Why does place matter?

What is co-production?

How can I involve stakeholders?

Creating Sustainable Places Together

A quick start guide for policy-makers and practitioners to place-based working and co-production

SUSPLACE
Sustainable Place Shaping

Click to start

WELCOME

Achieving sustainable development means reshaping the present relationships between society, economy and nature towards more sustainable pathways. This cannot simply be a matter for regulation and government but needs active engagement and debate across society that can help to change the places in which we live and how we live in them. The complexity and uncertainty which policy makers face in the 21st century also requires a more adaptive and reflexive approach with less reliance on centralised or sector-based solutions. This guide sets out why place-based participation can help to deliver more sustainable futures and how policy makers and practitioners across a range of different policy areas can support this through well-designed participative work with communities.

The guide has been developed by SUSPLACE – a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action Innovative Training Network exploring sustainable place-shaping, funded by the European Commission. SUSPLACE brought together six academic and seven non-academic partners from seven European countries in a four-year collaboration, coordinated by Wageningen University in the Netherlands. This network of academic and practical experience supported 15 early career researchers in developing a range of in-depth place-based projects. It is the experience of these projects, and the learning that came from them, that forms the basis for this guide. We very much hope it will prove helpful in enabling others to explore this important way of working.

The editors, Matthew Quinn, Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Cardiff University, and Anke de Vrieze, daily coordinator SUSPLACE at Wageningen University and Research

READING INSTRUCTIONS

This quick start guide consist of 3 main sections:

1. **an introductory section on**
   - **PLACE**
   - **CO-PRODUCTION and**
   - **GETTING STARTED**

   These chapters introduce you to the benefits and do's and don'ts of place-based working and of co-producing outcomes with communities, and guide you through the process of planning place-based working.

2. **a METHODS section that offers a menu of different participative methods to suit different aims and needs. All the methods are illustrated with case study examples to bring them to life and all have links to the fuller cases to allow you to check their relevance to your own context.**

3. **a section with CASES that offers the full description of all cases described in the method examples and include links back to the featured methods.**

You can read this document like a normal text document, but also scroll through using the navigation bars and hyperlinks. If you need to check back on the thinking behind the suggested approaches, just use the navigation bar at the top right to move quickly around the document.

start reading

Understanding place

Why does place matter?

Place links people together
People with different experiences come together in places. Place provides a context in which people have things in common and can interact with each other.

Place links different systems
Places are inherently connected. Social, economic and ecological aspects of life are very visible and the links between them more tangible when viewed from the perspective of place.

Place has meaning
Places have meaning for people. Place can connect individual values and collective identities. Shared sense of place can be a motivation for action.

Place shapes opportunities and barriers
The physical form of places, their infrastructure, ownership and uses shape how we can live our lives and can enable or disable sustainable pathways.

What do we mean by place?

Place is recognisable as a place
There is no set size for what constitutes place but it is usually a combination of a physical identity – a village, small town or landscape, or even a workplace - and a shared social sense of place and identity. Place is at its best as a forum for developing action when there is genuine sense or senses of place and identities.

Place can operate at different scales
A place that makes sense for one issue or question may not for another. The optimum scale or scales for addressing an issue should reflect the needs of the topic and of the likely participants, not what is simplest for the organiser. Often action will be needed at different scales to address an issue.

Place cuts across boundaries of wealth and institutions
Places throw people together. This is part of the power of place as a means of co-producing new approaches. It does not respect boundaries that can otherwise break up an issue into sectoral or administrative divides or favour one group over another.

Place makes otherwise abstract ideas real
Place is a real physical case for discussion. The impacts of one decision for other issues or of one group's priorities over another's are tangible and debated in the same room. The physicality of place also determines available options and opportunities.

What don't we mean by place?

Places are not defined by administrative boundaries
Places need to be meaningful for people who live there and the issue under discussion. What you may consider a place may not be meaningful and can mask differing communities and interests. Be ready to change the place definition or scale. Also be aware of the varying scales at which issues may need to be addressed and plan to engage at appropriate levels and make links between those discussions – what makes sense nationally may seem very different locally and vice versa.

Understanding co-production

Why does co-production matter?

Co-production (sometimes referred to as co-design or social innovation) is a process of combining the practical knowledge and experience of those most affected by an issue with different forms of professional insights in order to create and deliver something new and shared together. It therefore differs significantly from the traditional use of consultation to inform decisions.

Co-production offers elements important for creating sustainable change:

- it can help people to MAP how they interact with each other and with their places and see what is important to local well-being
- it can GIVE VOICE to a wider range of perspectives and identify local knowledge and priorities in order to create a different understanding of issues and their potential solutions
- it can BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER with different experiences and world views, releasing creativity and innovation and building trust and community capacity

What do we mean by co-production?

Co-production is about genuinely sharing power and knowledge
Genuine co-production seeks to put the community at the centre and places professional or institutional roles in a supportive rather than a controlling role. It aims to establish a genuine dialogue that enhances mutual understanding and builds capacity to learn and act together.

Co-production is doing with not doing to.
Co-production seeks to reverse the tendency of administrators and experts to know what is best for others without really involving them. Doing with people builds the confidence of those engaged and enhances the likely success of the resulting actions.

Co-production regards everyone as having value
This is a fundamental principle of co-production in order to empower people and to show how they can bring insight, contribute, and take control of issues of concern.

Co-production seeks to empower those with least voice
By giving voice to those with little voice in decision-making, co-production improves the decision-making process, increases confidence and self-worth for those participating and helps to connect different groups and interests.

Co-production seeks to build new common understanding
By working across divides of expertise and sectors and bringing together people with different interests and understandings, co-production can shape actions to deliver wider and more equal benefits.

What don't we mean by co- production

Co-production isn't holding a consultation workshop
Co-production must give participants the opportunity to determine and shape the debate and the scope to explore and develop ideas. If there is already a decided or firm proposition for whatever reason, be honest about that and engage in normal consultation to understand impacts for different groups.

Co-production isn't about talking to the usual participants
Co-production can't easily be based on existing decision-making groups or policy processes. It needs specific design to reduce the impacts of unequal power and voice among participants and support them to define issues and develop responses.

Co-production isn't about keeping different groups or views separate.
One of the powers of co-production, especially when combined with place-based working, is to bring people together rather than treat them as distinct, competing interests. Place-based co-production seeks to bring people together on a basis of equality, though to achieve this, you may first need to work with groups separately so as not to disadvantage marginalised voices.

Planning for your participation

Why does preparation matter?

It is very easy to undermine the trust of participants in place-based engagement by being inconsistent or unclear in the approach or application of the basic principles. The success of place-based participation therefore rests in the careful design of the process of engagement and the willingness to be flexible in responding to how the participants wish to shape the work.

What you need to consider

Get the design right

The detailed design of participation will shape the results. Consider how ready or able people are to engage. Should different groups be seen separately before bringing people together? What methods of engagement would give people most equal voice or put them at ease? Are there bridges to build between different interests? How do you prevent domination by a few voices? Does the situation need independent chairing or facilitation? Above all, always remember to agree upon the principles and desired outcomes of the process with participants.

Get the people right

In setting up place-based engagement, your first question is whom to involve. This should include all those with an interest or whom the issue will affect. Be careful about relying on proxy representatives of a community or community of interest: they might not be representative of a wider range of views. The richer the debate and engagement the better, as the purpose is increasing understanding, not getting quick consent to a proposal. Be open to adding other voices if others wish it.

Get the methods right

Different groups will thrive in different environments. Traditional policy groups will favour table debate and discussion. Different approaches, such as arts-based participation, can level the playing field, give more equal voice to others and open up new ideas and perspectives rather than play out existing positions. Chose techniques and locations consciously to bring out everyone's creative voice. Be ready to vary and change. Think of ways to bring in other views, using the different methods illustrated in this guide.

Ask a good question

This can be the most difficult issue as the question or issue posed needs to be clear but also open. Too big a question and it is unlikely to be meaningful. Too narrow a question and it is unlikely to be very relevant or interesting. Do not come with pre-formed ideas or proposals to test – let them emerge and be tested in discussion. Too often, traditional consultation or engagements have already reached a solution and define the question much too narrowly, preventing fresh insights. Be ready to flex the issue in response to views of initial participants and emerging ideas.

Commit the right time and resources

Time and resources are often in short supply in public administration but genuine engagement needs a commitment of both. Make clear up front, the commitment of your time and resources and that expected of others, and agree how long you want to work together.

Learn together

Co-production is essentially a process of collective learning. This learning needs to be captured, shared and sustained if it is to have lasting impact. Think about and discuss how this can be done at the beginning, through websites, social media, exhibitions, events, and storytelling and how that learning will be sustained after the life of the immediate work.

SELECTING METHODS

MAPPING
Mind and network mapping is easy for a wide range of participants to complete, drawing on their personal experiences. It enables rapid capturing and simple sharing of issues, connections and priorities to form a basis for deeper reflection

GIVING VOICE
Capturing a wide range of perspectives and different forms of knowledge about issues and their impacts on different people or locations is central to place-based participation. These methods offer different ways of enabling more people to contribute

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
The ultimate aim is for communities to agree and develop their own collective actions with the collaboration or support of public authorities. These methods are designed to support effective collective working and consensus building

MAPPING

Place/mind maps
A visual method to capture thinking on complex issues

Network maps
Hands-on visual mapping of the relationships between stakeholders or issues

GIVING VOICE

Participant observation
A method to gain deep understanding by participating and interacting with people in their daily lives

Semi-structured interviews
Uses a series of open questions to explore a topic, while retaining a focus on main themes

Photovoice
A visual method of inviting participants to take pictures of issues or places relevant to them and using the pictures as visual prompts

Video narratives
Uses film as a medium to record personal experiences, stories and values

Reflective journals
A formal structure to record reflections on activities and capture learning

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Workshops
An adaptable format that brings people to work together on a subject at different stages

Focus groups
Focus groups are facilitated discussion groups of mixed or single interests

Collaborative documentary
Uses co-production of a documentary to record and share a collective sense of experiences, stories and values

PLACE/MIND MAPS

A visual method to capture thinking on complex issues, and the relationship of ideas and physical places, that can be completed individually or done collectively

Purpose

- capture and understand complex (social) situations
- give new perspectives on issues

Key lessons

- best done as free standing exercise to give it space and attention
- needs facilitation/explanation
- can form the basis for subsequent collective discussion

Further Reading

https://www.nesta.org.uk/feature/digital-social-innovation/crowdmapping/

"Most of the participants enjoyed the task and said it helped them understand how they had come to think the way they currently do"

EXAMPLES

01 Understanding youth perspectives

02 Mapping as 'Silent Conversation'

03 Affective mapping to rebuild communities

Purpose
In seeking to involve young people in regional decision-making, participatory digital mapping was used to understand how youngsters define their own city-region.

Impact
This tool can be useful to understand how people's perception of an area might differ from administrative boundaries and what they value.

Description
Participants were invited to join a workshop in which they learnt to create simple digital maps using a free online tool. Asked to draw the region they feel attached to and the places they like or would like to see change, the resulting maps provided insights on what (young) people considered meaningful areas outside of administrative boundaries.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (7)
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: SUSTAINABLE CITY-REGIONS

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"MOST OF THE PARTICIPANTS ENJOYED THE TASK AND SAID IT HELPED THEM UNDERSTAND HOW THEY HAD COME TO THINK THE WAY THEY CURRENTLY DO"

EXAMPLES

01 Understanding youth perspectives

02 Mapping as 'Silent Conversation'

03 Affective mapping to rebuild communities

Purpose
The method - used in the context of a workshop on future directions for local urban planning - was used to unveil the meanings and values expressed in existing cultural narratives about the Finnish town of Mänttä, and to allow residents to enter the discussion of its possible futures.

Description
Participants were prompted to reflect on the meanings and values they attach to the town as well as the reasons why they deem them important. This was done in two separate rounds, each creating one concept map. First, participants wrote their answers individually on paper and placed them in a common space on the floor. Then, they collectively structured the inputs in a concept map, by physically positioning the sheets of paper to form clusters. The process was carried out in silence, to enable a deeper state of reflection and prevent louder voices from dominating the conversation. At the end of the clustering process, participants choose a tag to name each cluster with the aid of a facilitator. Method adapted from the SUSPLACE Arts-based Toolkit.

Impact
The method allowed participants to visually represent important and meaningful aspects of their place, and to collaboratively negotiate them. It empowered participants not only to generate data, but to analyse them as well. The maps provided a foundation for subsequent discussion, grounded in the meanings and values already expressed and negotiated by the participants.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (11)
URBAN PLANNING: A FINNISH TOWN REIMAGINING ITS FUTURE

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EXAMPLES

01 Understanding youth perspectives

02 Mapping as 'Silent Conversation'

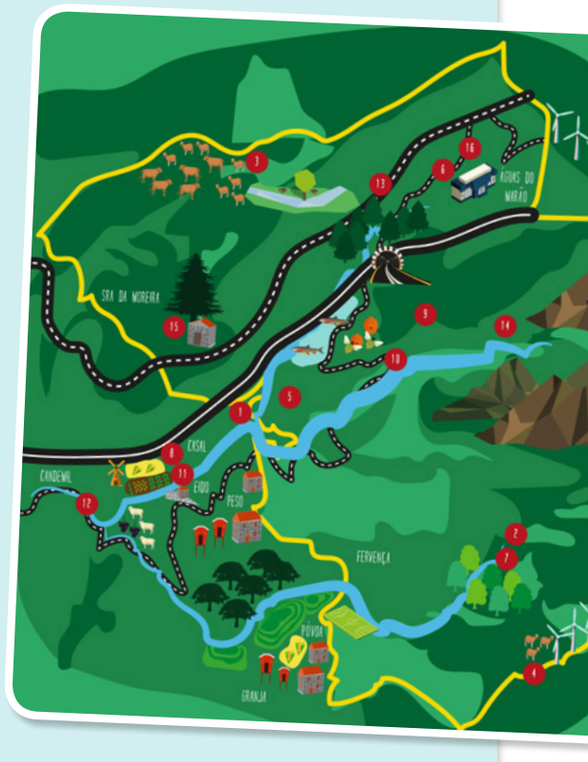
03 Affective mapping to rebuild communities

Purpose
An affective mapping exercise, where participants physically recorded the relation between places and people, aimed to re-engage communities with the tradition of commoning. The mapping included stories, memories and lived experiences in the place. The method can help to establish more positive views about a place, create a collective image, and empower the community to take action.

Description
As part of the overall project 15 people were asked to choose their favourite place and write a story about it. Each received a mapping kit, with:

- detailed written instructions of the exercise.
- a coloured string to tie it at their favourite place.
- a notebook to write their story about their place (with guiding questions).
- a glass jar to take an object.
- a map to mark their place.
- a disposable camera (when people didn't have smartphone) to take a picture of the place
- the mapping was combined with video narratives of the recollections of elders.

Impact
The work resulted in a collection of stories, shared with participants through an online platform. The stories formed the starting point of workshop discussions that stimulated reflection on the place, its challenges and needs, and created commitment to action.



READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (8)
RURAL DEVELOPMENT: COMMONLANDS IN SPAIN AND PORTUGALS

METHODS

MAPPING | GIVING VOICE | BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

PLACE/MIND MAPS | **NETWORK MAPS**

NETWORK MAPS

Hands-on visual mapping of the relationships between stakeholders or issues, done individually or as a group exercise

Purpose

- understand and appreciate different relations, connections and impacts
- improve communication among different groups
- identify potential gate keepers, cornerstone issues or catalysts for change

Key lessons

- best done as free standing exercise to give it space and attention
- needs facilitation/explanation
- can form the basis for subsequent collective discussion

EXAMPLES

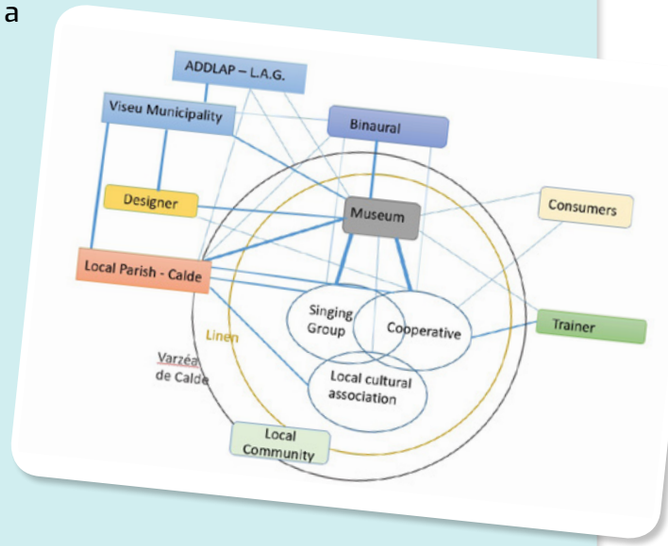
01
Visualising social networks

02
Mapping the wider impacts of green care

Purpose
In working on issues of rural revitalisation and innovation of local linen practices in the village of Várzea de Calde, Portugal participatory mapping helped to understand the actors involved and the web of relations between these actors.

Description
The method involved sitting down with key stakeholders and letting them brainstorm on their connections to linen, within and outside of the village. First, each actor wrote relevant actors on sticky notes. These were then placed on a large A3 paper with in the centre circles for 'Linen' and 'Várzea'. The sticky notes with relevant actors had to be placed as far or near the circles as the actor felt they should be. Finally, participants drew connections, with due thickness to emphasize the strength between actors.

Impact
This method is useful to co-produce stakeholder maps and get an overview of the most important relations and actors within and outside of a certain area.



READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (2)
CULTURE: INNOVATING LOCAL TRADITIONS

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EXAMPLES

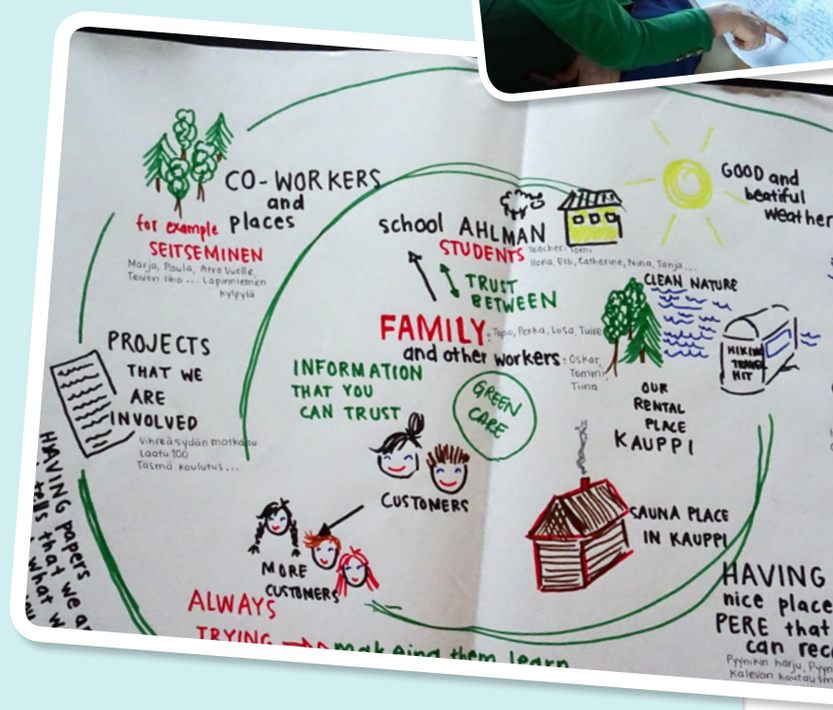
01
Visualising social networks

02
Mapping the wider impacts of green care

Purpose
The method aimed to understand and encourage reflection of participants on the impacts of local Green Care initiatives on the wider community and place, by mapping the connections to suppliers, supporters and beneficiaries.

Description
Participants drew a basic sketch of the social network collaborating towards the specific green care activity. Non-human as well as human elements were considered and discussed. The map linked to a timeline exercise in which participants set out the chronological development of Green Care activities, identifying major tipping points, signalling change or transformation.

Impact
The exercise helped participants to illustrate and reflect upon the wider transformational impacts of the activities, their development and what had made it possible.



READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (6)
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE: GREEN CARE IN FINLAND

METHODS

MAPPING | **GIVING VOICE** | BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION | SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS | PHOTOVOICE

VIDEO NARRATIVES | REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation consists of participating and interacting with people in their daily lives and thereby gaining a deep understanding of the society or situation at hand.

Purpose

- allows for deeper understanding of the dynamics of life in place

Key lessons

- requires (and enables) the establishment of a relationship of trust
- time-consuming
- risk of emotional involvement

EXAMPLES

01 Understanding traditional practices

02 Understanding social entrepreneurship

03 Understanding arts-based environmental practice

Purpose
The method of participant observation enabled fundamental trust building between the researcher and the community of Várzea de Calde, Portugal.

Description
Besides meeting regularly with participants in their day-to-day context, the experience of undertaking the traditional linen practices deepened understanding of the processes and needs.

Impact
The method achieved a collection of videos, photographs and verbal data on the practices and the organisational structure of the community around linen. It enabled the community to trust the researcher as an active and curious temporary community member.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (2)
CULTURE: INNOVATING LOCAL TRADITIONS

METHODS

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EXAMPLES

01 Understanding traditional practices

02 Understanding social entrepreneurship

03 Understanding arts-based environmental practice

Purpose
To better understand challenges in establishing social enterprises, the researcher followed the daily activities of one social enterprise. Instead of interviewing people retrospectively about how it was done, the researcher observed the way challenges emerged, were tackled and solved. The aim was to get a better picture of the way its introduction operates on various levels, and the political landscape within which this happens.

Description
The researcher went to a blind community that runs the social enterprise in Riga – BlindArt – on a daily basis and was in touch with the director of the social enterprise on a daily basis for nearly a year.

Impact
The researcher gained a deep and grounded insight into the operations of the enterprise, established trust with all the actors involved and was thus able to receive honest and reflective viewpoints of the entire process.

Photo by BlindArt

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (9)
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: BRINGING A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INTO BEING

METHODS

MAPPING | **GIVING VOICE** | BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION | SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS | PHOTOVOICE

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EXAMPLES

01 Understanding traditional practices

02 Understanding social entrepreneurship

03 Understanding arts-based environmental practice

Purpose
In the context of exploring a creative form of engagement and learning, the method allowed the researcher to gain situated knowledge, engage with the creative flow of the arts-based event, and build trust and rapport with the participants. This made conversations and discussions more open and gave context for understanding comments and insights expressed by participants.

Description
The researchers participated in the design of an arts-based residency as informal advisors and engaged in the residency as researchers documenting the process, but also as participants. Each day the participant observers engaged in co-reflection sessions guided by a set of open-ended questions defined during the design phase of the project. They also took notes, photographs, short videos, and audio of various moments during the retreat, while supporting other participants to act as witnesses throughout the residency. After the residency, they again reflected and then validated notes and observations with the project organiser.

Impact
The method resulted in a deep, contextualized understanding of the motivations behind the project, the pedagogical and practical influences on the design of the residency, and a visceral experience of the residency itself. The process of co-reflection greatly added to quality and focus of observations.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (1)
ART: NURTURING IMAGINATIVE LEADERSHIP: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ART

METHODS

MAPPING | **GIVING VOICE** | BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION | **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS** | PHOTOVOICE

VIDEO NARRATIVES | REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews use a series of open questions to explore a topic, while retaining a focus on main themes

Purpose

- brings out aspects of individual experiences, feelings, and values by allowing free responses rather than the closed questions of a survey

Key lessons

- requires active listening
- questions need to be openly framed to encourage rich answers and conversation
- useful to establish a firm basis for subsequent engagement with a community

EXAMPLES

01
Exploring citizen-run energy initiatives

02
Exploring practices of commoning

Purpose
In gathering views on the development of local energy schemes, a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions allowed for more flexibility than a questionnaire or a closed, fixed-response interview. This flexibility is important when interviewees work for institutions that operate in different organisational and territorial contexts, or hold different positions in a certain organisation. At the same time, having a guide with a number of open-ended questions that are asked to all interviewees allows comparisons to be made between, in this case, local energy initiatives in three different countries.

Description
A guide with a limited number of open-ended questions, tied to the research questions, ensured that the most important aspects were covered in the interviews. They also served as anchors for structuring the interview in order to keep the length of the interview to a minimum, since interviewees often have limited time availability.

Impact
Letting the conversation flow past the boundaries of a strict interview guide allowed for the identification of additional issues about the topic that were not identified during the original design process.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (4)
ENERGY: CITIZEN INITIATIVES: THE CASE OF COOPERATIE WINDPOWERNIJMEGEN

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EXAMPLES

01

Exploring citizen-run energy initiatives

02

Exploring practices of commoning

Purpose
To gather perspectives on practices of commoning, and encourage conversation, the method offered a flexible structure with freedom to adapt conversations as issues emerged.

Description
Rather than being overly confined to fixed interview questions and their order, the open questions enabled free-flowing conversation. Equally, the questions were phrased in a way that was relevant for people's daily life. Instead of using technical questions such as 'How do you relate to this place?' Why do you do X?', the following questions were asked: 'What do you like the most/the least about this place? How is a normal day here? What does mean X for you?' Sharing a timeline of past events that most affected the community helped to prompt further reflection.

Impact
The method helped to identify key issues that affected the place, as well as community dynamics (conflicts, power relations, etc.). The method also help to build trust with the community and built up an understanding of what drives people's actions: one to one conversation allow people to talk more freely about emotions and deep motivations.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (8)
RURAL DEVELOPMENT: COMMONLANDS IN GALICIA, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

METHODS

MAPPING | **GIVING VOICE** | BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION | SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS | **PHOTOVOICE**

VIDEO NARRATIVES | REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

PHOTOVOICE

A visual method of inviting participants to take pictures of issues or places relevant to them and then using the pictures as visual prompts for discussions

Purpose

- empowers vulnerable or disadvantaged groups
- opens up participation to those who would not be able to sustain conventional forms of engagement
- opens up new ideas and perspectives by visualising deep attitudes, values and behaviours

Key lessons

- has to be carefully designed and adapted to the situation
- important to show some early, tangible results for participants
- working with vulnerable groups requires flexibility and adaptation

"PARTICIPANTS FOUND IT MUCH EASIER TO TALK ABOUT THE PLACES WHERE THEY LIVE AND THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WHEN THERE WAS A VISUAL PROP"

EXAMPLES

01 Shifting the perspective towards young people

02 Empowering people with mental disabilities

03 Exploring food citizenship practices

Purpose
In working on regional development issues in the Cardiff Capital Region, photovoice enabled young people to express their lived experiences of the area. Moreover, the method allowed participants to gain more control over defining the 'problems' and issues at stake.

Description
The process involved two meetings. In the first, the group discussed the goal of the project, the themes, safety and ethics issues, as well as a deadline for taking photos. Participants were asked to take six photos in total: two of places they appreciate, two for issues they would like to see changing, and two to document a journey in the region. During the second meeting, each participant presented his or her image, followed by a group discussion. All participants agreed to have their contributions published and were enthusiastic about participating in an exhibition where local stakeholders and the wider community was invited.

Impact
This method is useful to allow underrepresented groups (and others) to define their own questions and problems, and to present them in visually compelling ways in order to inform others.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (7)
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: SUSTAINABLE CITY-REGIONS

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"PARTICIPANTS FOUND IT MUCH EASIER TO TALK ABOUT THE PLACES WHERE THEY LIVE AND THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WHEN THERE WAS A VISUAL PROP"

EXAMPLES

01 Shifting the perspective towards young people

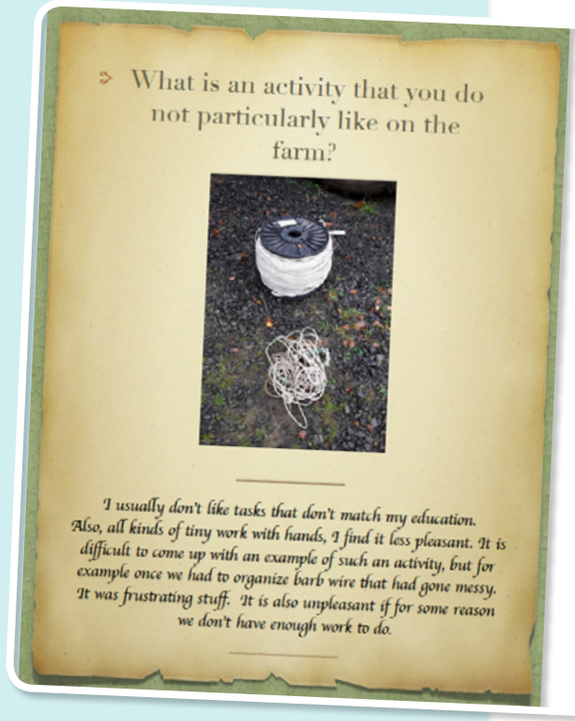
02 Empowering people with mental disabilities

03 Exploring food citizenship practices

Purpose
The method enabled ten young men with mental disabilities, working (and living) on Tikanmäki care farm (Lempäälä, Finland) to express their perceptions of the Green Care practices and their connections to the place.

Description
After agreeing on the process with the staff at the care farm a month beforehand, five questions were given to the participants so they could reflect on the content of their pictures in advance. Over the span of a week, the researcher joined the daily activities on the farm and each participant was invited to join for a "walking interview", together with their supervisor, when pictures were taken, based on participants' ideas. A day after, each participant was asked to confirm their choices, pick a favourite picture and give feedback on the experience. The conversations were condensed into captions, and compiled with the pictures into personal printed albums that were given to participants during a moment of collective sharing around the fire in the forest. Each participant presented their albums to the others and to the supervisors and care farmers.

Impact
The method was effective in 'giving voice' to people whose opinion is often not heard, and whose verbal communication abilities are different. It led to feelings of empowerment for both them and the supervisors, and to a better understanding of their perceptions of practices and place.



READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (6)
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE: GREEN CARE PRACTICES IN FINLAND

METHODS

MAPPING | **GIVING VOICE** | BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION | SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS | **PHOTOVOICE**

VIDEO NARRATIVES | REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

PHOTOVOICE

A visual method of inviting participants to take pictures of issues or places relevant to them and then using the pictures as visual prompts for discussions

Purpose

- empowers vulnerable or disadvantaged groups
- opens up participation to those who would not be able to sustain conventional forms of engagement
- opens up new ideas and perspectives by visualising deep attitudes, values and behaviours

Key lessons

- has to be carefully designed and adapted to the situation
- important to show some early, tangible results for participants
- working with vulnerable groups requires flexibility and adaptation

"PARTICIPANTS FOUND IT MUCH EASIER TO TALK ABOUT THE PLACES WHERE THEY LIVE AND THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WHEN THERE WAS A VISUAL PROP"

EXAMPLES

01 Shifting the perspective towards young people

02 Empowering people with mental disabilities

03 Exploring food citizenship practices

Purpose
In looking at issues of sustainable food behaviour, photovoice was implemented as a way to capture people's relationship with food and form a prompt for subsequent discussion..

Description
After completing a demographic questionnaire, participants were asked to take 4-10 photos, over the span of two weeks, about their relationship with food. To inspire critical reflection, participants were given some ideas of questions to think about such as: What does food mean to you? What do you like/ dislike about the place that you find food? How does the location where you get your food make you feel and why? Subsequently, participants were interviewed: first alone and then in a group. During both the interviews and **focus groups**, the photos were printed and visible to all participants.

Impact
The use of photovoice added value in four ways: (1) it built a rapport between the researcher and the participants; (2) participants reported thoroughly enjoying the process; (3) they gave verbal insights that they admitted would not have been possible without the exercise of photovoice; (4) the photos in themselves add another layer of non-verbal data that enriched the interviews and subsequent analysis.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (5)
FOOD: SUSTAINABLE FOOD CITIZENSHIP

METHODS

MAPPING | **GIVING VOICE** | BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION | SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS | PHOTOVOICE

VIDEO NARRATIVES | REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

VIDEO NARRATIVES

Uses film as a medium to record personal experiences, stories and values

Purpose

- gives voice and allows for deep reflection
- empowers by valuing the voices of individuals
- develops deeper understanding, pride and engagement

Key lessons

- time consuming and costly
- requires building of trust
- needs to allow people the time and space to express themselves

"I FELT PROUD AND HOPEFUL FOR BEING INVITED TO ACT AS AMBASSADOR FOR OUR LAND"

"I FELT HAPPY AND SATISFIED TO KNOW THAT THERE WAS AN ACADEMIC INTEREST ABOUT MY HOMETOWN, NOT ONLY ABOUT THE LANDSCAPE, BUT ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE, AND HOW DO THEY LIVE AND SENSE THEIR PLACE"

EXAMPLES

01

Empowering place ambassadors in tourism

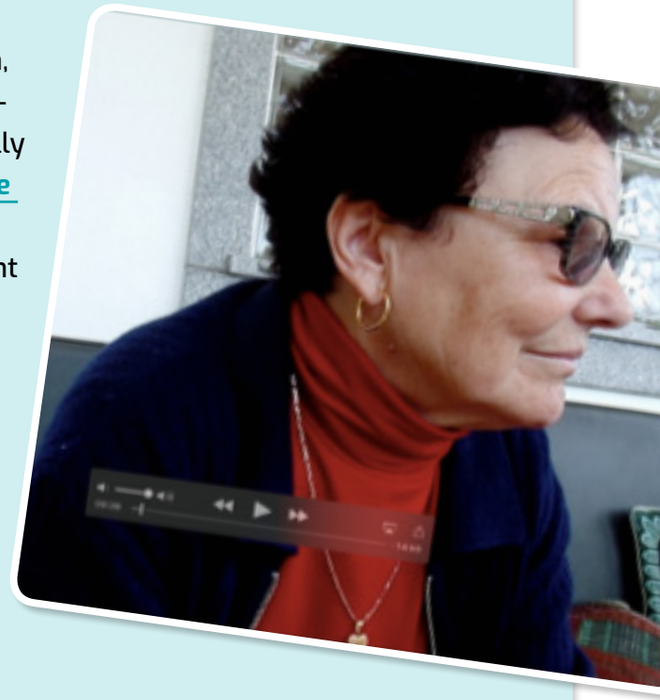
02

Rebuilding communities through storytelling

Purpose
In looking at the role of place ambassadors in sustainable tourism development in Portugal and Wales, videos of participants - recording their feelings and stories of their place - were used to record and explore place narratives.

Description
Eleven participants were filmed using semi-structured questions about them and personal stories that reflected their attachment for their place, and what they would like to share with others about their place. Participants watched and helped to edit the interviews down to 2 to 4-minute videos that served as individual narratives to create a documentary. Participants then individually watched their own short videos to comment on accuracy and reflect on place attachment.

Impact
The videos prompted and captured very personal reflections of participants. By recording them on film, the individual stories could be shared and discussed. They were finally brought together in a collaborative documentary, which then formed the basis for collective engagement and celebration for the village.



READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (10)
TOURISM: PLACE AMBASSADORS IN PLACE BRANDING AND TOURISM

METHODS

MAPPING | **GIVING VOICE** | BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION | SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS | PHOTOVOICE

VIDEO NARRATIVES | REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

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EXAMPLES

01
Empowering place ambassadors in tourism

02
Rebuilding communities through storytelling

Purpose
Video recording was used to involve the elders who could not participate in a wider 'affective mapping' of people's relation to their place. As elders were the last people who had lived from the commonland's resources, the video narratives aimed to enable them to reflect on the past practices, how they changed, and the future sustainability of the place.

Description
At the presentation of the project to the communities, elders that lived from the commonland were invited to do interviews and be recorded about their memories of past practice. The interviews were combined and edited to give a narrative of how local practices changed over time.

The voice of the "mountain range" - an important cultural symbol of the area - was added as a narrator to introduce the view on how this change affected non-humans. The video was shown locally and formed a basis for collective discussion.

Impact
The method allowed the elder members to contribute to the community exercise and helped the community to understand the historical changing relation with the land, reconnecting people with the land, and generating a feeling of pride for the participants.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (8)
RURAL DEVELOPMENT: COMMONLANDS IN GALICIA, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

Participants and researchers record their reflections on activities as they are carried out. This offers a formal structure for reflection and capturing learning.

Purpose

- provides a space for participants to voice their reflections on an activity or project in a more private way
- provides data collection throughout a project

Key lessons

- important to give time for structured and personal reflection
- provides an outlet for the researcher's own feelings which can otherwise become isolated

"She said something like, 'I'm from Essex, there's no point in me going'. It really showed to me how little students consider themselves to be part of their local community."

EXAMPLE

01

Reflecting on workshop learnings

Purpose
The method encouraged individual student and community members, working together on ideas for the local community gardens, to reflect on and record what they had learnt during workshops. The methods also allowed the researcher-educator to capture and compare their own experiences and reflections at the same time.

Description
Fifteen minutes were built into the workshop time for silent reflective journal writing based on set questions to elicit reflections (positive and negative) on the workshop experience. The researcher-educator kept a digital journal updating it with reflections on their experience of running the project and interactions with the participants outside of the workshops.

Impact
The method
- gave another perspective on the workshop outcomes
- allowed space for doubts, anxieties and criticisms to be voiced
- created space and structure for reflection on learning
- enabled the researcher-educator to have an account of the action research process and integrate various sources of evidence through reflection.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (3)
EDUCATION: ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS

METHODS

MAPPING | GIVING VOICE | **BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER**

WORKSHOPS | FOCUS GROUPS | COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTARY

WORKSHOPS

An adaptable format that brings people to work together on a subject at different stages

Purpose

- enables the acknowledgment and deliberation of multiple values and visions
- builds common purpose and understanding
- builds capacity and empower participants to co-produce

Key lessons

- requires meticulous preparation and attention to detail in the execution – the atmosphere can really affect the results
- co-creation workshops need careful handling as they can cause discomfort for people used to conventional forms of discussion or where power relations affect the group atmosphere.

Further Reading

SUSPLACE Arts-based Toolkit

"IT WAS A VERY POWERFUL APPROACH TO FACILITATE WORKING AS A GROUP, CREATING A FEELING OF PLAYFULNESS AND CONNECTEDNESS WHICH ENABLED COLLABORATION TO FLOW."

EXAMPLES

01 Place narratives for an industrial town

02 Student Sustainability Projects for Community Gardens

03 "Envisioning the Future" co-creation workshops

Purpose
Workshops were used to create collaborative dialogue around issues of urban redevelopment and planning, and to gain insight into residents' sense of place and place values.

Description
The structure and content of the workshops were influenced by the principles of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) – focusing on positives rather than negatives - while the activities and exercises used to engage participants included arts-based methods such as Silent Conversation, Predict Future Headlines, and Collage (outlined in detail in the SUSPLACE Arts-based Toolkit) The process was structured over two phases. In the first phase, the aim was to unveil the meanings and values expressed in existing cultural narratives about Mänttä, and to co-create new storylines for the ideal future of the town rooted in those meanings and values. Then, a final workshop reconnected participants to these themes, and prompted them to identify concrete steps to be taken to deliver that future.

Impact
The workshops allowed participants to reconnect with what they value and appreciate about the current state of their town, and use it as a basis for their discussion on possible futures. The use of arts-based methods allowed them to project themselves imaginatively into the future in a playful way, and express their wishes and desires for the future outside of the common frame and limitations of regular planning processes.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (11)
URBAN PLANNING: A FINNISH TOWN RE-IMAGINING ITS FUTURE

METHODS

MAPPING | GIVING VOICE | **BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER**

WORKSHOPS | FOCUS GROUPS | COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTARY

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EXAMPLES

01 Place narratives for an industrial town

02 Student Sustainability Projects for Community Gardens

03 "Envisioning the Future" co-creation workshops

Purpose
The workshop aimed to create a space for collective learning, idea generating, planning and evaluation in relation to the development of community garden education projects.

Description
The education project was structured around three workshops:
WS1: Visioning - To introduce the community gardeners to the students, to learn more about each other and understand and shape the purpose of the project. To identify the goals of community gardens and challenges they face using a future visioning exercise.
WS2: Planning - To explore the meaning of sustainability collectively and then integrate this in a structured group planning exercise to discuss the exact details of projects that students had proposed based on information generated in the first workshop.
WS3: Evaluating - To share and discuss the outcomes of the individual learning projects, evaluate learning outcomes and explore how the methodology could be used in the future, strengths and challenges.

Impact
As the project was volunteer-based, these were the only opportunities for structured learning activities and constructing shared meanings around the themes at hand. They allowed students to have richer interactions with community gardeners, which allowed them to gain a more complex picture of what community gardens, were and the various goals and issues shared by them all. It also allowed dedicated time for planning, sharing idea, data collection and evaluation. An unintended consequence was the benefit of bringing together representatives of the five community gardens who rarely have such an opportunity.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (3)
EDUCATION: ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS

METHODS

MAPPING | GIVING VOICE | **BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER**

WORKSHOPS | FOCUS GROUPS | COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTARY

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EXAMPLES

01 Place narratives for an industrial town

02 Student Sustainability Projects for Community Gardens

03 "Envisioning the Future" co-creation workshops

Purpose
The purpose of the workshops was four-fold: 1) to create a space for collective reflection and dialogue among the people directly involved in each Green Care case; 2) to gain analytical tools for a holistic and multi-dimensional picture of present services (offered) and resources (needed) in their practices; 3) to build capacities towards a collective future vision; and 4) to envision objectives of future services and resources.

Description
Three workshops took place (lasting 7 hours each – including lunch and two coffee breaks), each with a different case study, involving the main practitioners (between 4 and 9 people per workshop). A spacious and bright room was rented, and an interpreter was hired, to support (when needed) the facilitator/researcher.
The workshop was structured following Theory U and Appreciative Inquiry, and a variety of methods was used all throughout the day, to fit the five stages of the Theory U model: Convene, Observe & Discover, Dream, Design, and Harvest. Arts-based techniques were used during the Convene, Dream and Harvest phase (adapted from the SUSPLACE Arts-based Toolkit). Other methods were used during the Observe & Discover and Design phase, designed by the researcher based on the needs of each case study, and grounded in the data collected over 2.5 years of fieldwork. The methods aimed at envisioning the future Green Care practices for each case, while investigating the potential of practices to be carriers of sustainability values that may have positive effects on the development of the place where the entrepreneurs operate.

Impact
Participants had the chance to share their visions in an enabling atmosphere, and appreciate commonalities and differences, building capacities for a common collective vision. Participants also gained a holistic analytical understanding of their practices and resources, and consequently felt empowered to move from present reality to future objectives in a structured and generative way.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (6)
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE: GREEN CARE IN FINLAND

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are facilitated discussion groups of mixed or single interests

Purpose

- elicit collective or shared ideas and visions
- access broad and deep personal reflections and insights on a topic
- stimulate interaction, conversation and negotiation between people by mimicking a social setting

Key lessons

- do your homework properly before organizing any focus group. Participants need to be confident that you know their case and the topic.
- be careful when choosing the participants, so that they are different enough but still talk to each other.
- be sensitive all the time. Sometimes you will have to encourage the participants, but be careful with leading or suggestive questions.
- it is useful to combine it with some single interviews with those who could not attend the focus group, or would not have been suited to such a discussion

'BY BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER, FOCUS GROUPS CAN ENHANCE COLLABORATION, STIMULATE DISCUSSION AND CREATE A GREATER SENSE OF ENGAGEMENT'

EXAMPLES

01

Collective sense-making in local sustainable tourism

02

Understanding food citizenship practices

Purpose
In working on issues of local sustainable tourism, focus groups were used to reinforce group engagement. The focus groups followed individual interviews and allowed for collective sense making.

Description
The focus group work was developed and run with a local social enterprise and held in a local venue. Colourful materials were used to take note of the group reflections as well as voice recorders. Markers and post-it's were available to all participants to share their ideas. We also had a "talking stick" - whoever holds the stick has the 1st word to say (this technique was used to provide a better balance in the discussions and include more introvert people in the discussion). In the end, the group shared reflections with each other. After this, there was a celebration with food and beverages of what we achieved together. This was an important moment to reinforce the group engagement.

Impact
The event succeeded in engaging the community participants equally and enabled them articulate, share and celebrate their sense of place.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (10)
TOURISM: PLACE AMBASSADORS IN PLACE BRANDING AND TOURISM

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are facilitated discussion groups of mixed or single interests

Purpose

- elicit collective or shared ideas and visions
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'BY BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER, FOCUS GROUPS CAN ENHANCE COLLABORATION, STIMULATE DISCUSSION AND CREATE A GREATER SENSE OF ENGAGEMENT'

EXAMPLES

01

Collective sense-making in local sustainable tourism

02

Understanding food citizenship practices

Purpose
In exploring citizens' experiences of food procurement, five focus groups were carried out in order to complement semi-structured interviews and provide a better understanding of the social embeddedness of food-related practices. Focus groups mimic related social settings and stimulate interaction, conversation and negotiation between people

Description
Although groups were heterogeneous in their views and procurement practices, they were formed of friends, family-members and colleagues in order to closely reflect how behaviours are socially influenced. The focus groups were photovoice -guided though the photographers had the choice to remain anonymous. The use of the photographs was especially relevant in the focus groups phase in order to spark discussion and debate by seeing the world through another's' eyes and to encourage potentially more reserved people to explain their photos.

Impact
The focus groups enabled a rich analysis, as they highlight, not just the views that people have, but also the ways in which views have been formed. It was especially interesting to compare interview and focus group data from the same participants to see some participants' views change with social interaction. Elements of peer pressure, social norms/expectations, power and status meant that some views were quieter than in the interview stage. Although the moderator should always try to keep participation somewhat balanced, it is also important to let natural processes develop to understand the barriers to cultural shifts.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (5)
FOOD: SUSTAINABLE FOOD CITIZENSHIP

METHODS

MAPPING | GIVING VOICE | **BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER**

WORKSHOPS | FOCUS GROUPS | **COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTARY**

COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTARY

Uses co-production of a documentary film as a medium to record, share and communicate a collective sense of experiences, stories and values

Purpose

- builds collective engagement, capacity and confidence
- provides a lasting filmed legacy for the participants

Key lessons

- need to build trust with participants and engage them in the selection of narratives
- importance of sharing the product – of giving back
- need for a quality filmed product that can be used in a variety of contexts

"WATCHING OUR COMMUNITY STORIES GAVE ME A BIGGER MOTIVATION TO PROMOTE AND PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE"

"IN ALL MY LIFE, I NEVER THOUGHT WE COULD DO SOMETHING SO BEAUTIFUL FOR OUR VILLAGE"

EXAMPLE

01

Documentary film: sense of place

Purpose
The method combined a means of bringing together and sharing the work on the project with the production of a lasting film legacy for the community to communicate their local sense of place.

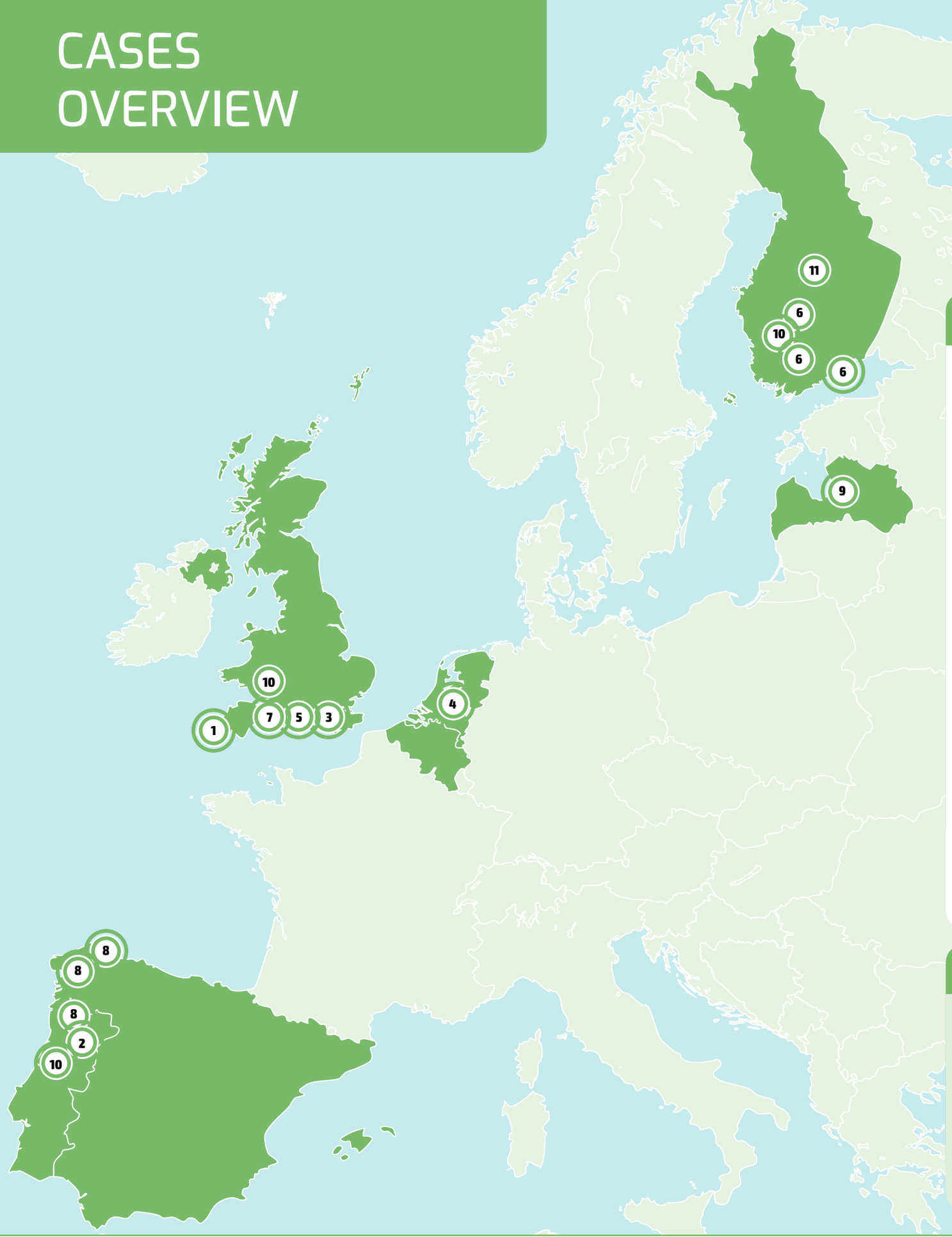
Description
Following initial work using video narratives with individuals to record their personal stories of the village, the 11 participants met together for the first time to view the first cut of the documentary. The documentary was watched by the whole group. The participants were divided into two groups to reflect about the video and the project and about a common sense of place that emerged from the stories.

Impact
The resulting documentary gave the means to share the work with the wider community who had not been able to participate directly. The documentary has subsequently been presented in a number of different settings and countries and has won a tourism film award. Sensed Place – A Documentary

The documentary gave the community a collective sense of pride in their achievement and local self-esteem and confidence increased through their interaction with the visitors interested in the documentary. The community was able to host their own screenings, including folk singing by the local choir.

READ MORE ABOUT THIS CASE (10)
TOURISM: PLACE AMBASSADORS IN PLACE BRANDING AND TOURISM

CASES OVERVIEW



SUSPLACE cases in this guide

1. **ART** - Nurturing Imaginative Leadership: Exploring the role of art
2. **CULTURE** - Innovating local traditions: The Linen Cooperative of Várzea de Calde, Portugal
3. **EDUCATION**: Engaging University Students in Local Sustainability Projects
4. **ENERGY:** Citizen Initiatives: the case of Coöperatie WindpowerNijmegen, The Netherlands
5. **FOOD**: Sustainable Food Citizenship
6. **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**: Green Care practices in Finland: nature-based social entrepreneurship
7. **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**: Sustainable City Regions? – The case of Cardiff Capital Region
8. **RURAL DEVELOPMENT:** Commonlands in Galicia, Spain and Portugal
9. **SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**: Bringing a social enterprise into being: theoretical and practical implications
10. **TOURISM**: Place ambassadors in place branding and tourism
11. **URBAN PLANNING**: A Finnish industrial town re-imagining its future

SUSPLACE cases not featured in this guide

ECO VILLAGES | Siri Peters | Transformative learning in eco-villages

EDUCATION | Malin Backmann | Learning landscapes in higher education

FOOD WASTE | Anastasia Papangelou | Nutrient flows in Brussels' food system

PERMACULTURE | Elgars Felcis | Sustainability transformations through permaculture

TECHNOLOGY | Omer Husain | Disruptive technologies

1

ART

Nurturing Imaginative Leadership: Exploring the role of art

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	semi-structured interviews	focus groups
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Kelli Rose Pearson | Wageningen University
kelli.pearson@gmail.com

previous case | overview cases | next case

Context
This case was not confined to a physical place, but explored the role of the arts in creating spaces of possibility, though often themselves rooted in physical places. It included a series of creative workshops, one of which – Retreat: Imagining Sea Level Rise in Cornwall – is illustrated here.

Retreat was an experimental four-day arts-based residency designed to engage local citizens around the topic of climate change. The residency was conceived as a loosely simulated holding camp in which local people would imaginatively experience and explore life as a climate change refugee. The residency was part of an international research project funded by The Seedbox, an international environmental humanities organization based in Sweden.

Participants
Retreat was co-designed by academic partners and local artists or artist groups, so that it would serve the dual purpose of a research project and immersive artistic experience. In total, 38 people attended Retreat from the Coastal Cornwall region, including 7 families (22 adults and 16 children: with children of all ages between 5 and 12 years and two toddlers).

Purpose
The broad aim of Retreat was to explore the potential of arts and creative practices to engage local citizens in imagining the potential impacts of climate change in Cornwall. The work was guided by the following questions: 1): How do people experience the process of imaginatively exploring the personal and emotional implications of climate change impacts?; 2) how can art-based methods play a role in imaginatively and emotionally engaging with climate change issues?

Insights
- fostering citizen knowledges allows people to engage with climate change in ways that makes sense in their everyday lives
- supporting experiential learning about climate change through resonant experiences enables people to appreciate the implications of climate, both personally and empathetically
- arts- and maker-based approaches can be highly effective in terms of engaging and evoking resonance imaginatively, emotionally, and aesthetically
- arts-based practice has the potential to bring joy and delight to the challenging process of engaging with these issues

2

CULTURE

Innovating local traditions: The Linen Cooperative of Várzea de Calde, Portugal

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	semi-structured interviews	focus groups
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Alessandro Vasta | University of Aveiro
a.vasta@ua.pt

previous case | overview cases | next case

Context
The case takes place in the village of Várzea de Calde, Portugal and revolves around the importance of linen (flax), a local traditional resource. Várzea is located in the interior Centre region of Portugal, which is characterized by a mountainous landscape, small farms, strong depopulation and ageing trends and a history of lack of investment (especially of infrastructure). Várzea is a small rural village with about 230 inhabitants, although it is only about 35 minute drive from Viseu city.

Participants
The Linen Cooperative is made up of about 18 active women of the community. Some (older ones) who already knew the traditions and processes and fewer (younger) ones who have learned. The women in the cooperative are also part of a local singing group that revolves around linen.

The local museum is a very active and a well-networked advocate for the linen tradition and the local Calde Parish and local Viseu Municipality are supportive.

Local NGO Binaural/Nodar, has been undertaking deep ethnographic research in Várzea and developing a book and a documentary to record and disseminate this important aspect of local heritage.

Purpose
The project considers the use of the linen heritage in a characteristic rural village in Portugal as an innovative form of endogenous development rooted in local natural, economic and social resources. The project aims to understand the process of innovation related to a traditional rural resource, how place-based policies can stimulate such practices in rural areas and the role of networks and agency.

Insights
The most important lesson is that the quality of the network in rural areas and the dynamism of the actors involved are crucial for sustainable place-shaping initiatives. The case study also shows the importance of innovating traditions and traditional products and practices in order for them not to die out. In Várzea, this is turning out to be very important as a potential source of economic development in a rural area characterized by depopulation and ageing. In addition, it is important for linking the generations, enabling young people to stay in the locality and for female empowerment.

previous case | overview cases | next case

3

EDUCATION

Engaging University Students in Local Sustainability Projects

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	semi-structured interviews	focus groups
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Alice Taherzadeh | Cardiff University
TaherzadehA@cardiff.ac.uk

Context
Cardiff University is typical of UK universities in that it expresses a desire to incorporate sustainability into its curriculum and teaching and learning practices but coordinated institutional effort is focused on making university operations more sustainable rather than in implementing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This case built on a prior SUSPLACE case on forms of experiential learning for sustainability in Cardiff University (which highlighted the role of extra-curricular activities and influences outside of the lecture theatre), and established a voluntary student education project, Tyfu i Ddysgu (or Growing to Learn), based on the concept of Service-Learning. Service learning makes use of community service to achieve learning outcomes - in this case based on voluntary student-led projects in five local community gardens.

Participants
Key members (or community gardeners) of five community gardens (15). A group of 12 university students, from first-year through to master's level in a range of disciplines.

Purpose
The case sought to understand:
1. how do participants view the opportunities and challenges of the project?
2. what do participants learn or what skills do they develop from taking part in the project?
3. in which respects is the pedagogical approach taken in Tyfu i Ddysgu effective as a Higher Education for Sustainable Development methodology?

Insights
- having richer interactions between community gardeners and students has been beneficial in helping students to develop project ideas and be exposed to different perspectives.
- there has been an unintended benefit of connecting the five community gardens who often do not have time to speak with each other.
- community gardeners are generally impressed with the creativity and enthusiasm of the students but are wary about issues of continuity and feasibility.
- the challenges as project facilitator are the lack of contact time with students due to the project being volunteer-based and trying to get a balance between trusting in students to carry out projects as a learning experience while also providing enough structure and monitoring to ensure that the projects are realised for the gardens

4

ENERGY

Citizen Initiatives: the case of Coöperatie WindpowerNijmegen, The Netherlands

previous case | overview cases | next case

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	**semi-structured interviews**	focus groups
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Diogo Soares da Silva | Wageningen University
diogo.soaresdasilva@wur.nl

Context

Coöperatie WindpowerNijmegen is a citizen-owned energy cooperative based in the city of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Established in 2013, its initial aim was to build Windpark Nijmegen-Betuwe, a wind park composed of four turbines in municipality-owned land along the A15 motorway. It was funded by 2015 and completed in 2016. Initially composed by roughly 30 people, the cooperative has now more than 1400 members. More than 1000 Nijmegen residents have purchased shares that helped fund the wind park. As of 2019, the cooperative is planning the construction of the solar park Zonnepark de Grift, a complex of 17000 solar panels.

Participants

The key-actors taking the lead in this case are the cooperative WindpowerNijmegen and the foundation Stichting Wiek-II. This foundation was developed in parallel with the cooperative, with the mission of development community-minded projects for local initiatives. It is a collaboration between the cooperative, the regional association Gelderland Nature and Environment Federation, and the Nijmegen-based company Izzy Projects.
In addition to bank finance, the municipality of Nijmegen loaned both the initial sum for operational expenses and the land. The regional agency Oost NL took part in the project preparation and co-financed the construction of the windmills. Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy financed the operation through its incentive scheme for sustainable energy production, Stimulering Duurzame Energieproductie (SDE+).

Purpose

This case aims to understand the potential and limitations of citizen initiatives (CIs), the new institutional arrangements between CIs and traditional governmental institutions, and how can CIs contribute to shaping more sustainable places. It also assesses the potential role of CIs in providing public services in scenarios where governments have retreated from certain roles, how governments can play a supportive role in this transition, and its democratic implications and consequences.

Insights

The initiative's success was made possible by a strong institutional support for citizen-led initiatives in general, and for the decentralized production of clean energy in particular, at various levels of government. Support from local residents also allowed the initiative to flourish and finish the construction of the wind park in a short period.
However, the reliance on governmental support schemes and institutional support at various levels can make initiatives fragile to abrupt policy and political changes in the local, regional, and national political landscape.
To read more: Citizen Initiatives in the Post-Welfare State

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FOOD

Sustainable Food Citizenship

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	semi-structured interviews	**focus groups**
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Marie Quinney | KU Leuven
mariequinney@gmail.com

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Context
The case is based in the city of Cardiff, Wales. Participants were locally based individuals who procured their food in a variety of food environments (community gardens, allotments, personal gardens, food markets, supermarkets, local shops, etc.).

Participants
Twenty-five citizens from various backgrounds, genders and ages recorded their experiences of various food environments. The work also engaged a small number of policy-makers and NGO leaders working on food issues.

Purpose
To explore the drivers, strategies and outcomes of more sustainable food citizenship practices. In particular to understand:

- how psychosocial, sociocultural and structural influences help or hinder sustainable food citizenship practices
- which strategy or strategies (exit, voice, loyalty, resignation) food buyers adopt in relation to sustainability issues and why
- whether sustainable food practices belong to a new form of citizenship

Insights
The work revealed a generalised, albeit at times low, level of understanding and care for sustainability issues in food. Nevertheless, food practices do not often reflect this due to structural or psychosocial barriers (time, money, lack of knowledge, lack of social network, lack of community resources, mistrust of institutions, external locus of control).
Health was the predominant driving factors for the procurement of sustainable food and spatial distance of environmental and social problems in the food supply chain caused cognitive dissonance and, often, inaction.

The majority of participants expected businesses and/or governments to fix the problems. Sustainability as a concept was, however, problematic. A divide was felt between supermarket shoppers and 'other' procurers who were perceived as posh/rich/pretentious, thus deeming community-based food citizenship behaviours unattainable or undesirable.

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HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Green Care practices in Finland: nature-based social entrepreneurship

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	semi-structured interviews	focus groups
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Angela Moriggi | LUKE
angela.moriggi@luke.fi

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Context
This case focuses on Green Care practices in Finland. Green Care covers a diverse number of activities carried out in nature to the aim of providing therapeutic, social inclusion, pedagogical and leisure benefits to different target groups.
Green Care practitioners create new concepts and approaches for existing services in urban and rural areas, mobilizing novel cross-sectoral partnerships, and drawing from resources available in places.
The focus of the work was with three practices:
Tikanmäki care farm: located 30 km south of the city of Tampere, near the town of Lempäälä. The farm involves a group of mentally disabled people in raising organic sheep and in farming practices for rehabilitation and social inclusion purposes;
Majvik biodynamic farm: located at the outskirts of Helsinki, in Sipoo municipality, it produces vegetables for schools, restaurants, and markets in the area. The place engages different target groups in farming practices for pedagogical and social inclusion purposes;
Hiking Travel Hit (HIT) nature-tourism company: a family-owned business, based on the shore of Nasijärvi lake, in the city of Tampere. It offers outdoor sports, learning experiences, and leisure activities in nature to a wide range of customers, for well-being, educational and recreational purposes.

Participants
Most of the participatory work was done in collaboration with three communities of practitioners, accounting to roughly 14 people in total. Work also extended to their network of stakeholders (ca. 22 people) – providers, clients, external collaborators, civil servants etc. - that directly or indirectly contribute to the realization of Green Care practices.
During one stage of the fieldwork, one of the target groups of the practices - a community of 10 mentally disabled people living and working in Tikanmäki farm – was directly engaged for a photovoice project specifically designed for them.

Purpose
The case explored the potential of Green Care practices to contribute to place regeneration. Taking a regenerative approach suggests going beyond minimizing harm, and is based on a process of continuous learning with the ecosystem and for its health. This can be seen to be best done at place-based level, understanding specific needs, capacities, and assets of the localities at stake, and based on those, supporting processes of virtuous and inclusive development.
The case explored the transformative capacity of Green Care considering the role of

- social entrepreneurship
- caring as a transformative paradigm
- place regeneration

Insights

1. Green Care practitioners are extremely resourceful individuals, who mobilize and create resources and competences, and shape existing conditions, to realize their aims. Crucial resources are not only social and material, but

continue reading

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HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Green Care practices in Finland: nature-based social entrepreneurship

Methods featured

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More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Angela Moriggi | LUKE
angela.moriggi@luke.fi

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also cultural, ethical, and affective. Place itself is an important resource, enabling or constraining resourcefulness in various ways;

2. Caring – crucial to take responsibility for others and the ecosystem - is a universal value, a way of being in the world based on the recognition of our foundational vulnerability and interdependence. Moreover, caring is a learning process, based on iterative experimentation and constant tinkering to adapt to the needs and capacities of those involved. The process of learning can have transformative potential, enabling both people and places to thrive when certain practices and values are enacted;
3. Participatory action-research (PAR) methods can support thorough and grounded investigations of place-shaping practices, appreciating the complexities of meanings and qualities people attach to places. PAR can trigger critical reflection and capacity building for those involved, leading to fruitful co-production of knowledge and to empowerment of vulnerable groups.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable City Regions?
The case of Cardiff Capital Region

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
▶ place/mind maps	▶ participant observation	▶ workshops
▶ network maps	▶ semi-structured interviews	▶ focus groups
	▶ photovoice	▶ collaborative documentary
	▶ video naratives	
	▶ reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Lorena Axinte | Cardiff University
AxinteL@cardiff.ac.uk

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Context
Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) is a collaboration between ten local authorities in South East Wales, comprising more than half of Wales's population. The area is considered to be less economically developed compared to other parts of the UK and it is struggling with other associated issues: deprivation, poverty, health problems, poor housing conditions, lack of infrastructure, lack of investment, etc. At the same time, the region has a lot of potential in terms of renewable energy production, sustainable tourism, as well as community initiatives for food production or reciprocal help.

This work is set in the wider context of the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act, new legislation that requires all public bodies in Wales to consider their long term impact and to make positive contributions to the environmental, social, cultural and economic wellbeing of future generations.

Participants
The statutory Future Generations office (the Commissioner and her team) whose role is to make sure all public bodies understand and apply the principles of the act;
The 10 local authorities and their public service boards that have conducted a detailed analysis of their areas and their 'local wellbeing plans';
People and communities living in Wales who should be aware of the rights this legislation is granting them and require public bodies to make everything possible to respect them.

Purpose
The project 'Sustainable City Regions?' tries to find pathways through which the economic drivers of city-region development can be balanced by broader priorities of sustainable place making at regional scale.

The questions raised are:
- How do city regional governance arrangements enable or deter CCR from becoming more progressive and regenerative?
- Considering the Well-being Act, in what ways would CCR change by engaging its future generations - essentially today's young people - in its governance structure?
- How could they engage/be engaged and influence the development processes?

Insights
The Well-being Act is very important legislation because it encourages public actors to challenge 'business as usual' and puts the environment, people and culture at the same level as the economy. However, these ideal principles are much more difficult to apply in reality given the power of existing ways of working, institutions and path dependencies. Long-term collaborative processes are needed to change behaviour and approaches of public actors.

continue reading

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable City Regions?
The case of Cardiff Capital Region

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
▶ place/mind maps	▶ participant observation	▶ workshops
▶ network maps	▶ semi-structured interviews	▶ focus groups
	▶ photovoice	▶ collaborative documentary
	▶ video naratives	
	▶ reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Lorena Axinte | Cardiff University
AxinteL@cardiff.ac.uk

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The work also raises issues about the implications for sustainable place-making where the city region authorities, Welsh Government and UK Government are pursuing different metrics, timeframes and governance approaches. This limits the scope for inclusive approaches, including the opportunity to engage young people.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Commonlands in Galicia, Spain and Portugal

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
▶ place/mind maps	participant observation	▶ workshops
network maps	▶ semi-structured interviews	focus groups
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	▶ video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Marta Nieto Romero | University of Aveiro
marta.nietor@gmail.com

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Context
North Portugal and Galicia have conserved vast areas of common lands, a property regime based on the collective use and benefit of resources that dates from Middle Ages. Today, owners are the people that use the territory; they are co-owners only when they live in the parish, and stop being co-owners if they move away. This property cannot be divided, nor inherited or attachable. Galicia has 25% under a legalised common land regime (referred as to Montes Vecinales en Man Común; Law 13/1989) and Portugal has 10 %, mostly concentrated at North Portugal (referred as to Baldios; Law 158/2017). Yet, during last century the links between communities and common lands had eroded and common lands potential for building more sustainable community economies is not realised.
This case studies how communities restarted commoning and its impacts.
Case 1. Teis is a parish and a neighbourhood of the city of Vigo. Since 1990 the community decided to centre their activity on forest regeneration with native species.
Case 2. O Carballo commonland is situated in Central Galicia, in the municipality of Friol, located at Lugo province. Since 2007, the community decided to break the co-management agreement with the state and manage independently their common land
Case 3. Ansiães commonland is situated in Porto District, and sits on Maraão Mountains. It was managed by the Forest services of the state until 2016, when the community decided to break the co-management agreement with the government. This work is at an early stage.

Participants
Case 1. The governing board of the commonland (3 persons), the other commoners (38) and the management on the ground, undertaken by a professional group (one commoner and the others hired person).
Case 2. The president and the secretary of the commonland (2 persons), other commoners (50)and a group of commoners who constitute a group of volunteers (10) who participate on collective activities on the ground.

Purpose
The main **objective** of the case was to explore how commoning occurs in forested common lands, its impacts on human-forest relations and how it can be promoted through policy and research.
Specifically the work considered:

- how theory on commons and commoning can inform sustainable transformations;
- which assemblages of commoning practices (if any) change relations between the community and forest;
- conflicts and mismatches between policies regulating forest and common lands and their implementation and the interests and ways-of-doing of the commoning-communities;

continue reading

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Commonlands in Galicia, Spain and Portugal

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	semi-structured interviews	focus groups
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	video naratives	
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More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Marta Nieto Romero | University of Aveiro
marta.nietor@gmail.com

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- how storytelling about a place - expressed through visual methods- can promote commoning via challenging the way people understand their communities and their place.

Insights

Some preliminary results with respect to what approaches were key to create and maintain a collective community management of forests are the following:

- that change must be slow to not generate too much conflict so the initiative collapses, some path dependencies exist and compromises must be made.
- Informal communication is key and more effective than the general assemblies.
- Involving external people (out of the "legal" community) is often necessary to have technical support, or moral support (energy to continue)
- community social events in forests are key events for community building and to connect people to forests.

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SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Bringing a social enterprise into being: theoretical and practical implications

Photo by BlindArt

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	semi-structured interviews	focus groups
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Andris Šuvajevs | Latvia University
andris.suvajevs@gmail.com

previous case | overview cases | next case

Context
The case took place in a village of blind people – a secluded area in Riga, Latvia where most blind people live, work, rehab, and socialise. The case analysed the way the social enterprise 'BlindArt' initiated a new project whereby they employed four sightless women in the creation of design objects. It was a particularly suitable time to research the process since the support for social entrepreneurship was finally receiving notable State support and it was a unique opportunity to pay attention to the daily challenges - practical, administrative and strategic - within the enterprise, as well as the relations the enterprise cultivated with the general public and the blind community as a whole.

Participants
Over the course of the year, the case engaged numerous people that were directly or indirectly related to the project, including working closely with the director of the enterprise and another two people in the office on a daily basis, together with the four sightless women who were the main actors in the project. There were discussions with 10-20 other people in the blind community and interviews with experts in the Ministry of Welfare and the State financial institution "Altum".

Purpose
The case looked to understand the nature, role and context for social enterprise, including its origins and the benefits of social enterprise for well-being. The case also considered the shifting policy landscape and the implications of the changing roles of State and social actors, with the shift to privatisation of delivery of welfare, driven by 'austerity'.

Insights
- the sightless women felt their quality of life had decidedly improved: having access to stable employment increased their sense of independence, provided an opportunity to assume commitments, and contributed to their sense of self.
- the current regulation of social enterprises in Latvia is still unfriendly to entrepreneurs. The tax burden is enormous which prevents them from developing further.
- social entrepreneurship will be challenging in any environment where the population is generally poor. This forces the social enterprises to re-orient their production toward export, which is a challenge in itself.
- there is little awareness and understanding of the structural and historical reasons for the emergence of social economy in Latvia - the politics of austerity are the main drivers behind it.

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TOURISM

Place ambassadors in place branding and tourism

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	semi-structured interviews	**focus groups**
	photovoice	**collaborative documentary**
	video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
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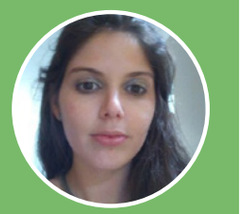

Researcher
Cátia Rebelo | Cardiff University
cerqueira.rebelo@gmail.com

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Context
One case study is in Carvalhal de Vermilhas, Portugal and another in Brecon Beacons National Park, Wales.
Carvalhal de Vermilhas is a rural village of 200 inhabitants in the interior of Portugal. The main issues are depopulation, ageing and lack of employment to allow people to stay or, even, attract new people. The place has potential to develop sustainable practices of tourism.
Brecon Beacons is one of the three National Parks of Wales. Although in a better position than the small village in Portugal, the place also suffers from the same issues: depopulation, ageing, and lack of jobs to maintain young people. Being a National Park, tourism is one of its main activities. The park developed a Place Ambassador scheme, and that was the base to develop the present study.

Participants
Carvalhal de Vermilhas: Binaural/Nodar (local NGO), residents (11 participants) from Carvalhal de Vermilhas, local authorities.
Brecon Beacons: National Park Authority, residents (10 participants) from Langorse and Bwlch, and Place Ambassadors (people who did the Ambassador scheme provided by the BBNP Authority).

Purpose
The case explored:
- whether more collaborative and inclusive strategies of developing place branding, which capture local sense of place, support more socially-responsible and relevant forms of tourism development and marketing
- the role of 'Place ambassadors' (formal and informal) in the promotion of sustainable tourism and sustainable places
- the use of local video narratives, developed with participants and combined into short documentary presentations

Insights
The whole engagement project and the associated co-produced documentaries resulted in:
- place narratives that are rooted in local sentiment and knowledge rather than being generic
- shared power over the narratives, building pride and confidence for local participants to take collective action for their place
- strong video narratives that engage others through conveying a genuine sense of place

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URBAN PLANNING

A Finnish industrial town re-imagining its future

Methods featured

MAPPING	GIVING VOICE	BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
place/mind maps	participant observation	workshops
network maps	semi-structured interviews	focus groups
	photovoice	collaborative documentary
	video naratives	
	reflective journals	

More information
www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Researcher
Sara Grenni | LUKE
sara.grenni@luke.fi

previous case | overview cases | next case

Context
Mänttä is a small Finnish town located about 100 km northeast of Tampere. Mänttä has a rich industrial history linked to the Serlachius family, who founded the paper mill – still operating and employing a significant portion of the population. While building an industrial success, the Serlachius family also acted as local patrons, and brought art and culture to the town, building an art collection that became a foundation and local museum of national standing. Mänttä is also characterised by a beautiful landscape, with an abundance of nature, forest, and lakes. The municipality of Mänttä-Vilppula has plans to improve Mänttä's town centre and to promote the cultural and artistic heritage of Mänttä.

Participants
The case was carried out in informal partnership with the planning office of the municipality of Mänttä-Vilppula that expressed an interest in gaining knowledge on local cultural narratives. The research was carried out independently from the progress of the municipal plan and sought to create a dialogue with town residents on their visions and desires for the future, rooted in their sense of place and values.

Purpose
The project investigated the role played by sense of place and place values in shaping narratives of change and transformation towards sustainability. Initially, the main question guiding the study was: Are there place meanings and values that are related to more sustainable visions of the future? As the project progressed, though, the questions evolved to include focus more on the 'how': How to explore collective place meanings and values? How to include them in open discussions on the future of places?

Insights
- the use of an appreciative inquiry approach supported positive feelings among participants that resulted in a collaborative atmosphere. It also facilitated a re-appreciation of assets that are often overlooked or taken for granted, leading some participants to change their perception about Mänttä in a positive way.
- the use of arts-based methods proved useful as a tool to bring meanings of place and underlying values to the fore. However, it is yet unclear how successful they were in detaching participants from dominant narratives, and letting innovative ideas emerge.

Colophon

Editors: Cardiff University | Matthew Quinn
Wageningen University and Research | Anke de Vrieze

Contributors: Alessandro Vasta, Alice Taherzadeh, Andris Šuvajevs, Angela Moriggi, Cátia Cerqueira Rebelo, Diogo Soares da Silva, Kelli Rose Pearson, Lorena Felicia Axinte, Marie Quinney, Marta Nieto Romero, Sara Grenni

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More information:

If you want to know more about SUSPLACE or place-based working, check the project website:

www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

Or contact:

Matthew Quinn, Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Cardiff University, QuinnMJ1@cardiff.ac.uk

Anke de Vrieze, daily coordinator SUSPLACE at Wageningen University and Research, anke.devrieze@wur.nl

Dirk Roep, project coordinator SUSPLACE at Wageningen University and Research, dirk.roep@wur.nl

SUSPLACE
Sustainable Place Shaping

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