

NEWSLETTER 2



Crossing Generations, Crossing Mountains



Lifelong Learning Programme

BIG FOOT project

Newsletter n°2

Participatory mapping – consultation of local communities
Intergenerational learning approach – methodology for the experimentation
Community focus – region of Trikala



Crossing Generations, Crossing Mountains

Towards local development through intergenerational
dialogue in mountain areas

Introduction – BIG FOOT from the beginning

Before realizing the specific project steps which will set a basis to the intergenerational learning approach, it was essential to properly present the project to involved communities in Bulgaria, Greece and Italy. The main part of the presentations took place during so called “public evenings”, which were organized respectively in Berkovitz (BG), Trikala (GR) and Gubbio (IT).

As the success of the project depends on the communities’ involvement, the presentations were in this sense crucial. Participants should be further interested in the project objectives, participate to the consultations, express their visions and needs.

Thanks to these first meetings, the partners could identify different groups of young and elderly people, which want to participate to the project: handicraft and folkloric associations, agriculture unions, rural tourism organisations, local culture organisations, schools, families and other individual stakeholders.

These first contacts belong to the specific project’s methodology, which includes “the participatory mapping” procedure.

Participatory mapping – consultation of local communities



The participatory mapping in Big Foot is a participated consultation process, driven by the respective partners in selected communities (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy), and aimed at discovering the local perspectives, the community needs and evaluating the local environmental, historical and cultural resources.

This approach guidelines are developed and adapted to the project by the Greek partners, Trikala development agency S.A.

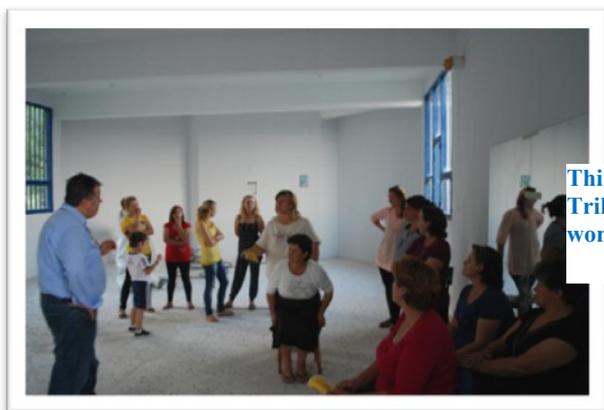
What does it mean more precisely?

Participatory mapping is, in its broadest sense, the creation of maps by local communities, often with the involvement of supporting organizations. Participatory maps are used to provide a valuable visual representation of what a community perceives as its place and the significant features within it. However, even if the process may not be finalised in the production of real maps, what really matters to the Big Foot partnership is the aim of the process. This consists mainly in encouraging a process of local participation in every aspect of development policy, which in Big Foot consists in the definition of the Intergenerational interventions.

We can define six purposes to initiate participatory mapping approach:

- To help communities articulate and communicate spatial knowledge to external agencies by demonstrating how a community values, understands and interacts with its lands and immediate space.
- To allow communities to record and archive local knowledge, to use mapping projects to collect and preserve cultural histories and to record their elders' knowledge about their land.
- To assist communities in land-use planning and resource management.
- To enable communities to advocate for change.
- To increase the capacity within communities.

One of the greatest strengths of these initiatives is the ability of the mapping process to **bring community members together and share their ideas and visions, which can contribute to building community cohesion.**

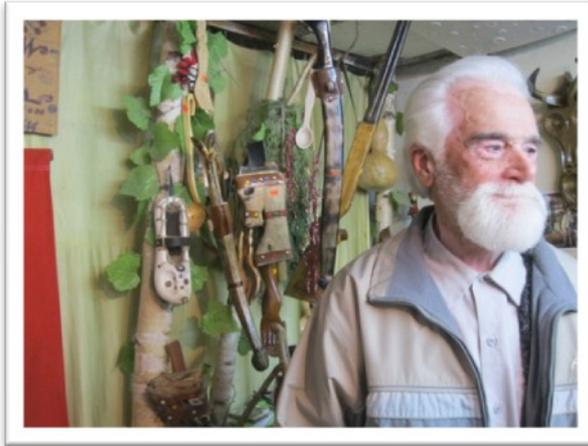


Third consultation meeting, Trikala, GR, Meeting with women from rural areas

The Consultation process can also act as a basis for discussion: discussions might raise community awareness about local issues. Thus, participatory mapping is strongly about **community building.**

The central characteristic of this method is the “bottom up” orientation – it seeks to take into account the internal opportunities and constraints of the communities as a result of the environmental, economic, social and cultural factors of an area’s past, as well as the external opportunities and constraints arising from opening up local economies.

It is an approach that allows the local community and local players to express their views and to help defining the development course for their area in line with their own views, expectations and plans.



The participatory mapping is realized in a selected intervention area - The BIG FOOT project is intended for **small mountain areas** which form a homogeneous unit in geographical, economic and social terms. The areas selected must in all cases have sufficient coherence and critical mass in terms of human, financial and economic resources to support a viable development strategy.

Wood carver – craftman in Berkovitza, BG

The **elaboration of the Participatory Mapping** is a complex process that requires a good knowledge of the intervention area, thorough a collection of primary data and information, and continuous contact with residents and stakeholders in the region. The more that is known about an area, the easier it is to implement a project and develop **BIG FOOT experimentation activities**. We refer to a correct identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the area - assets, vehicles for innovation, main obstacles, factors which hinder development, etc.

Indeed, one of the important objectives for the diagnostic stage is to communicate with the population concerned on the work carried out. This also allows the diagnosis procedure to be used as an ideal opportunity to involve local people in the initiative.

Thanks to the consultations of the community needs and their visions of the local assets, a lot of fields raised up, in which the communities would like to develop the intergenerational experimentation.

The communities are interested in **tourism development by re-discovering of the old paths known by the former generations, collecting of traditional cooking recipes by initiating elderly people to digital knowledge, construction of a school garden dedicated to education on environment, development of modernized ceramic courses etc.**

In the next project step, it will be necessary to choose just the most relevant activities, which will be developed through the intergenerational learning approach.

Intergenerational learning approach – methodology for the experimentation

This specific learning methodology remains a necessary tool for the next steps on the pilot sites in Bulgaria, Greece and Italy.

It will be based on a detailed methodology elaborated by MENON Network EEIG and collected in the **“Handbook for intergenerational service learning”**. The main idea of this approach is the development of **mutually beneficial activities for young and elderly people**. Based on the consultation of the community needs, this approach should contribute to the **community cohesion and to overcome barriers between generations**.



Partnership workshop in Brussels, dedicated to the methodology

Which are the core principles of the intergenerational learning ?

- ✓ Mutual and reciprocal benefits
- ✓ Participatory
- ✓ Assets based
- ✓ Well planned
- ✓ Culturally grounded
- ✓ Strengthens community and promotes active citizenship
- ✓ Challenges ageism
- ✓ Cross-disciplinary

The intergenerational learning is oriented towards the **exchange of experiences and use of the skills of each generation**. Furthermore, it has the task of developing **understanding of the attitudes** of other age groups and correcting these as required.

As it is a very complex method, different obstacles and challenges need to be analysed and discussed in advance, in order to avoid a number of risks; they are mainly related to negative stereotypes about the other generation or cultural and behaviour differences.

Overcoming these barriers can be a part of the method and create an interesting exchange between the generations.

We cross the fingers for the experimentation part !

Community focus – region of Trikala

Trikala prefecture is part of the region of Thessaly, with its capital- the town of Trikala. The area includes the town of Kalampaka and the unique tourist monument - the Meteora rocks with the monastery complex, built at the top of the rocks.

The south-eastern part of the region belongs to the Thessaly Plain. The forested Pindus mountain range dominates the western part. The northern part of Trikala is also mountainous and covered by forests and barren lands; you can find here the mountain ranges Chasia and Antichasia.



Its major river is the Pineios, flowing to the South and East. Its climate is mainly of Mediterranean character, with hot summers and cold winters, along

with temperate climate conditions by the mountains. This prefecture contains 18,3% of the total population of the Thessaly region. The total population of Trikala comes up to 138.047 citizens.

According to the statistic data, the higher percentage of the employees in the area works in the sector of **tourism and services** (50,09%), following the field of **farming and animal husbandry** (29,10%). The **agriculture** of the area is famous, and contributes a part of the country's export. Its well-known products include fruit and vegetables, cotton, olives, cattle and other foodstuffs.

In the next newsletter: focus on Berkovitzka municipality, pilot site in Bulgaria.

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The Big Foot project is set to tackle many challenges of the rural mountainous regions, including the lack of economic opportunities and out-migration of the younger population. The project aims to support intergenerational learning, through training and community consultations, enabling and valuating the skills and knowledge of the older generation, and combining traditional knowledge with modern communication tools and expertise in order to enable innovative, creative and productive joint solutions for local sustainable development.

Innovation, through blending tradition and development, will take different forms and pace in Big Foot: as a sensible and agreed-upon evolution towards a better understanding and integration into a world that is changing.



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