inclusive decision-making. - Apply participatory leadership principles when facilitating groups and community initiatives. - Identify strategies to promote active participation and collective ownership.
Main steps of the activities	Icebreaker – Silent Line-Up: participants complete a non-verbal group challenge, reflecting on communication, initiative and leadership without speaking. Group reflection: participants share examples of facilitators or leaders who positively influenced them and identify the qualities that made them effective. Interactive input: presentation and discussion of key concepts, including Marshall Ganz's definition of leadership, distributed leadership through the Snowflake Model, Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation, and Lao Tzu's perspective on empowering leadership. Collective discussion: participants connect these concepts with their own experiences and explore how participatory leadership can strengthen community activation and youth participation.
Suggestions for the implementation	- Facilitate the session using an interactive methodology that encourages dialogue and reflection rather than lectures. - Use visual resources and practical examples to illustrate the different leadership models and continuously relate the concepts to participants' own experiences and community contexts.
Participants feedback	The Silent Line-Up activity proved particularly effective as an introduction to the topic, demonstrating how leadership can emerge naturally through collaboration and non-verbal communication.

Title of the session	Advocacy II: Campaign Presentations and Peer Feedback
Introduction	This follow-up session allows participants to present the advocacy campaigns designed during the previous session, receive constructive feedback, and reflect collectively on different advocacy strategies and approaches.
Objectives	• Present the advocacy campaigns developed in Session I. • Encourage peer learning through structured feedback. • Reflect on the strengths and areas for improvement of each proposal. • Consolidate participants' understanding of advocacy in practice.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the session, participants would be able to: • Communicate an advocacy proposal clearly and effectively. • Provide and receive constructive feedback. • Identify key elements that contribute to a stronger advocacy campaign. • Reflect critically on different advocacy strategies.
Main steps of the activities	1. Group presentations of the advocacy campaigns (approximately 5 minutes per group), using any preferred format (digital presentation, oral presentation or physical materials). 2. Structured peer and facilitator feedback using the "Tops & Tips" method: participants write strengths ("<i>Tops</i>") and suggestions for improvement ("<i>Tips</i>") on coloured sticky notes. 3. Collectives debrief to discuss the feedback received and reflect on the main learning points from both advocacy sessions.
Suggestions for the implementation	• Create a supportive environment where feedback is constructive and balanced. • Encourage participants to justify their comments and focus on practical improvements. • Display all "<i>Tops</i>" and "<i>Tips</i>" visibly to facilitate group discussion and reflection.

Day 3

Title of the session	From Stories to Community Knowledge: Understanding Local Narratives through Community Listening
Introduction	Every community holds stories that reveal much more than individual experiences. They highlight common challenges, shared values, local resources, and opportunities for change. This session introduced participants to the concept of

	community listening as a participatory method for transforming personal narratives into collective knowledge that supports youth participation and local action. Working in small international groups, participants explored how to move beyond simply hearing stories by identifying recurring themes, emotions, community needs, migration drivers, and local strengths through simple analytical tools developed within the SOS methodology.
Objectives	• To introduce participants to community listening as a participatory research method. • To develop participants' ability to analyse personal narratives collectively. • To identify recurring themes, emotions, needs, and migration factors across different stories. • To encourage critical thinking and collaborative reflection. • To demonstrate how qualitative data can support community planning and local action.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the session, participants would be able to: • Listen actively and respectfully to community narratives. • Identify recurring themes across multiple stories. • Distinguish between facts, emotions, and underlying needs. • Recognise push and pull factors influencing migration decisions. • Visualise community knowledge through collaborative mapping techniques. • Transform qualitative information into practical ideas for local initiatives and community action.
Main steps of the activities	1. Introduction: Presentation of the purpose and principles of community listening within the SOS methodology. 2. Theme Spotting: Participants analyse short narrative excerpts and identified common topics, emotions, needs, and migration-related factors. 3. Community Narrative Mind Map: In small groups, participants organise the collected information visually by connecting quotes, emotions, needs, local resources, and possible community responses. 4. Story Analysis Canvas: Each group completes a structured analysis of one narrative using an analysis template, producing a practical document that could later support community planning, podcast development, or policy recommendations. 5. Reflection and Group Discussion: Participants compared findings across groups, identified common patterns, and reflected on how collective knowledge can inform local action.

Suggestions for the implementation	• Organise participants in small groups (4–6 people) to encourage discussion. • Use authentic or fictional short narratives related to local community experiences. • Provide printed templates for the Story Analysis Canvas and mind mapping activities. • Encourage facilitators to guide the discussion through open questions rather than providing answers. • Allow sufficient time for reflection and sharing of findings. This activity can easily be implemented in schools, youth centres, or community organisations with minimal materials
Participants feedback	Participants appreciated discovering how individual stories can reveal broader community realities when analysed collectively. They reported that the activities strengthened their empathy, critical thinking, and collaborative skills while helping them better understand the connections between personal experiences and wider social issues. Many highlighted the practical value of transforming community narratives into evidence that can support local initiatives and youth participation.

Title of the session	Using narratives for social change
Introduction	This module empowers young community leaders, youth workers, and creative change-makers in rural areas to transform personal stories of resilience into a powerful movement for collective action. Designed to counter prevailing "narratives of decay" that drive youth depopulation, this interactive session teaches participants how to use the Audience-Medium-Message framework to build both strategic "maps" that convince policymakers to invest in youth infrastructure, and identity "mirrors" that inspire local peers to see their own potential. By mastering these narrative techniques, participants will learn to collect raw community stories into practical, high-impact tools, like geo-localized podcasts and digital campaigns. That shifts local psychology from a sense of loss toward a future of innovation and opportunity.
Objectives	• To explore the strategic role of narratives in building collective identity and driving rural social movements. • To introduce the Audience-Medium-Message Triangle as a framework for targeted community communication. • To facilitate hands-on practice in digital storytelling and pitching for rural youth.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the session, participants would be able to:

	• Explain why narratives are powerful tools for awareness-raising and social change. • Identify different audiences (youth, local authorities, public) and adapt the narrative to each. • Design a simple story-based communication plan linked to project activities (e.g. geo-podcast, digital campaign).
Main steps of the activities	Activity 1: The Cross-Border "Mirror" What it is: A hands-on digital storytelling exercise where participants interview a peer from another country/town and transform their real-life story into a 5-slide social media campaign (Instagram/TikTok carousel) designed to inspire youth back in their own hometown. • Step 1: Interview your partner about a local challenge, the turning point, and a small success. • Step 2: Use the Message Triangle framework to adapt that story for local youth thinking about leaving. • Step 3: Draft a 5-slide visual post using a template that connects the international story directly to home potential. Activity 2: The "Diplomatic Map" What it is: A roleplay and pitching exercise where participants practice presenting community successes to local leaders (like town mayors) to prove that investing in young people drives economic and social returns. • Step 1: Choose a concrete, real-life example of local youth adding value to the village. • Step 2: Structure a sharp, 60-second verbal pitch using three parts: The Hook, The Story, and The Strategy. • Step 3: Deliver the pitch to a partner playing the "Mayor," who must immediately summarize it to someone else in 30 seconds to test if the message was truly clear and understandable
Suggestions for the implementation	• The question of staying or leaving can bring up real frustration or sadness for rural youth. Create a supportive, non-judgmental space where participants feel safe sharing both their love for their home and their genuine struggles. • During Activity 2 (The Diplomatic Map), use a large visual countdown timer on a screen or smartphone. • In Activity 1, don't let participants get taken away trying to design perfect graphics on their phones/computers. Remind them that the booklet worksheets are for mapping out the ideas and words the design can happen later. • Print out simple cards for the "mayor" role in Activity 2 (e.g., the sceptical business owner, the traditional politician, the tech-savvy council member).

	This helps partners stay in character and gives the speaker a realistic challenge. Keep a blank flipchart on the wall labelled "<i>our landscape</i>." Encourage participants to write down spaces in their towns that currently feel abandoned but have the potential to have a "<i>small win</i>".
Participants feedback	- Participants shared that it was surprisingly fun to actively look for the positive things and "small wins" already happening right in their own villages. - Hearing real success stories from peers in other countries was incredibly encouraging. It gave participants concrete ideas and confidence to try similar projects in their own hometowns. - Participants found learning about the Audience-Medium-Message Triangle highly practical and interesting to pick up new social media tactics that they can easily use in their daily lives and future communication work.

Title of the session	Cultural Storytelling – Theory & Creative Workshop
Introduction	This session introduced participants to the concept of cultural storytelling and its role in strengthening identity, belonging and community participation. Through theory and interactive activities, participants explored how local stories can preserve cultural heritage and empower rural communities.
Objectives	- To introduce the concept of cultural storytelling. - To explore the relationship between storytelling, identity and belonging. - To encourage participants to reflect on their own communities. - To develop awareness of storytelling as a tool for community empowerment.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the session, participants would be able to: - explain the concept of cultural storytelling; - recognise the importance of stories in rural communities; - reflect on community identity and local heritage; - identify how storytelling can support participation and empowerment.
Main steps of the activities	Step 1 – Introduction The facilitator introduces the concept of cultural storytelling and explains how stories can strengthen identity, belonging and community participation. Step 2 – Group Reflection Participants reflect on how their communities are represented by others and discuss which local stories are often overlooked or forgotten. Step 3 – Story Circle Activity

	Participants work in groups around flipcharts to identify important places, traditions, memories, community challenges and stories that deserve to be shared. Step 4 – Community Photo Challenge Participants select a photo from their phone representing their community and explained its significance to the group. Step 5 – Group Discussion The facilitator concludes the session by discussing how community experiences can be transformed into meaningful stories.
Suggestions for the implementation	• Create a safe and inclusive environment where participants feel comfortable sharing personal experiences. • Encourage open discussion while respecting different perspectives. • Allow flexibility during the reflection activities, as participants may need additional time to share their stories and engage with the group.
Participants feedback	Participants responded positively to the interactive activities and actively contributed to discussions, sharing personal experiences and community perspectives throughout the session.

Title of the session	Narrative Prototyping & Peer Exchange
Introduction	This session focused on transforming community experiences into meaningful narratives. Participants explored the basic principles of storytelling, applied ethical storytelling practices and worked collaboratively to create, refine and share stories inspired by rural communities. The session concluded with a peer exchange activity, encouraging reflection and dialogue through storytelling.
Objectives	• To introduce the basic structure and key elements of storytelling. • To support participants in developing meaningful community narratives. • To promote ethical storytelling practices. • To encourage collaboration and constructive feedback through peer exchange.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the session, participants would be able to: • structure a simple community story; • apply the key elements of storytelling; • recognise the importance of ethical storytelling; • present and discuss their narratives with peers; • reflect on how stories can be adapted into audio storytelling.
Main steps of the activities	Step 1 – Introduction to Storytelling

	The facilitator introduces the basic structure of a story, the key storytelling elements and the principles of ethical storytelling. Step 2 – Story Development Working in small groups, participants create a short story based on one of the proposed themes (Stay, Leave or Return?) using the Story Planning Worksheet. Step 3 – Story Refinement Groups review their narratives, discuss the main message of their story and make final improvements before presenting them. Step 4 – Peer Exchange Each group presents its story to another group by reading it aloud. Participants listened actively, exchanged constructive feedback and reflected on the different community experiences presented through the stories. Step 5 – Closing Reflection The facilitator concludes the session with a short discussion on how community stories can be shared through audio storytelling and later transformed into podcasts.
Suggestions for the implementation	• Encourage participants to focus on authentic community experiences rather than creating perfect stories. • Allow enough time for group discussion and reflection and promote respectful and constructive feedback during the peer exchange. • The facilitator should guide the discussion while ensuring that every participant can contribute.
Participants feedback	Participants actively engaged in the storytelling process and collaborated effectively within their groups. The peer exchange activity encouraged meaningful discussions, allowing participants to discover common experiences and different perspectives across communities.

Day 4

Title of the session	The Power of Storytelling through Podcasts
Introduction	The session explores the power of sound as an intimate and engaging medium for telling true stories, guiding participants through five key areas: deep listening, finding a story, interviewing techniques, writing for audio, and sound design.
Objectives	• To introduce participants to the narrative potential of sound and podcasts as a storytelling tool • To develop deep listening skills as the foundation of compelling storytelling

	- To provide tools to find, define and shape a story with meaning and momentum - To share interviewing techniques that are engaging, alive and ethical - To introduce the principles of writing for the ear and cinematic sound design
Learning outcomes	By the end of the session, participants would be able to: - practise active listening towards places, people and themselves - formulate a story pitch using a specific frame - conduct an interview based on deep listening, making use of silence and spontaneity - structure a story in scenes rather than information, creating a storyboard and selecting material rigorously - write narration designed for the ear (short sentences, simple words, trusting the listener) - use sound layers, distances, music and silence to create a three-dimensional audio space
Main steps of the activities	Introductory input: why sound is so powerful, trying to find inspiring personal memories in which sound plays a specific role, often linked to an emotion. Listening as a practice (with references to Pauline Oliveros and Georges Perec): 60 seconds of listening with eyes closed, focusing on the listening itself; guided listening to audio documentaries; free writing while listening to a soundscape; recalling the sounds of an imagined, familiar place Finding your story: starting from a question, identifying characters, defining what is at stake individually, followed by a pitching exercise shared with the whole group, thus comparing personal experiences. Interviewing techniques + pair exercise: a 5-minute interview about a memory from the interviewee's hometown, then swapping roles in the pair thus experiencing and sharing the same feelings. Shaping the story after the recordings: after the interview, the attention is focused on story structures, storyboarding as well as on cutting material. Writing for audio: sharing key principles to write for an audio recording, supported by some listening to examples in the web. Sound design: discussion on key features of sound design: layers, distances, music and silence. This is followed by a sound-walk exercise in silence, capturing three short clips (each one from different distance: close, mid-distance, far away) Final reflections, next steps for participants' podcast stories, and sharing of resources

Suggestions for the implementation	• Alternate short theoretical inputs with practical, experiential exercises • Provide a quiet space and the possibility to go outside for the sound walk • Make recording devices (smartphones are sufficient) and headphones available • Use high-quality audio examples (Radio Atlas, fieldrecordings.xyz, HowSound, Transom.org) to illustrate the concepts • Create a welcoming, non-judgemental atmosphere: remind participants that "there are no wrong answers" in the creative exercises • Encourage pair work and plenary sharing to build mutual trust • Connect the exercises to participants' own territory and lived experience (stories, sounds and places that are meaningful to them) • Close by inviting participants to "<i>begin by simply listening</i>"
Participants feedback	The session includes a structured final reflection moment with questions such as: "What surprised you most today? Was it the power of silence in interviews? The idea of non-linear storytelling? The way sound can transform a scene?" which can be used to collect participants' feedback at the end of the workshop.



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