



# 6th Social Capital World Forum

## International Learning Village

### *'Connecting City and Citizens'*



*Social Capital and Abundance – Learning together how to create abundant communities*

2016-2017



Co-funded by the  
Europe for Citizens Programme  
of the European Union



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*We would like to thank all those whose hard work and effort made the event possible and also the participants for sharing their thoughts, experiences, knowledge and dreams*

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## Introduction

*“Social Capital in Abundance – Learning together how to create abundant communities”*

The Social Capital World Forum was launched in Scotland in 2009, to bring together organisations (civil society, NGOs, social enterprises, academic, statutory sector, etc.) working at a regional/national level with *social capital as a key resource for enhancing community well-being and resilience*.

The Social Capital World Forum secured support from the Citizens for Europe 2.3 Citizens Project to host three International Learning Villages that would provide the opportunity to test a model to build bridges between a city and its citizens. Our aim was to work with local partners in 3 cities and to facilitate meaningful conversations between citizens and the public sector in Scotland, Sweden and Austria.

### Core Partners

[Assist Social Capital](#), lead partner – Assist Social Capital Community Interest Company (ASC) was set up in 2004. ASC acts as a bridge between academic evidence for social capital and its practical applications. Our services identify, articulate and operationalize social capital in practice enabling communities (of place, practice or profession) to become more resilient and to respond with confidence and competence to the challenges facing them in ways that are sustainable over the long-term.

ASC is the co-founder (together with OFRI) of the [Social Capital World Forum](#) (SCWF) which has delivered 6 international conferences since 2009. Through the SCWF we have connected with over 1,000 individuals helped nurture a numerous offshoot social innovations.

As a third sector organisation ASC was the only partner eligible to lead on this EU for Citizens project. We felt it was important to work with partners from the public sector to and developed a participatory leadership model known as a Learning Village to create safe spaces where citizens and city planners co-create solutions relevant to their local contexts, which led to us work in partnership with OFRI and SKL to develop the model in Glasgow (Scotland), Dornbirn (Austria) and Gothenburg (Sweden) in partnership with the Local Authorities in these cities.

[The Office for Future Related Issues \(OFRI\)](#) - is a staff unit in the Office of the Vorarlberg state government which reports directly to the state governor. Society is in the midst of comprehensive economic, social and ecological change and OFRI is aware that the traditional regulatory measures of the state (such as laws and directives) are reaching their limits. The complexity of problems is increasing on the one hand, and the deepening diversity within society, on the other hand, makes it more and more difficult to reach consensus. OFRI works to find and promote methodologies that include the local population

as a whole – but also specific interest groups (i.e., stake holders) – more effectively in the decision and implementation processes. In this way, the quality of solutions can be improved, as well as the acceptance of the solutions, which can be significantly enhanced. As a result, the chance that the measures shall be successfully implemented also increase. OFRI promotes sustainable development of society, bringing people and issues together to find appropriate and acceptable answers to the challenges of our time. The Learning Villages project fitted extremely well with these concepts, which encouraged OFRI to get involved as a partner organisation.

**SKL, Sweden** - The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions represents and advocates for local government in Sweden. All municipalities, county councils and regions in Sweden are members. SKL members are the employers of more than one million people, which makes it the largest employer organisation in Sweden. The Association strives to promote and strengthen local self-government and the development of regional and local democracy.

## **Local Partners**

**Glasgow Life** - in 2007 to deliver cultural and leisure services on behalf of, but not exclusively for, Glasgow City Council. Glasgow Life, a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, delivers a diverse range of services and activities across the city, through a portfolio of directly managed and leased facilities and outdoor recreation sites. Its services include Arts, Communities, Events, Libraries, Museums, Music, Sport and Young Glasgow. It works with communities and partners across the public, private, and third sectors to inspire Glasgow's citizens and visitors to lead richer, more active lives through culture and sport. Glasgow Life work towards six strategic objectives to:

- enhance the health and wellbeing of people who live, work and visit the city.
- create an environment where enterprise, work and skills development are encouraged.
- provide opportunities for making positive life choices in a safe, attractive and sustainable environment.
- create a culture of learning and creativity that lets people flourish in their personal, family, community and working lives.
- enhance and promote the city's local, national and international image, identity and infrastructure.
- demonstrate the ongoing improvement in the quality, performance and impact of the services and opportunities

**Norra Hisingen, Gothenburg** - the district of Norra Hisingen was formed January 1, 2011 when Backa a suburb in Gothenburg, was merged with the districts of Kärra-Rödbo and Tuve-Säve. Gothenburg city district Northern Hisingen is a neighbourhood struggling with social problems and social inequality. The district Northern Hisingen is going through urban transformation and Selma Lagerlof's Square will be enlarged with 1,500 new apartments, a new plaza - and Gothenburg city will begin build a new city district hall in the local area in 2017, with venues for public sector offices, but also a common ground and venues for public meetings and local culture. Two pressing issues connected to the city district hall project were;

- *How can the new city district hall be everyone's house? and*
- *How can the new city district hall with venues for culture, be filled with local life?*

The Learning Village in Northern Hisingen offered a forum where the participants had the opportunity to get to know each other and build relationships, learn from real life stories and listen to others' experiences to develop common understanding, initiatives that could help to realise ideas that could develop and strengthen the local community.

**City of Dornbirn** - 50 000 Inhabitants located in Vorarlberg in the very west of Austria, Dornbirn is an economically prosperous region and runs several service facilities (hospital, libraries, bath, etc.) and was recently voted the city with the best living quality in Austria. The number of inhabitants is growing rapidly and over 100 nationalities live in the city. The growing diversity is a challenge for the city and its administration.

**Figure 1: Activities of the Social Capital World Forum 2016**



## Purpose of the Event

### Background

We all have to increasingly deal with complex social, economic and environmental uncertainties across the world. Our current structures and systems are struggling trying to deal with these challenges we face, whilst at the same time trust and cohesion between people and across communities are getting lost.

The European Union as a whole faces these challenges and it has emphasised through programmes like 'Citizens for Europe', that it is more important than ever for its **citizens to take part in discussions and help shape policies** through active citizenship to better deal with and overcome challenges such as austerity, unemployment, migration, aging populations etc. towards a more sustainable model, based on ideas of increasing resilience, wellbeing and quality of life within our communities.



For this reason we as well as all our project partners saw it as crucial **to find new solutions** as well as **explore new ways** to increase citizen participation and democratic engagement whilst also promoting intercultural dialogue and cooperation building new and mutual relations based on **collaborative governance**.

### The Relevance of Social Capital

Social capital describes the **value and relevance of relationships of trust**. Those relationships between people form the basis for our communities and collective action.

*Social Capital is the basis of social engagement in all areas of community life; so it is required for the future success of a connected community.*

For that reason we believe that social capital can provide a **positive way of engaging** with people which can make a real difference for everyone by encouraging cooperation, collaboration and inclusion based on grassroots engagement involving individuals from all walks of life to facilitate positive change towards more sustainable communities.

### The Social Capital World Forum



Greater knowledge of social capital can facilitate progress in our communities to bring about more sustainable and prosperous society. For that reason the first Social Capital World Forum (SCWF) was launched in 2009 in Scotland by two of the project's partners Colin Campbell (Director, Assist Social Capital,

Scotland) and Dr. Manfred Hellrigl (Director, Office for Future-Related Issues Voralberg, Austria).

*The SCWF aims at bringing together people interested in putting social capital into practice and to build a global community of social capital practitioners and organisations.*

The previous SCWFs explored the concept has through the themes of sustainability and community resilience to move from learning to practice by ‘preparing the ground’ for future outcomes to develop.

### **Towards Creating Space for Abundant**

#### **Communities**

There was a growing sense during the pervious events for the need of a new approach which could **connecting people locally** as well as **internationally**.

This led to the idea of using a ‘Learning Village’ approach as an innovative way to convey those values. This was carried forward in the 2013 SCWF **‘Creating Space for Abundant Communities’** in Scotland.

#### **The Learning Village**

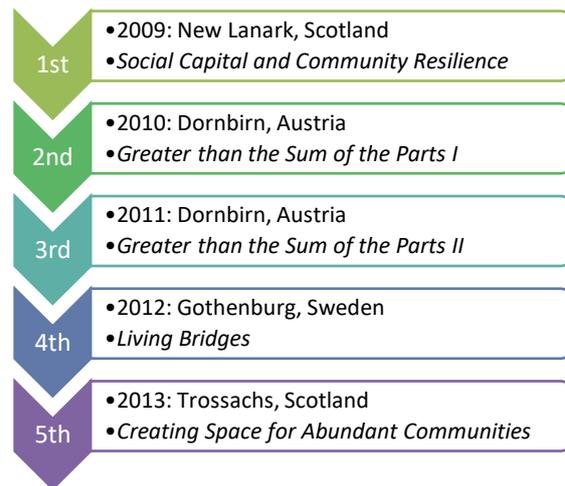
A Learning Village is intended to create a safe space - **‘a safe container’** where people feel free to share personal experiences and insights with each other, to listen, learn and contribute for conversations that matter. It is aimed at encouraging a wider range of stakeholders to participate than would normally get involved in community initiatives, increasing diversity and enhancing opportunities for **collective learning and decision-making**.

Within this space people learn to trust, collaborate and build relationships together allowing participants to feel safe to share real life stories, diverse opinions, ideas and experiences to delve more deeply into our understanding of what constitutes a local abundant community.

*Learning Villages use innovative methods to increase connectivity and meaningful conversations based on Social Capital, Participation and Strength-based Approaches enhancing opportunities for collective learning and decision-making.*

As already mentioned, this approach was tested in 2013 based on the core question of *‘How can we re-create space for abundant communities?’*. That event was an International Learning Village, and the energy and synergies that emerged encouraged us to pursue the

**Figure 2: Timeline of Past Social Capital Conferences and SCWFs**



idea in more local contexts. We wished to see if it was possible to replicate the success of the 2013 event with local citizens collaborating with people working in the public sector in 3 local communities in 3 different European socio-economic and linguistic contexts, with the core team as bridges across the international community.

### *The Europe for Citizens Learning Villages Project*

The project was designed to create a **replicable model** that could be used by **any community** to create a safe space in which to tap into the **skills and assets of the local community** in ways that would respond to their context and to create a network of support that would enable the projects to move forward successfully.

To achieve this we worked together with representatives of the three cities and their citizens to quickly create spaces which were able to support sustainable democracy and trusting relationships. We also trained local volunteers to act as hosts for the Learning Villages.

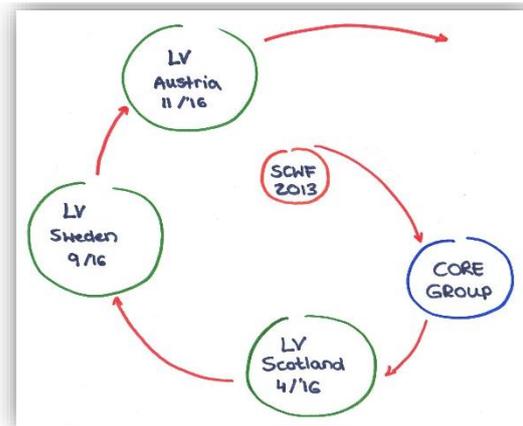
*Each Learning Village aims at leaving a legacy of capacity in each of the community which would enable them to use the same skills in their projects and daily lives.*

Through the three Learning Villages we wanted to explore what it means to be a European citizen and to participate in **designing living contexts in relation to the policies and objectives** of the EU; to enhance integration, create equal opportunity and diversity by building relationships across barriers of culture, language and age as part of a sustainable future. The project responded to the root causes of these issues using 'Social Capital', 'Participation' and 'Strengths Based Approaches'.

### *Organising the three Learning Villages*

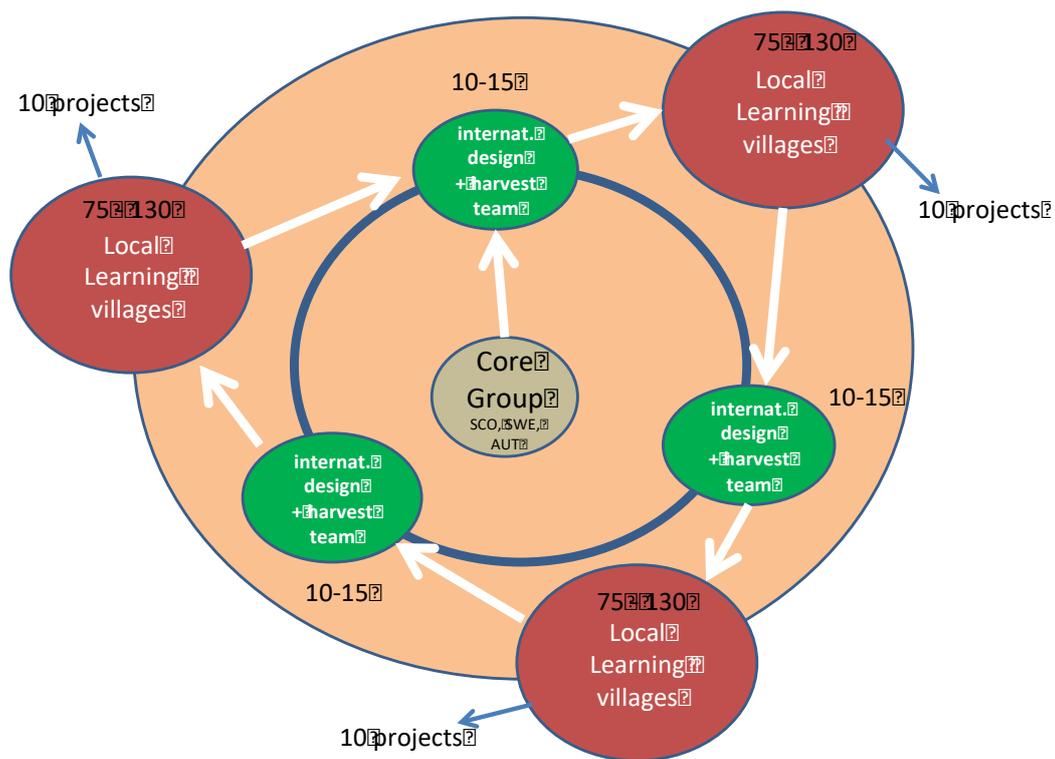
The 3 international Learning Villages (LV) took place in Scotland, Sweden and then Austria, with **exchanges of delegates from all three countries** to explore new ways of becoming involved in Europe-related projects and creating abundant innovative connections between public sector and civil society. The LVs provided **local volunteers from a variety of cultures, social backgrounds and fields of work** with the chance to connect, share knowledge and ideas and increase social capital by establishing and holding conversations through methods that move us from deficit to asset based approaches.

**Figure 3: Development of the Idea of the Learning Village**



It was our intention to establish 30 co-created projects as a basis for a long-term, voluntary work as an outcome three LVs. By **sharing common experiences** that **maximize local strengths, skills and qualities within communities**, citizens moved from being merely passive consumers of local services to **active participants in their design and delivery** in collaboration with public sector partners. The LVs facilitated interactions between citizens and the public sector based on interdependency and co-ownership of the 30 projects and thereby motivated integration of citizens within the European Union.

**Figure 4: Structure of the Learning Villages**



*\*The Core Group formed part of the International team of delegates - which are represented by green circle - made up from 10-15 people who travelled to the three different Learning Villages and formed part of the local hosting teams together with local volunteers which hosted the Learning Villages – represented by the red circles – which were attended by 75 to 130 people. The aim was that out of each Learning Villages ten projects would emerge.*

### *Aim of the Learning Villages*

The idea was to ***pilot and test the Learning Village*** approach within real community settings in three European countries Scotland, Sweden and Austria, with very distinct contexts, to create a replicable ***template or model that could be used to deliver long-term relationship-building initiatives in any European community***, based on the experiences gained within the three Learning Village settings.

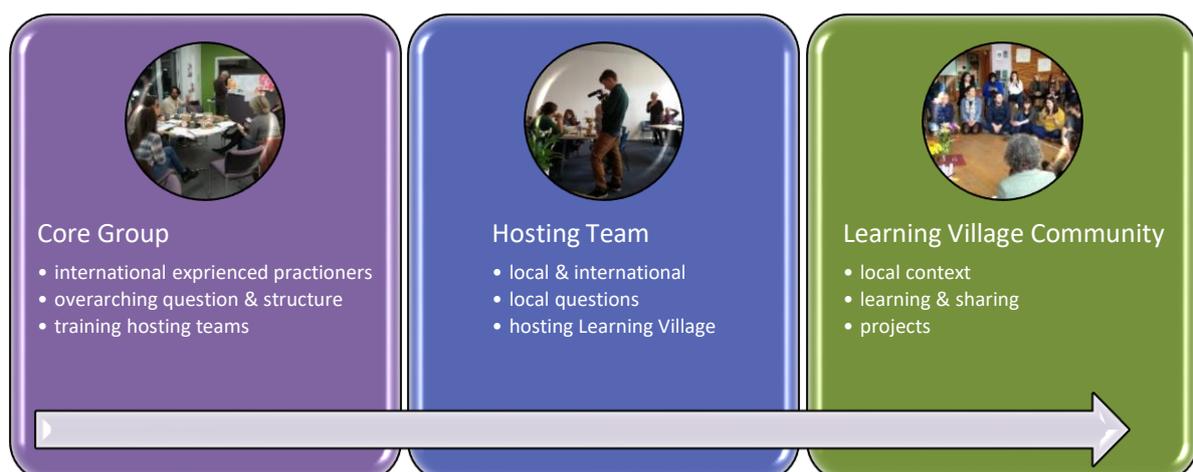
An aspiration of the three Learning Villages was to ***bridge the gap between the public sector and civil society*** and to provide the opportunity for participants to become involved in a transnational project, debating **themes of common interest** within an inter-cultural and cross-sectoral setting.

The Learning Villages were set in a local community with a local hosting team of volunteers. The international team of practitioners with experience in participatory processes worked with the volunteers for the first two days and trained them in the methodologies and then guided and inspired the participants to find their own ***local solutions within a global (EU) context*** (see Fig. 5).

This form of bottom-up participation provided all participants with the opportunity to:

- **meet with people** from different backgrounds, cultures, countries, sectors etc. working on similar issues
- **develop a deeper understanding** on how to make communities thrive
- **gain insights** on participatory processes and open-ended development
- **discuss ideas and tools** on how to create space for abundant communities
- **discuss and get feedback** about present and planned projects
- **put into practice** learned participatory skills

**Figure 5: International Learning Village Structure**

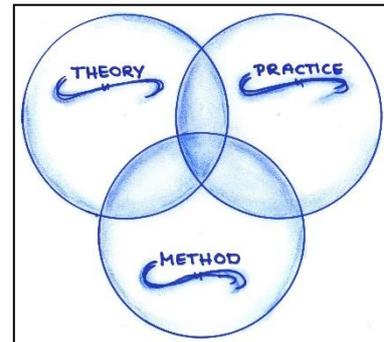


## A Learning Village Framework

This section of the report provides an *introduction to the Learning Village approach*, on how to develop a ‘safe container’ for conversations that matter. We hope this report will encourage others to try out the Learning Village approach to work on local issues in *collaboration with stakeholders across the public and civil society sectors*.

We describe some of the *theory and methods* which can be related to the local community, and explain how to connect theory and method with *practice*. None of these elements can stand-alone as it is important to bring them all together creating the right balance between them.

Figure 6: Balancing the three Elements



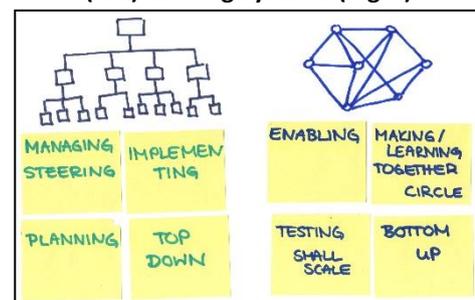
### Relevant Theories

#### Mechanical vs. Living Systems

*Hierarchical structures* and *top-down approaches* are what most people are used to when it comes to problem solving. It is common to focus on

*expert-led processes and procedures*. One good example is a class or lecture room, where knowledge is delivered by a teacher who is the ‘expert’, whilst the students sit in rows (mostly) listening and taking notes. Work places also have a tendency to be structured in hierarchical ‘units’, creating a silo-like structure where most activities are managed and planned, with no space for creativity or collaborative decision-making.

Figure 7: Characteristics of Mechanic (left) & Living Systems (Right)



These hierarchical approaches are referred to as being similar to machines. They are designed to be ‘mechanical’ like, fixed and inflexible. However, as the world changes around us at ever-increasing speed, this style of leadership is becoming less able to respond appropriately to and deal with the complex challenges (e.g. increased pressures on services, disengaged citizens, environmental issues, refugee/migrant crises etc.) we are facing.

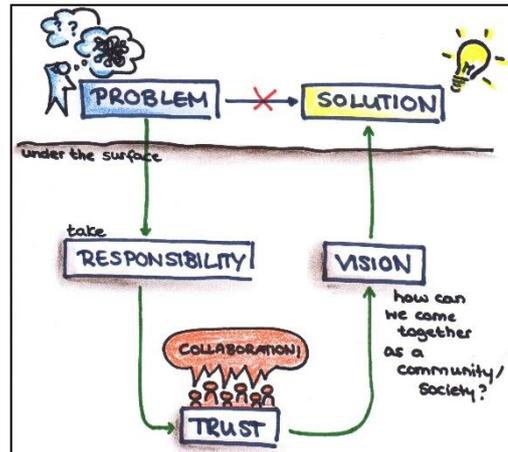
To become better able to address these issue we have to learn how to *work and meet in different ways, providing spaces where people can come together* and be encouraged to meet at the ‘same level’ – where they can discuss and plan together, addressing local as well as global issues from the *bottom-up*. Within this context everyone is considered as a ‘bearer of knowledge’ they can bring to *finding solutions together in emergent and organic ways* like a ‘living system’.

### Problem – Solution Model

When we are faced with complex issues then, it becomes clear that often a direct solution may not be available. Instead we might have to take ‘a longer route’ to really address a problem. ***Diving under the surface exploring the issue and gaining a different perspective.***

This can happen when individuals recognise the problem and take up the responsibility to explore and address it. Though, to find the solution within the complexity, the diversity of perspectives from people coming together by widening the responsibility and involving more people is crucial. By ***working together it is easier for the ‘bigger picture’ to emerge creating a vision*** out of which the ***corresponding solutions*** can arise.

Figure 8: From Problem to Solution

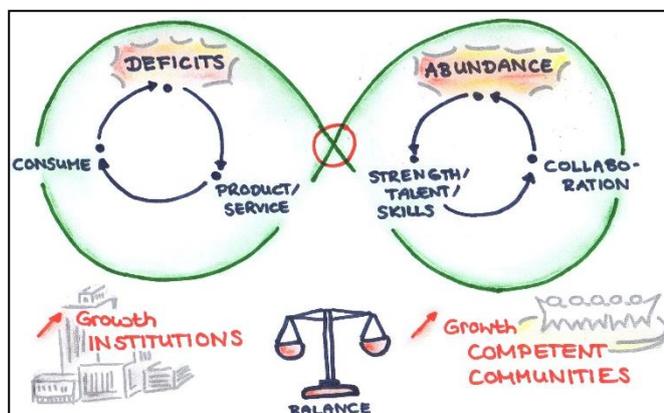


### Deficit and Abundance Model

The problem solution model in Figure 4 identifies that the typical route for top down decision-making is problem, or deficit focused; it begins by identifying what is wrong and identifies or even creates a solution that will fix the problem. This approach often leads to the introduction of experts who create a product/ service at a price which is then delivered to the community. We have already identified this approach is becoming less effective as our communities and lives become more complex. But it also creates a situation where products and services that are deficit-focused are invested in, while local skills, knowledge and talents are ignored. This leads to a disinvestment in local skills, knowledge and talents, making communities more dependent on external actors.

In contrast, an asset-based approach ***shifting the focus from ‘what’s wrong’ to ‘what’s right’***, to our strengths, abilities, capacities. It assumes that there are ***resources and capacities inherent in every individual or community*** that can be invested in to respond to current conditions. Once these strengths have been identified, they can be enhanced through collaborative approaches that inspire confidence, self-worth and trust. ***The more we invest in these strengths the more opportunities arrive to put them into action*** and so we ***begin to invest in the abundance of communities.***

Figure 9: Deficit-Abundance Model



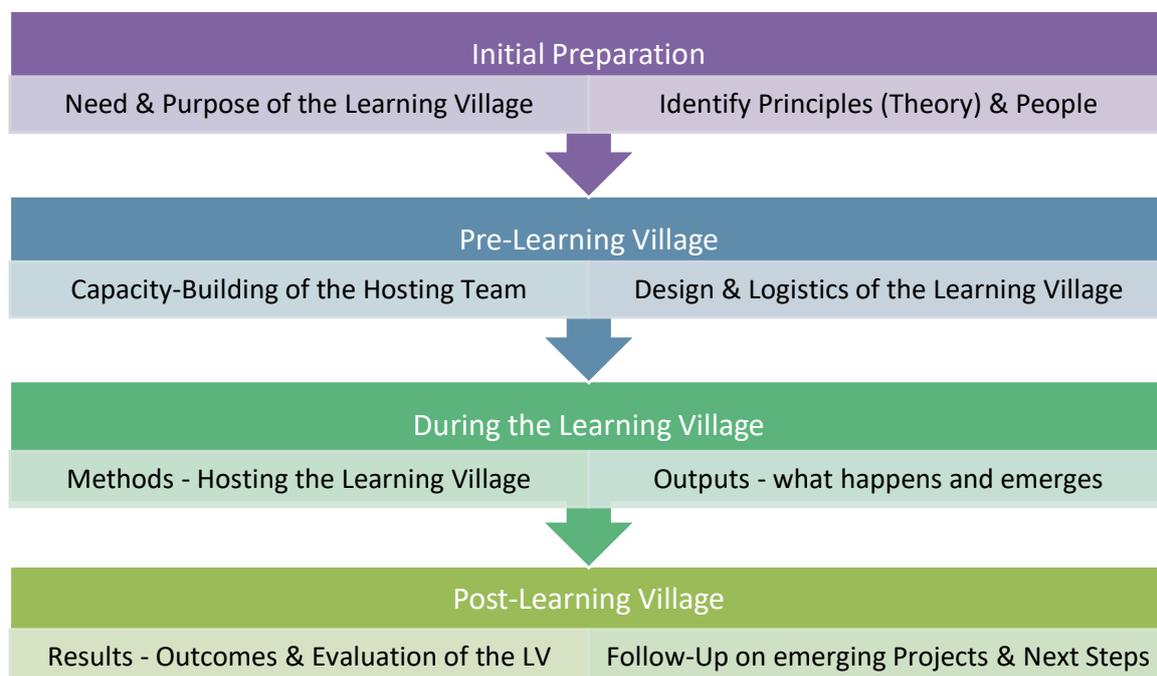
## Hosting Methods for the Learning Village

Next to the theoretical aspects, the ‘way how’ the Learning Village is facilitated is also important to creating the ‘safe space’. Below we suggest some possible methods. It is important to point out that these methods are not fixed and can be inter-changed and adapted to the differing contexts they are used in. The methods described below were the ones we identified as the best suitable ones for our three Learning Villages.

### Preparing the Space

When organising events like the Learning Villages, large and small alike, they all require some preparation which prepare space within which people can meet, connect and communicate with each other. This makes it an essential step as it also involves identifying the methods best suitable for each context within which the Learning Village takes place during the preparatory phase.

Figure 10: Planning and Structuring the Learning Village\*



\*The same steps have also been used for the three Learning Villages for the 6th SCWF and this report follows this structure throughout this document.

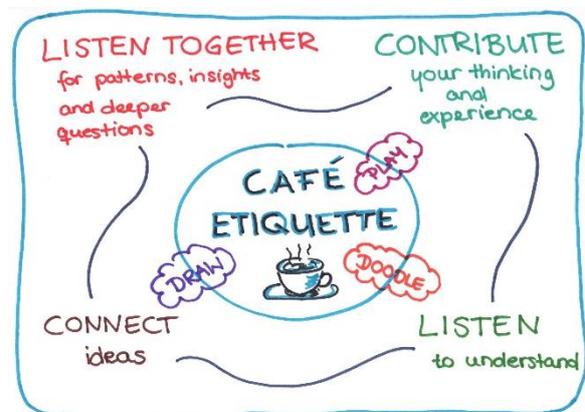
## Hosting the Learning Villages



**Space and Beauty** – describes how the space is used, decorated and organised which involves the **logistics** of what materials are required at which time such as pens, papers, tables, white boards etc. But it also involves other aspects such as making the **space feel more comfortable** through e.g. flower arrangements, layout.

**Check-In & Check-Out** - are a way of **welcoming and letting people come in as well as out of the space** through introducing themselves and/or sharing their thoughts and feelings about the upcoming event or to reflect about it afterwards. This can be done in a great variety of ways such as people sitting in a circle and one after the other taking a turn – what we often use in this case is a ‘talking piece’ which could be anything like a ball, a stone or anything else to be handed from one person to the other.

**Context Café** - is about people **exploring questions that matter** for our communities through a series of ‘rotating table conversations’. The set-up involves people organising themselves in groups (each table approximately the same number of participants). Then, the people at each table will discuss the given question developing and sharing their thoughts and ideas. After a set time people will be encouraged to move on to another table **connecting with different people and conversations** at the different tables.



The **questions** discussed are **depending on the context** within which the Learning Village takes place and are prepared by the hosting team. The key aspects of the conversations can be collected at each table and shared with everyone at the end of the conversations.

**Appreciative Inquiry** - is about **identifying strengths** and what works well within a community as well as **identifying potential** and envisioning what could work well in the future.

For this SCWF, people shared stories about active citizens in the local context which they found to be inspiring and successful. Following on from that the **main 'threads'** which most of the stories have in common were **identified, shared and reflected on**.



**Collective Storytelling** - is based on the idea that sharing stories is an old but **powerful way of learning and sharing ideas and experiences** - where the story is the 'teacher' shared by the storyteller. The story shared is relevant for the context of the Learning Village and will be shared. The collective learning from the story can be further deepened by providing questions around and or opportunities to draw around the main aspects of the story – e.g. what touched the listeners the most or what pictures they had on their mind whilst listening to the story. Those thoughts were then shared at the end of the story.

**Pro-Action Café** – provides an opportunity for **participants to bring forward an idea, project and questions** which are then can be moved forward through conversations about the given project by people sharing their ideas and offering new insights as well as asking relevant questions. This conversational process is similar to the café where people move between the tables but in this case the conversations are focussed at the idea/project at each table.



**Harvesting** – besides the organising, hosting and evaluating of the Learning Villages, it is also just as important to capture or to **'harvest' the content of what is happening** which spans over the **whole planning and hosting process** laid out in Fig. 10.

Capturing the **content** including the initial **purpose** which provides the reason for the conversations as well as the **processes and contents** which structure the Learning Village. From those the **output** of ideas, conversations and experiences can be harvested as well as the **outcomes** from each of the activities and the Learning Village overall. Through this the **meaning and patterns can emerge** which may lead to the next level of conversations and respond to the purpose.

**Figure 11: Harvesting Process**



## Putting it into Practice (1/3): Learning Village Glasgow

The first of the series of three Learning Villages was hosted at the **Netherton Community Centre** in Glasgow, Scotland from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2016.



The local partners for the Glasgow Learning Village were Glasgow Life and the Voluntary Action Fund. The basic costs of the event were supported by the Europe for Citizens Programme and additional funding to ensure there was no barrier to local community members and organisations attending came via the Scottish Government. In addition, the Scottish Government supported ASC's objective to create a mini-documentary of the Learning Village.



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## Preparation of the Learning Village – ‘Preparing the ground’

Leading up to the Learning Village, there were several stages to prepare the events (see Fig. 12, step 1-3).

### Preparation Meetings

The initial preparations for the Learning Villages included a number of meetings, conversations and discussions by the core group.

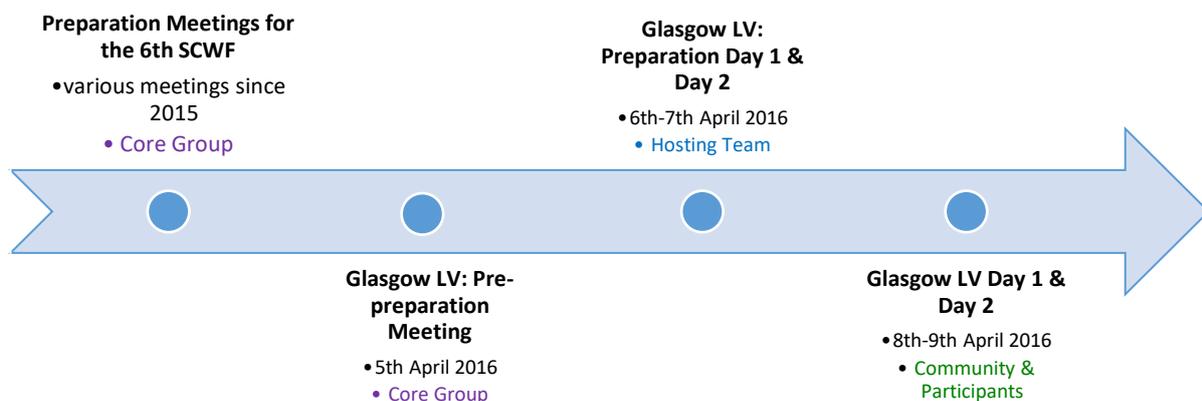


*The core group met to discuss the purpose of the three International Learning Villages.*

The main question focussed on how a variety of actors from the public sector and local communities can come together in a relatively short period of time to increase their social capital and create sustainable abundant communities. The **purpose** is to

**‘Connect The City and Citizens’.**

Figure 12: Timeline for the Glasgow Learning Village



The primary **aims and outcomes** of the Europe for Citizens 2.3 Civil Society Project were the following:

- (i) To create replicable framework on how to design and host meaningful conversations based on the experiences made during the three Learning Villages
- (ii) To host three International Learning Villages in Scotland, Sweden and Austria
  - providing the opportunity for local citizens to become involved in a EU-related project
  - to create abundant and innovative public sector - civil society connections
  - 30 co-created projects

Following on from this, **local partners** interested in using the Learning Village approach to increase connectivity between cities and citizens within their localities were identified in each country. These partners then became the **local hosting teams** for the local Learning Villages with responsibilities for aspects such as logistics and invitations to local stakeholders.

In the case of the **Glasgow Learning Village**, the Scottish partner was Glasgow Life. ASC had already established a working relationship with them via an interest in social capital. The Voluntary Action Fund was also a local supporter via the strategic partnership they have with ASC and their previous involvement with the SCWF Learning Village in 2013.



### *Pre-preparation Day for the Glasgow LV*

Leading up to the first of the three Learning Villages in Glasgow, the core team had a specific meeting a day prior to the event to clarify:

- (a) what **processes** (methods and theory) would be relevant to use within the **context of the Glasgow Learning Village**
- (b) the **general design** of the two **capacity-building** days for the Glasgow hosting team

Based on this a timeline was created for the two preparation days for the hosting team.

### *Preparation Days for the Hosting Team*

During the two days leading up to the event, the international team gathers with the local hosting team to **'set the scene'** and **build the capacity** of the team.

**DAY 1.** The local and the international hosting teams meet for the first time together. In Glasgow, the local team included members of the Netherton community as well as staff from local public and third sector organisations. They were joined by the international hosting team that included the core group and some of the members of the Swedish and Austrian local hosting teams.

After an initial **welcome** and the explanation on the purpose of the International Learning Villages, all members **'checked-in'** introducing themselves and sharing their thoughts about the upcoming Learning Village:

Next, the **theory and methods** were introduced as part of the training and capacity-building. The hosting team were familiarised with the 'flow' (programme) of the Learning Village describes the different elements of the 2-days of Learning Village: Check-In & Check-Out, Context Café, Appreciative Inquiry, Storytelling, Pro-Action Café, Harvesting, Groundwork.

Depending on their preferences, each hosting team member then chose one of these to sign up for:



Video 1: SCWF 2016 Training Day

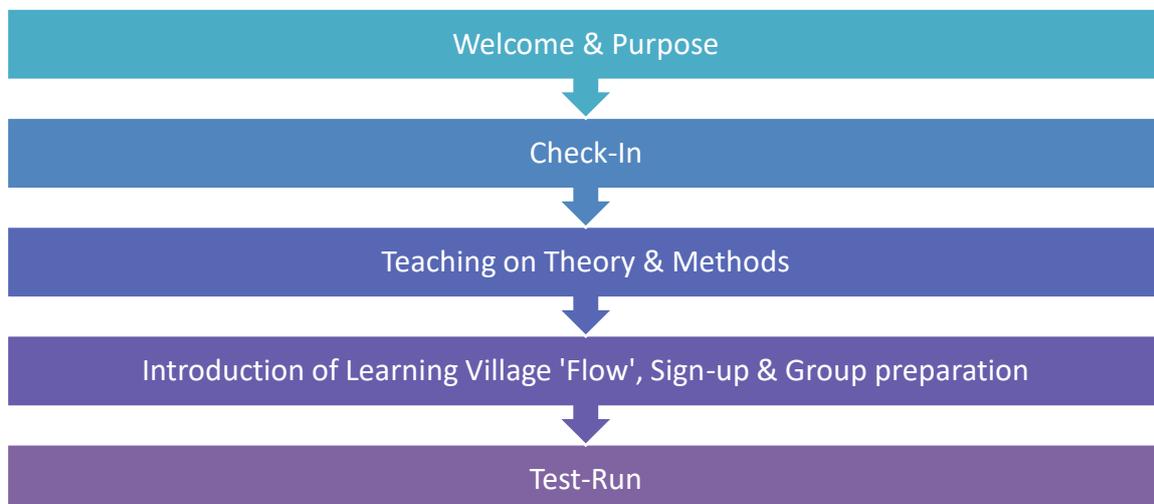


Link: <https://vimeo.com/161836947>

Once each member had signed up, they met in their specific groups (Check-In & Check-Out, Context Café, Appreciative Inquiry, Storytelling, Pro-Action Café, Harvesting, Groundwork) to prepare the hosting of this part of the Learning Village, where they were coached by an experienced practitioner from the international hosting team. This way each member has the opportunity to host part of the Learning Village and learn first hand, through practical experience about the different elements.

Building upon this preparation a **'test-run'** of each of the different groups was facilitated during the remaining 1.5 days. This provided the opportunity for each group to practice in the hosting team setting as well as receive **feedback** from the other groups about the specific structures, questions and other relevant aspects of their task.

Figure 13: Steps of the Preparation Days for the Hosting Team



## Glasgow Learning Village - Scotland



Figure 14: Glasgow Learning Village 'Flow of the Event'

Altogether, **76 local and international people** from seven countries (Fig. 16) participated in the Glasgow Learning Village – **15% were young people**. As intended the participants represented a mix of community members, third and public sector (Fig. 15).

Figure 16: Participants distribution by Country

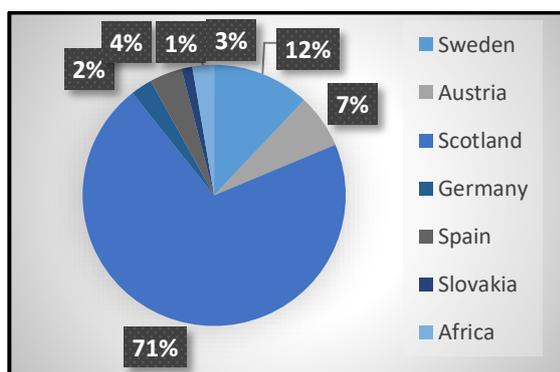
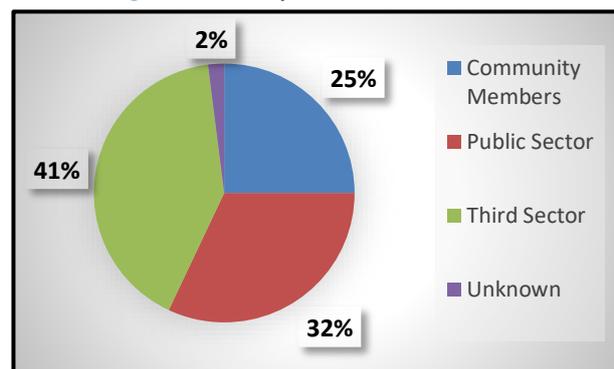


Figure 15: Participant distribution after Sector



### Learning Village - Day 1

After an initial **welcome** and introduction to the local and international partners, delegates were explained the background of the 6<sup>th</sup> SCWF and the Europe for Citizens 2.3 Civil Society Projects series of three Learning Villages. The purpose of the Glasgow Learning Village on *'how we can work more positively with collaborative approaches'* was introduced.

Following on from this one of the local hosts from Glasgow Life and one of the community members welcomed everyone to the Netherton Community Centre which has been identified as a **cultural hub** by Glasgow Life which aims at increasing partnership working and resources accessible in the area working closely with the community through local groups such as the Netherton festival Group.

The **Flow** (see Fig. 14) of the two days was introduced and the participants were welcomed to also spread the information of what was going on in the Learning Village through social media like Facebook and Twitter using #scwf2016. Then delegates were invited to **check-in** in whilst sitting in a circle by introducing themselves and sharing their feelings about the upcoming event. Most people mentioning that they;

- were happy to be taking part at the Learning Village
- wanted to learn & share new things
- were excited to meet so many new people in such a positive setting
- were intrigued and interested in what is coming up in terms of getting involved in the community and conversations
- were interested in what social capital means

Participants then broke into three smaller groups to hear a teaching on the **relevant theory** and **methods** (see p. 13 for more detail) to explore in depth the importance of participation and citizen engagement as well as new, more collaborative working and approaches. In reflecting on those learnings, participants highlighted the following points:

- this is about building bridges between people and the public sector but they are like two different languages struggling to come together – they need to come out of their ‘boxes’
- people do start to see that there is something else going on out there
- this is about breaking free – out of the deficit circle and helping others to do the same which may seem like a small thing but this will make the difference
- it is about getting the balance between the strengths and resources
- we need to realise that community does not always require outside input
- there is this idea of the ‘scary’ authorities but we need to find a way to build trust

The subsequent **Context Café** provided the group the opportunity to begin to meet and discuss with each other what they understood by the term ‘competent community’:

In response to the question *‘What does a competent community mean to you?’* the Learning Village Community identified that ***‘the potential is already there – it just needs to be unlocked’*** through;



- Providing/creating Opportunities & Shared Space
- Breaking down barriers
- Recognising own and other’s potential
- Contributing to conversations
- Allowing the structure to come from the community – organically
- A Change of mind-set

It was highlighted that when **'Community energy leads'** it becomes possible to tap into a huge pool of potential to create the communities we want.

After exploring the ideas surrounding abundant and competent communities, everyone had the opportunity to share a story of their choice during the **Appreciative Inquiry** session through *Stories about active citizen participation within their local context.*



The stories were initially shared in small groups. Each group then decided what story best represents active citizen participation and that story was then shared again with everyone in the room.

There was a great variety of stories based on personal experiences and inspirations on involvement as well as stories of personal/ community development, environmental awareness and bridge-building between individuals and organisations.

The stories highlighted that **'Everyone has something to give'** as well as that **'It is not just about what but how you do it!'**

The following main themes and points highlighting successful examples of active citizens in the community were identified:

- Solutions come from the people affected
- Think outside the box! - Our community members are good at this
- We need Commitment, Courage and Conviction to follow through with 'an idea' - Our Ideas
- There is the question of ownership of Things and Issues within our communities
- Trust between people enables change and investment
- We need to fertilize the ground for a more collaborative culture
- Embrace diversity!
- Collective Action - we all are needed to work together towards a collective goal & wider social good
- Ask for help- usually people are happy to help
- Take the first step!
- We need to create the space where people in the community can meet



Each table then chose one of the stories they had heard to feedback to the whole group. Next delegates voted on the stories they felt encapsulated the essence of a competent community. From this exercise 6 stories were then chosen to be told to the larger group, all Learning Village participants.

## Storytelling

To round up the first day, the participants broke into six smaller groups to hear *Stories about Change*. The six stories covered:

- Creation of Youth Networks based on emerging processes
- Active older people in the community - ***'You are never too old'***
- The importance and value of community festivals
- Inter-generational exchange
- How individuals can become active and crucial members in their community
- Transformational power of volunteering & motivation



The main learnings which were drawn out of the stories were;

**Belief in people - they can transform lives**

**It is about giving back to the community**

**We need to overcome our limits**

**We need to creating more space**

**Having 'an idea' and bringing it into the community is important**

**We need to become involved in our communities**

**Self-determination and Choice are important**

**Connections & Friendship are what is important**

**We need to building on our strength and the community**

## Learning Village - Day 2

Having spent the first day delving deeper into the topic of community cohesion and abundance, the second day was about *'putting it into practice'*.

The participants were provided with the opportunity to put forward 15 local projects to be explored by the Learning Village community during the **Pro-Action Café** by identifying:

- (a) The purpose behind the project
- (b) What is missing and
- (c) What are the next steps



The 15 projects reflected a great diversity in ideas:

**'Temple Tunnel'** community effort to make the tunnel safer for everyone

The **'Red Tent'** to provide a meeting space for women in the local area to connect with each other.

**'Jangling Space'** on creating a local cooperative involving local people in building things that 'jangle' as well as providing an educational space

**Timebank (I)** on offering skills to community via online platform where people can share and exchange

**Timebank (II)** on sharing skills with the rest of the community and linking that with the relatively empty local community centre

**'Youth Inspiration'** on how schools can promote respect facilitated by the regional equality council

**Intergenerational project** on creating and piloting an 'open school' for everyone at any age

**'Youth Participation'** on how to involve young people in decision-making

**'Netherton Festival'** group on how to use an community-led approach to organise local festivals

**'School Gates Go'** for more active travel to school through encouraging walking and cycling to school involving children and parents alike

**'Self-built made simple'** by creating a space for people where they come together and support them on own housing

**Community-wide Garden** project making gardening more accessible and involving young people

**Enabling the Romani Community** to overcome language barriers affecting kids and their families

**'News and Views'** on how to share local news and celebrate the 'good stories' in the G13/G14 area and developing an online platform for this

A **'Learning Village for Schools'** to take ownership and get more involved by Young People's Council

The Learning Village concluded with the **participant's reflections** on the event which were overwhelmingly positive and thankful. Everyone was invited to share their thoughts, feelings and also the benefits of the event to them personally but also in their occupational capacity & their organisation:

---

*Lots of Inspiration and Engagement*

---

*Amazing how quickly people can come together & bond & develop trust*

---

*I learnt about the importance of a safe space*

---

*Found so many different & new ideas*

---

*Thanks for all the creativity*

---

*I feel that I get to take away so much from it*

---

*This was about novelty of new connections & new learnings*

---

*Reminded me of the power of positivity*

---

*I will start looking at strengths & opportunities rather than gaps*

---

*A lot of seeds have been planted- a real Learning Village!*

---



At the end of the Learning Village the 'batton' was handed to the Swedish team where the next Learning Village will take place.

**Video 2: Learning Village Day 1**



Link: <https://vimeo.com/162140537>

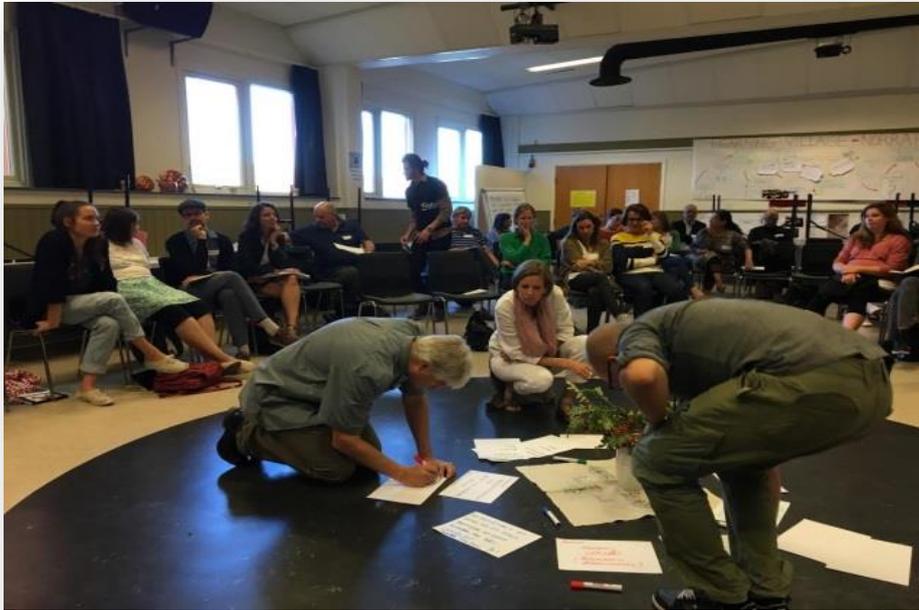
**Video 3: Learning Village Day 2**



Link: <https://vimeo.com/163912227>

## Putting it into Practice (2/3): Learning Village Gothenburg

The second of the three Learning Villages was hosted at the Backa Community Centre in Norra Hisingen in Gothenburg, Sweden from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September 2016.



The local partners for the Learning Village in Gothenburg was the city district of Norra Hisingen, Gothenburg.

## Preparing for the Learning Village – ‘Preparing the ground’

In addition to the preparatory meetings of the International Core group which prepared the overall organisation of the three Learning Villages as previously mentioned (see pp. 20), the local team in Sweden like in the case of the previous Learning Village also organised specifically for the local Learning Village.

### Preparation Meetings

In autumn 2015, the Swedish core partner, the SKL (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions), invited the city district Norra Hisingen in Gothenburg to be the **local host** of a Learning Village in collaboration with the local community. The invitation was accepted by the city district board and a local project leader started preparing the ground for the Learning Village together with SKL by hosting meetings for public staff and representatives.

During the meetings the Learning Village model and methods were presented and the **focus and burning issues for the Learning Village were formulated.**

*How can we together create a safe and vibrant local community?*

This question became the headline of the invitation. Another important part of the preparation was to **identify target groups** as this an important part of the Learning Village to find solutions to a complex issue. Having **diversity of perspectives and participants** with different backgrounds and representing different sectors of society involved is viewed as a strength.

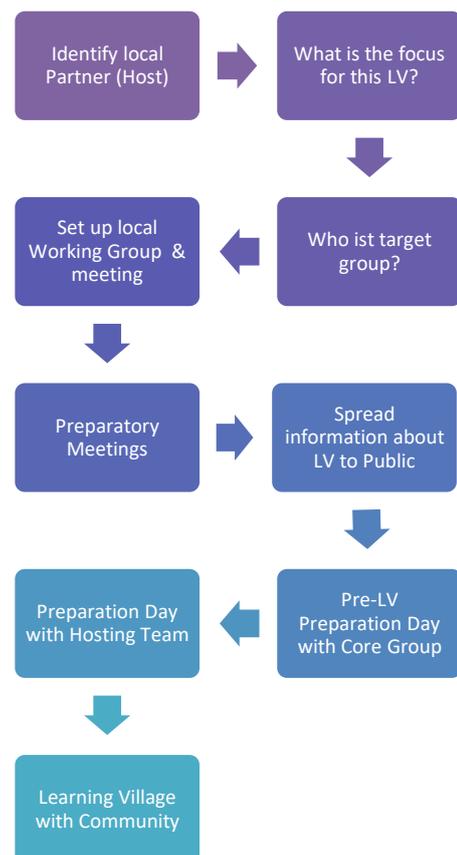
The first **introductory meeting** in autumn 2015 was followed by setting up a **local working group**, preparatory meetings and the working group trip to the Learning Village in Glasgow in April 2016. The Learning Village in Glasgow was an important learning experience for the Northern Hisingen working group.

**Information about the up-coming Learning Village in Gothenburg was spread** through spontaneous meetings, ‘bicycle-meetings’, networking, ‘snowball method’, Facebook, brochures, articles and advertisement in the local newspaper.

### Pre-preparation Day for the Gothenburg LV

The Learning Village in Northern Hisingen was preceded by a planning day on the 13th of September 2016 for the **international management team** (13 people) when the structure was shaped, with **smaller adjustments** of the overall Learning Village design in order to fit the local context.

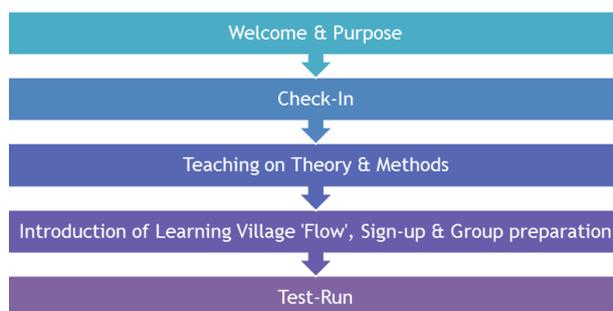
Figure 17: Preparing the Local LV



### Preparation Days for the Hosting Team

During the preparation days (14th-15th September) the **entire Learning Village hosting team participated** (22 people). The working language for this element of the Learning Village was English so that the international hosts were able to take part. The aim of these days was to involve the local hosting team in the **whole picture and design** and **create an understanding of the Learning Village and the ideas and theories** that underpin it. Participants in the hosting team were invited to sign up to activities which they would then co-host during the Learning Village. **Test rounds** of all the Learning Village's activities and methods were carried out to prepare members of the hosting team.

Figure 18: Steps of the Preparation Days for the Hosting Team



### Learning Village Gothenburg - Sweden

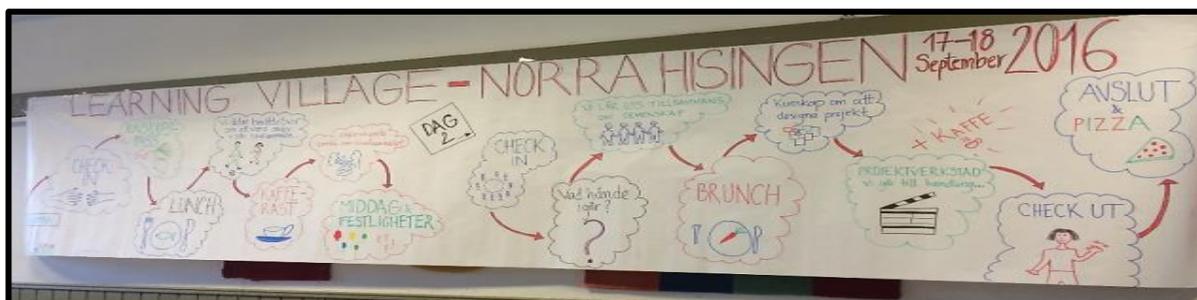
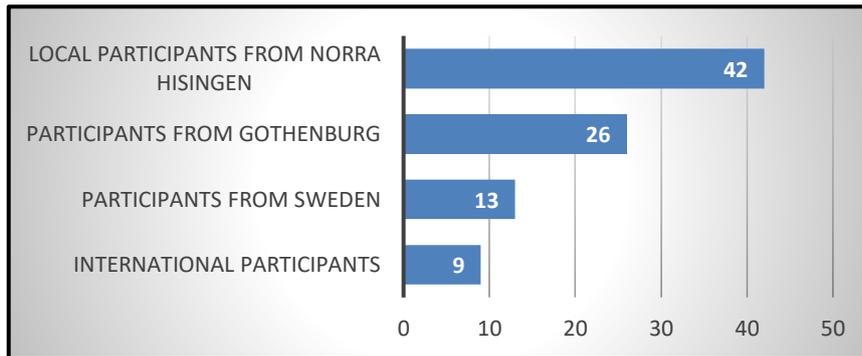


Figure 19: Gothenburg Learning Village 'Flow of the Event'

This Learning Villages was hosted at the Backa Culture Centre in Gothenburg at the Centre in the city district Northern Hisingen (Norra Hisingen). In order to maximise the local outcomes **the language for the event** was mostly Swedish, however English was used in two sessions (one of the teachings and one of the stories).

A list of participants based on geography show that a majority, 42 out of **a total of 90**

Figure 20: Participants geographic origin

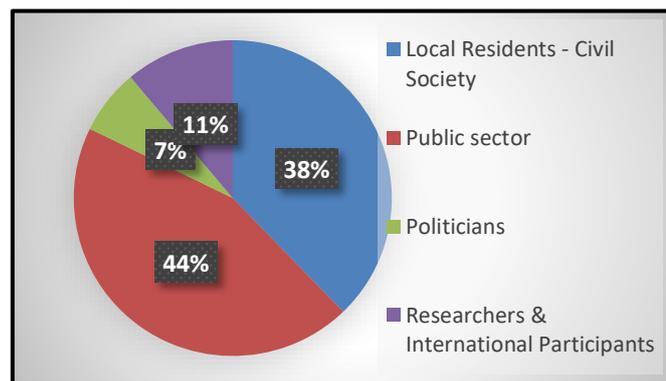


**people** living or working in Northern Hisingen. Almost a third, 26 people, live or work in Gothenburg while 13 people came from other parts of Sweden and 9 people were from other countries.

A **multitude of people, organizations and public representatives** attended. The Learning Village gathered people from different groups: Residents of the district with dedication and willingness to participate and influence their community. Some of those representing local associations, others came as individuals. The District Committee Chairman and a rather large group of employees of the district administration attended. Among the employees there were some senior managers. There were also employees and managers of leisure centres, libraries, care for the elderly and those who work with neighbourhood development, and social workers. There was also a group of officials from the City of Gothenburg administration and representatives from other municipalities. There were also a number of international participants, SKL, the project partners from Scotland and Austria, and even a public organization from Denmark.

Figure 21: Participants distribution by Sector

Another way to recognize the participants is the role and function. 40 people work in the public sector. 34 people participated as residents, association members or otherwise from civil society. Six politicians attended and 10 people were either researchers or international participants.



The **focus** of the Learning Village was to create conditions for a **vibrant abundant neighbourhood where people enjoy, meet and create a good local livelihood together**. The calling question formulated by the local working group was:

*How can we create a safe and vibrant local community?*

As a background, the Gothenburg city district Northern Hisingen is a neighbourhood struggling with social problems and social inequality. The district Northern Hisingen is going through urban transformation and Selma Lagerlof's Square will be enlarged with 1,500 new apartments, a new plaza - and Gothenburg city will begin build a new city district hall in the local area in 2017, with venues for public sector offices, but also a common ground and

venues for public meetings and local culture. Two pressing issues connected to the city district hall project were;

***How can the new city district hall be everyone's house? And***

**How can the new city district hall with venues for culture, be filled with local life?**

The Learning Village in Northern Hisingen offered a forum where the participants had the opportunity to get to know each other and build relationships, learn from real life stories and listen to others' experiences to develop common understanding, initiatives that could help to realise ideas that could develop and strengthen the local community.

### ***Learning Village - Day 1***

The participants were invited to sit in a big circle and the first day began with a **welcome** to all participants to the Learning Village in Selma Center in Northern Hisingen. The District Committee Chairman of Northern Hisingen and the LV project leader (project and process manager Northern Hisingen) stressed that that ***Learning Village was meant to be a place for co-creation and for the people who live and work in the district.*** The international team, the background to the Learning Village project within a European democratic and participatory scope and the international cooperation between Scotland, Sweden and Austria were presented.



An overview of the days the Learning Village process was given by means of the **flow** (see Fig. 19) in which the schedule and illustrations of the various sessions were plotted. The participants were encouraged to use social media through Facebook and Twitter to spread information what was going on in the Learning Village using #scwf2016.

***The thoughts and hopes for the Learning Village*** were brought up during the circle **check-in**, all the participants were invited to introduce themselves and say a few words about why they had decided to participate and also express their thoughts and hopes for the Learning Village. The participants expressed among many things that they wanted to:

- focus on co-create together
- create relationships between citizens, associations, municipalities and politicians
- develop a venue
- find partners for project ideas
- some were also curious about the methods that would be used during the days



*"I came here today because I think it's important to have a voice and feel included and involved in the neighbourhood and in society."*

(Jaana, resident and student)

*"I believe in this kind of meetings. In this way we are all on the same level and platform where we meet politicians, residents, associations and organizations. At physical meetings I think it's very important to be able to see and get to know the person behind the role"*

(Violetta, member of Backa Handboll Sportsclub)

Some particular perspectives were highlighted by participants concerning the local development of Northern Hisingen such as the need to focus more on:

- children's perspective
- getting newcomers involved
- to encourage young people to engage in the civic organizations
- working with segregation between young and old
- to develop a safe neighbourhood
- and to remember that trustful relationships is the foundation of a sustainable society

After the circle check-in the participants were introduced to **theories and models of thinking** that form the framework of the Learning Village. The presentation took place in three different venues. One of the teachings was delivered in English. In addition to the theories and models participants reflected the following:



- Too often we forget that officials and citizens have the same objectives, There must be a change of power relations in society - one must dare to give power to citizens!
- Many successful organizations have started by acting when needed. We shouldn't wait for an invitation, but take a stand and focus on acting!
- Often, the focus is on deficit - on what is missing in society - while existing resources, strengths and talents of the people are not taken into account. There is a need to develop knowledge on how we build trust and how to develop a new type of leadership that encourages people to get involved in collaboration

- From the city district point of view, it is important to start focusing on what is really important for people and make sure to invite broadly to meetings and conversations, not just “the usual suspects”

The next step of the Learning village were the **Café Conversations** about competent communities where participants were having discussions in small groups based on a common theme. The three world café rounds focused on the question; *“What is an active local community for you?”*



Many insights were made during the conversations at the café tables, such as;

- *In such a society, there is cooperation between civil society, local community and public sector which creates local involvement and connectivity*
- *There is cross-border meetings with genuine conversations where people listen to each other*
- *There are activities and facilities for all ages and children are included in the dialogue*
- *There are real representation, and you feel that citizens have influence*
- *In such a society you know how to handle differences wisely and also to affirm differences in a constructive way*
- *People contribute with their own resources and take initiative, with the assistance of public resources*
- *We would have a more vibrant city with sense of the local area as a safe space and confidence instead of surveillance*
- *We would have better knowledge of each other's needs and be more concerned about our neighbourhood*
- *We would have a vibrant democracy with conversations and meetings in all directions*
- *There would be opportunities for real influence and people would feel included, but on their own terms*
- *We would have a better distribution of resources and power*
- *The public official role and mandate should be clearer and we would talk about "how" and not just "what"*
- *We would look for what we ourselves can realize and feel that; ‘what ever we do matters’*
- *We would have long-term sustainability in our local community.*

After the Context Café conversations, all participants had the opportunity to share their own story about active citizenship with two participants in “trios”. It was done through the **Appreciative Inquiry-method**. The task was to

*“Tell a story about something that inspired you, where you did something together with others and created something for a bigger purpose”*

After sharing stories, each group **identified some insights** on what ingredients are needed to create an active local community. Some selected insights per group gathered on post-it notes and shared with all participants on a mind map. Here are some of the themes and insights of the participants:



- We (here) are the local community***
- We must meet across the borders!***
- Interpersonal relationships make the difference!***
- We need each other, and we need to affirm this mutual need.***
- Everyone's knowledge is required***
- Co-creation needs to happen over time***
- It is important that whatever you initiate, is based on local people and resources***
- A prerequisite is the faith in people, that they are resourceful***
- We all have much to contribute***
- We have the responsibility to express ourselves, but also to listen to others***
- We need a forum for dialogue, for listening - in all directions***
- It is important that there are neutral adults in the community***
- Think from the perspective of community, belonging and connection***
- It is important to identify things in common while living in big diversity (in a local place)***
- Politicians can build walls, but they can't build human relations***
- Places for meeting each other are important! e.g. markets, social venues, paths are infrastructure creating meetings***
- Places for meetings is a prerequisite for building cross-border relationships***
- We need venues that are open to everyone***
- Open meeting places create opportunities for active community***
- Active local community takes courage and imagination and unconventional thinking***
- Dare to let go of power so we can meet at eye level***
- Do not give the answers - provide conditions for opportunities!***
- Do not be afraid to do something hands-on***
- See the opportunities instead of problems - what action can you take?***

The Learning Village's first day ended with a festive menu dinner cooked by the local restaurant Goose and music and poetry reading by a participant.



### **Learning Village - Day 2**

The day began with **check-in** in a big circle and a recap of day 1, where a short video recorded the day before was shown. The purpose of the Learning Village was explained again; to **focus on building strong and trusting relationships** in the city district between citizens, civil society and the city district administration.

**Storytelling: Collective learning from personal stories** - The first activity of the day was to gather around a storyteller with a **personal story**. During the session, the participants could listen to different stories and thereafter reflect on the story. There were four different stories on the theme of development of a local community. The storytellers were asked to tell their personal stories for some 20-25 minutes as if sitting at a campfire.

The storytellers were allocated in different rooms in the company of a storytelling-host who hosted the storytelling session. Participants choose which story they wanted to listen to. Participants chose to focus on a **specific aspect** of the story such as: What kind of relationships occurred in the story? What was the defining moment in the story? What can we learn of collaboration from the story?



One story was told by Daniel of Backa Handball Sportsclub and of his serious commitment to the sport. ***"It is a natural meeting place between people in society and an arena where kids grow, an arena where you can catch up and provide alternative routes to those in need..."***. The participants after listening to Daniel's story shared their reflections and thoughts in relation to their chosen questions.



Afterward ten project ideas were developed in the **Pro Action Café** which was the major activity the second day were the very creative and action-oriented conversations on **actual project ideas presented by participants**.

The session was using the method of Pro Action Café and the aim was to provide space for initiatives to be developed and refined. Another aim was also to promote collaborative relations in the local community.

14 participants took the chance to present their project ideas and ten got help to refine their ideas in the pro action café. The **co-creative session** was done in small groups in three rounds of conversations on the following:

- **Round 1: what is the underlying purpose?**
  - **Round 2: What's missing? and**
- **Round 3: What are the next elegant steps?**

**10 initiatives** emerged for a good local community:

**Creative Arts workshop** linked to the (individual resident) - Recycling materials to create activity for people who are at home for various reasons.

**Open venue Backa-Brunnsbo** (official in the city district) - Meetingplace Backa Brunnsbo. How can we create a vibrant place to meet together and based on the needs of people in the area? Meet between generations.

**Continue the Learning Village** (official in the city district) - How can we create a culture of co-creation and continue the work in the district to create the opportunities for further meetings and conversations?

**Programming for children and youth** (individual resident) - Using computers to give children and young people a sense of belonging in the community. You make contact with people you would not otherwise meet. The initiative that can also satisfy future needs.

**Hands-on activities for children** (official in the city district) - In cooperation with the district administration for culture and leisure.

**Upgrade the street handball court** (Backa Handboll sports club) - There is no room for spontaneous sports handball. We want to renovate the outdoor handball court now!

**Entrepreneurial school for young people** (Social Housing) - The social housing company want to develop and create an entrepreneurial school for young people in the area. Make use of the local creativity and increase the sense of ownership and responsibility in the public areas in the neighbourhood.

**City district hall** - continued dialogue? (official in the city district) - How do we create a building for everybody: stage and theatre, library, information centre, municipal offices and a democratic spaces.

**Together prevent and combat drug abuse in Backa.** (association Year) - Working together to counteract drug use in Backa. Create relationships and strengthen community activities.

**Tikitut** - locally based tourism (Tikitut Bergsjön) - Community Based Tourism in Northern Hisingen. A way to create meetings between people who would otherwise not meet.



Participants during the pro action café **contributed with their questions, perspectives and insights**. Some project ideas were connected to other initiatives and thereby new relations of co-operations were established. After the Learning Village ending the city district administration has invited the initiators to a project workshop with the **opportunity to continue to develop the initiatives further**.

Learning Village ended with a circle. The local representatives and SKL expressed their gratitude and thanks. **Participants were invited to share a few words**, if they wanted, to the entire group based on the question *What do I take with me from the Learning Village?*

- Energy
- Meet at eye level
- Belief in & Hope for the future
- The call
- Relationships & Contacts
- Commitment and Creativity
- Curiosity
- Analysing & Insights
- Challenges
- Faces & New Friendships
- Solidarity
- Joy
- Safe
- Exciting Continuation
- The origins of stories
- Looking forward to develop projects
- Confirming that people are the same and yet different!

Patrik Gladh, The Norderhisingen District Committee Chairman closed the Learning Village with the words:

***"This is the first step towards something bigger. We haven't had this platform before. But now we have had it for two days and it must last. This is a step forward. "***



"The baton" was then handed to the Dornbirn hosts, organisers of the upcoming Learning Village in Austria.

## Putting it into Practice (3/3): Learning Village Dornbirn

The third and last Learning Village of the 6<sup>th</sup> Social Capital World Forum was hosted in Dornbirn, Austria from the 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November 2016.



The local partners for the Learning Village in Austria was the city of Dornbirn.

## Preparing for the Learning Village – ‘Preparing the ground’

Again, in addition to the preparatory meetings of the International Core group which prepared the the three Learning Villages overall (see pp. 20), the team in Austria organised the local Learning Village.

### Preparation Meetings

In March 2016 OFRI met with the Mayor and heads of Administration of Dornbirn to present the idea of a ‘Learning Village’ and find a calling question for the Learning Village in November.

Dornbirn is the smallest of the three cities with about 50 000 Inhabitants located in the very west of Austria. It is located in the middle of an economically prospering region and runs several service facilities (hospital, libraries, bath, etc.). It got recently chosen to be the city with the best living quality in Austria. The number of inhabitants in the city is growing rapidly and over 100 Nationalities are living in the city. The **growing diversity is a challenge** for the city and its administration.

After taking a look at the recent projects and challenges within the city the group agreed to boil it down to one **question**:

**: “Regarding big challenges, how can we best live together in our city?”**

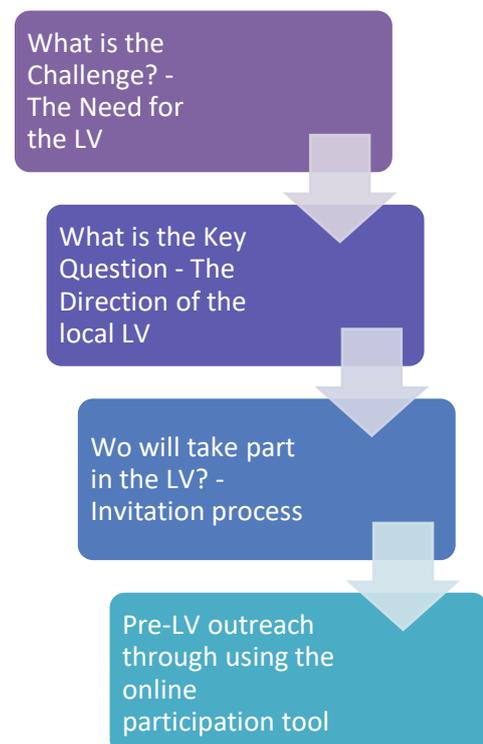
The meeting was very important to **raise awareness of the challenges** the city is facing and how the Learning Village could benefit the community and the administration. And it was the starting point for the **invitation process**.

In September OFRI and the city of Dornbirn decided to combine the Learning Village event with an **online-participation tool** called Insights. Three weeks before the LV, a webpage (<http://zusammenleben.dornbirn.at/dornbirn/1001>) went online and people were asked to answer the Question:

**“How can living together succeed in our city?”**

The answers were clustered by the users and then integrated in the results of the learning village to **provide 5 core insights** around the question (see below).

Figure 22:  
Preparatory Steps of the Dornbirn LV



### *Pre-preparation Day for the Dornbirn LV*

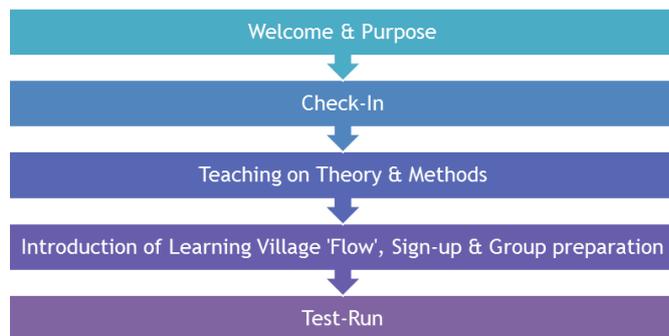
The core team had a meeting on Tuesday 22 of November to prepare the learning village and the following preparation days. Basically there were just some small adaptations to the two learning villages before. The methods and theory was set and also the flow of the two days was emerging by the Glasgow and Gothenburg experiences.

Major change was the decision to hold the event from Friday afternoon to Saturday evening (and not from Friday morning to Saturday lunchtime) in order to allowed more people to participate.

### *Preparation Days for the Hosting Team*

Like in the other Learning Villages the two days leading up to the event, the international team gathered with the local hosting team to 'set the scene' and build the capacity of the team in order to host the event. The structure for the preparation was adopted from the LVs before.

**Figure 23: Steps of the Preparation Days for the Hosting Team**



After an initial welcome by OFRI and the City of Dornbirn, the ***purpose of the International Learning Villages*** was explained and all the hosting team members (28 people) presented themselves and their ***expectations*** on the event and

### *What do we want to harvest?*

What is attracting people to take part in the LV? (really) **BURING Questions:**

- 10-20 concrete projects
- How can we close the gap between city and citizens?
- Strengthen relations within the city
- Give space for youth and other ideas
- Film about the LV Dornbirn

### International aspects:

- LV as a blueprint – easy to get, how to create LV's in communities everywhere
- Understand what is really helpful for communities?
- A clear understanding what it really means to be engaged as a person
- A Space were we can meet with no right or wrong. Learning from the LV's – what actions creates that space?

Like in former LVs the hosting-team chose an element to *sing up* to help prepare and host learning village:

- Check-In & Check-Out
- Context Café
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Storytelling
- Pro-Action Café
- Harvesting
- Logistics and Space & Beauty  
(Groundwork)

Building upon this preparation a '*test-run*' of each of the different groups was facilitated during the remaining 1.5 days. This provided the opportunity for each group to practice in the hosting team setting as well as receive feedback from the other groups about the specific structures, questions and other relevant aspects of their task.

## Dornbirn Learning Village – Austria

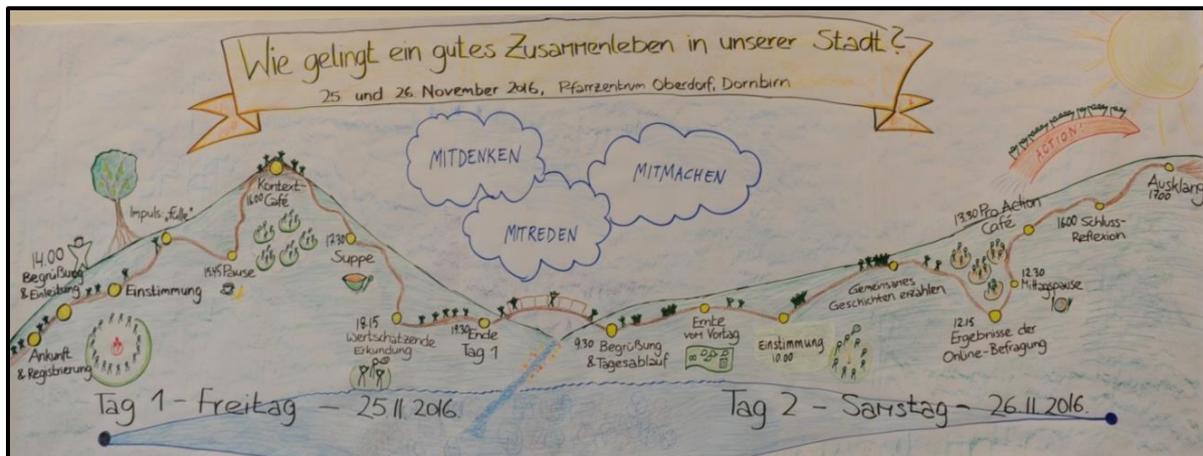


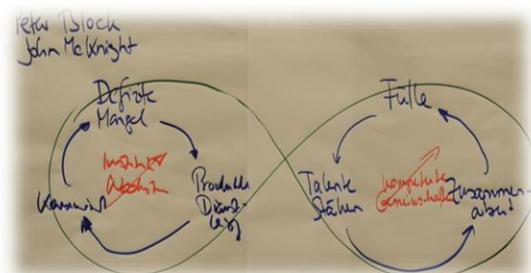
Figure 24: Dornbirn Learning Village 'Flow of the Event'

Altogether, **119 local and international people** from at least five different countries participated in the Dornbirn Learning Village – Austria.

### Learning Village - Day 1

After an initial **welcome** with contextual background information at the level of European democratic engagement and civic participation and the origins of the Learning Villages via the SCWF, the purpose of the Dornbirn Learning Village on *'Regarding big challenges, how can we best live together in our city?'* was introduced together with the local and international partners. Following, the Major of Dornbirn welcomed the international hosting team and the community and pointed out why she is committed to citizen participation and what are her expectations to the LV.

The **'Flow'** (see Fig. 24) of the two days was shortly introduced before everyone was given the opportunity to **check-in** by introducing themselves and their motivation to take part in the LV. Divided into three smaller groups, the Learning Village participants were introduced to the **relevant theory** and **methods** (see p. 13 for more detail) to explore in depth the importance **of participation and citizen engagement** as well as **new, more collaborative working approaches**.



The subsequent Context Café provided the first opportunity to directly discuss in three rounds the following questions:



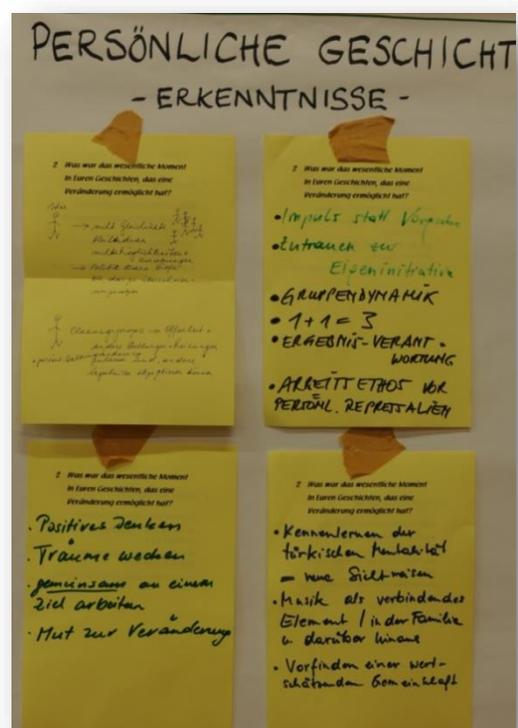
- Why did I show up today?
- What outcomes do I hope for?
- What am I ready to contribute?



Figure 25: Word Cloud of the Café Harvest\*

\*Translation of some of the Key Words: Learning – Topics – Information – Opinions – Taking Part – Tolerance – Awareness – Family – Strengths – Wisdom – Ideas – Doing – Talent City – Fun – Focus – Appreciation – Play a Part – Curiosity – Optimism – Acceptance – Create – Networking – Social – Time – ‘We’ – Seriousness – Head & Heart

After the context café everyone had the opportunity to share a story during the Appreciative Inquiry on:



*Stories about a positive change that took place within your local community*

The stories were shared between three people and afterwards these small groups were asked to **identify the essential thing that made the change happen** within their stories.



Figure 26: Word Cloud of the Appreciative Inquiry Essentials\*



\*Translation of some of the Key Words: Together – Initiative – Responsibility – Communication – Acceptance – Time – Change – Taking over – Touching – Meeting each other – Impulse – Music – Eye level – Openness – Play – Goal – Do it – Integrating – Need – Courage – Risk – Team – Personal

The first day ended and a **friendly, joyful atmosphere** was spreading all over the place.

## Learning Village - Day 2

The second day started with a **welcome** and **short body exercises** to get ready.

Followed by another story telling method, aiming to come from the individual level of storytelling to a **collective story harvesting** to get a better understanding about the circumstances needed to live together in an abundant community.



Five people were identified on the day before and asked to tell their **personal story about community change**. The six stories covered:

- **Innatura** - The story was told by the CEO of the Innatura a modern museum about biodiversity and life. She explained how the critical advice of a 15 year old boy changed her way of leadership towards participation.
- **Kirche in der Stadt** - The pastor of Dornbirn told the story how the church went through a big participatory change process a few years ago in order not to lose its people.
- **Weltgymnastrada** - The former head of the sports-administration told the story how Dornbirn got chosen to be the hosting city of the worldgymnastrada, (one of the biggest sport events in the world) winning against cities like Amsterdam and Brussels turning the atmosphere of the whole region into celebrations and friendship.
- **Women in the jungle** - The only story told in English was about the experiences from one of the participants that she made during her time in the jungle of Peru, were the life style and abilities of the local women lend to interaction with the young European visitor.
- **Umweltwoche** - One of the most popular environmentalist programs in the region is called Umweltwoche. One of the founders told the story of the beginning and what was needed to become what it is now.

The other people were asked to choose one of the stories and harvest the learnings of the story for the bigger question **“how can we best live together in our city”** by answering one of the more specific questions like:



After the story telling session the **collective harvest** in the big group took place and all the insights were **combined with the online-Insight** and presented to the participants. The following five Insights are the result:



**WORKING TOGETHER** – to secure a good living of all citizens – independent of their age, origin, religion or education – we need mutual respect and dignity



**CREATING SPACES** - lots of citizens longing for “Spaces” where they can meet informally to work together on projects and initiatives



**RELATION – CITIZENS / ADMINISTRATION / POLITICS** - If we are all pulling in the same direction, we can improve our living together. It’s about finding a new path of collaboration and walk it together.



**FUTUREPROOF** – To keep the high quality of life in Dornbirn, we need to develop assets like modern mobility-concepts, recreational spaces, family friendliness.



**CITY DEVELOPMENT** - influences our living together. That means that softskills (living Neighborhoods) and hard facts (empty houses, flats) need to be considered carefully, when planning our city development.



Like in the other two Learning Villages having spent  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the time delving deeper into the **topic** of community cohesion and abundance, the last  $\frac{1}{4}$  was dedicated to **‘putting it into practice’**. The participants were provided with the **opportunity to put forward 17 local projects** to be explored by the Learning Village community during the **Pro-Action Café** by identifying:

- **The purpose behind the project**
- **What is missing and**
- **What are the next steps**



Overall, the 17 projects reflected a great diversity in ideas:

**‘Genusswandern für Junggebliebene’**

Making trekking tours for alderly people, who wants to stay aktiv

**‘Rundwanderweg Möckle/Mäander’**

Creating walking track close to the city beside local river, as an opportunity to encounter.

**‘Movment’** creating awerness and joy for body movment.

**‘Integration’** Networking and providing help for male Refugees to get access to the centre of society.

**‘Integrationspaten’** Building up a pool of people, that take care of someone how is new in town. Integration-buddy

**‘Roma’** creating a vision for a constructive living together of Romas and the community in Dornbirn.

**‘Friede’** How can we support peace and were does it begin?

**‘Waldfriedhof-Park’** Crating an alternative cemetery with the inviting atmosphere of a park.

**‘Belegung Pfarrheim Wallenmahd’**

**‘Schaffung von Wohnraum’** Making more empty houses available for young famalies.

**‘Ganzheitliche Pflege des öffentlichen Raumes’**

Taking care of our public spaces in a holistic way and by integrating refugees and locals.

**‘Fairvelo’** Building up a possibility to use more cargobikes (transportation bikes) by creating a space for people where they come together and support them on own housing

**‘Produktionsguide Dornbirn’** Making locally produced things visible for citizens

**‘Re – und Upcycling’** Creative re- and upcycling from stuff. (Furniture, etc.)

**‘Markthalle Dornbirn’** founding a first market hall in Dornbirn with local products that is open every day.

**‘Flucht und Schule’** Bringing people with refugee experience together with students.

**‘Begegnungscafé’** Creating a coffee-store were people how are new in town can connect and people find working

How can place run by the church be used in a meaningful economical sustainable way.

opportunities

The ***Learning Village concluded*** with some closing words by OFRI and the City of Dornbirn. The Mayor announced that this Learning Village was the starting point for an ongoing participatory process in the city around the topic “How can we best live together in our city?” and that the administration is willing to help these 17 projects to move forward and realise their ideas.



At the end of the Learning Village the ***'batton' was handed*** back to the Scottish team where it all started.

## After the Social Capital World Forum – ‘Bringing it all together’



### Outcomes

#### *Outcomes for the Learning Village*

By implementing the Learning Village concept in three different countries and local environments we have been able *to refine the process design and methods*, and also verify some common outcomes of the Learning Village model:

- Learning Village model (LV) works very well as a 1-2 days collective process that starts by welcoming everybody and make visible all the participants' hopes. It continues with open exploratory conversations and in-depth examinations of common values, co-creative approaches and practical experiences. The Learning Village process leads to the participants presentations of project ideas and initiatives and the planning of concrete projects for a better livelihood in the local community. And it all ends as it started by giving the whole village the opportunity to one by one express their thoughts and reflections of the days together in the Learning Village
- LV works well in creating a trusting environment, “a safe container” where people and groups with different backgrounds can feel welcome, listened to and included in the conversations and the co-creation
- LV creates social capital, reciprocity and a more competent community, which develops when people are able to converse in depth and see the common values and opportunities

- LV helps strengthen relationships, networks and collaboration between the city district /municipality and civil society and citizens

### Local Outcomes

As a result of the Learning Villages **local as well as international network(s)** of community members, and representatives of the third and public sector were formed within the context of ‘Connecting City and Citizens’. They therefore provided a platform for engagement and participation of the local citizens within an European Project.

As the Learning Villages were embedded within local communities, they have supported **local capacity-building** which can then be carried forward into their projects and future events and activities.

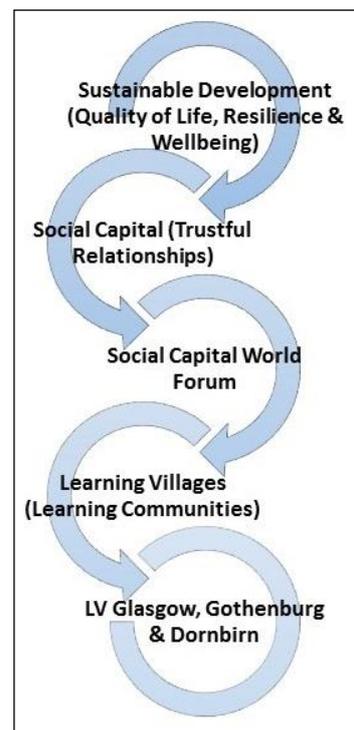
Together, the three Learning Villages have provided the space for **over 30 projects** to be explored and developed. The SCWF and its associated networks will then disseminate and share the learning and outcome of the Learning Villages - the 6<sup>th</sup> Social Capital World Forum.

### Overall Outcomes

Altogether, the learning and outcomes of the three Learning Village will be collated as well as out of which the **Learning Village Framework** will then be created. *The Learning Village Framework will act as a tool to enable local decision-making and innovation, empowering communities to find sustainable solutions themselves and address challenges they face in a global context*

In the long-term, the aim is to enable citizens to engage and participate in decision-making in their own communities by increasing the understanding and awareness of a social capital culture based on the principles of participation and strength-based approaches.

Figure 27: Purpose Cascade



## Insights from the LV-project

*"Everybody likes learning and development but not when it takes place. It's about daring to stay in the mess of the emergence. "*

(Manfred Hellrigl)

*The insight concerning preparation:* Then collaboration and building of the competent local community commence during the preparatory process and manifests during the learning Village meeting and in conversations that really matters on jointly identified needs and issues of concern:

- LV needs a group of public officials to be an active part of a local team with the mandate to plan and prepare LV
- LV gets legitimate locally, while anchored in civil society and dedicated organizations and individuals involved in the preparations of the LV
- LV requires preparatory meetings where the theory, process design and methods are introduced to the municipality and actors in civil society
- LV requires a local team consisting of people from both the municipality and civil society, engaged in the LV-preparation and willing to train in order to host the activities during the LV
- LV invitation should be addressed to people and organizations that want to engage in the core question - the burning issue that is formulated in the invitation. The invitation should aim for diversity and a good mixture of public participants, citizens and civil society
- LV involvement and participation need to be a personal choice and voluntary, both for public and civil society representatives and citizens
- LV attracts more participants if performed during weekend, when people have better opportunities to participate.

*The insight concerning dedication:* the Learning village; the municipality or city district authorities need to be dedicated:

- LV assumes that there is a public and civic concern and real need for in-depth conversations, strengthening of collaborative relations, common needs or engagement in burning issues
- LV needs to be anchored political and receive support for planning, implementing and follow up.
- LV needs to be anchored in public administration and management.



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**Contacts:**

Colin Campbell, ASC (Scotland) [colin@social-capital.net](mailto:colin@social-capital.net)

Dr. Manfred Hellrigl, OFRI (Austria) [Manfred.Hellrigl@vorarlberg.at](mailto:Manfred.Hellrigl@vorarlberg.at)

Dr. Anna-Karin Berglund, SALAR (Sweden) [Anna-Karin.Berglund@skl.se](mailto:Anna-Karin.Berglund@skl.se)