



Co-creative social service innovation in rural areas

Fringe Workshop at the Rural Vision Week, 25 March 2021

Organised by the SEMPRE Accelerators project

Diaconie of Schleswig-Holstein & REM Consult, Germany

SEMPRE und SEMPRE Accelerators - the basic idea

- In rural areas, it becomes increasingly difficult to make social services available to everyone
- Marginalised groups are seen (and see themselves) primarily as users of social services.



But they can become social innovators themselves...

... with the right support and by being empowered!

SEMPRE: From local needs to micro projects



In each of the rural partner regions, the local partners worked with social service users – i.e. members of a specific marginalised group such as single parents, migrants, people with disabilities.

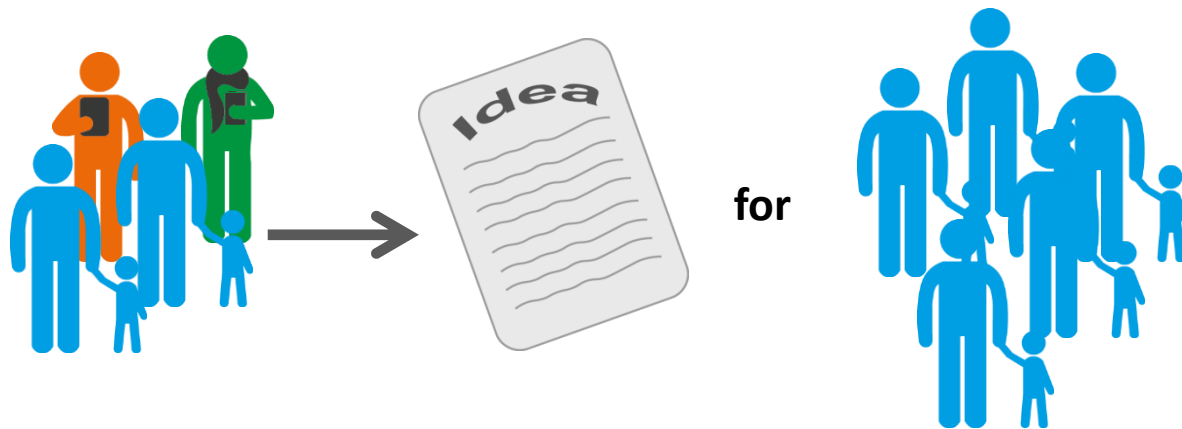
A facilitator brought together members of this group and organised needs assessment, using participatory methods such as kitchen talks or future workshops

The facilitator also invited local stakeholders, such as the social services department of the municipality, the job centre, or NGOs to join a „Local Empowerment Network“.



SEMPRE: From local needs to micro projects

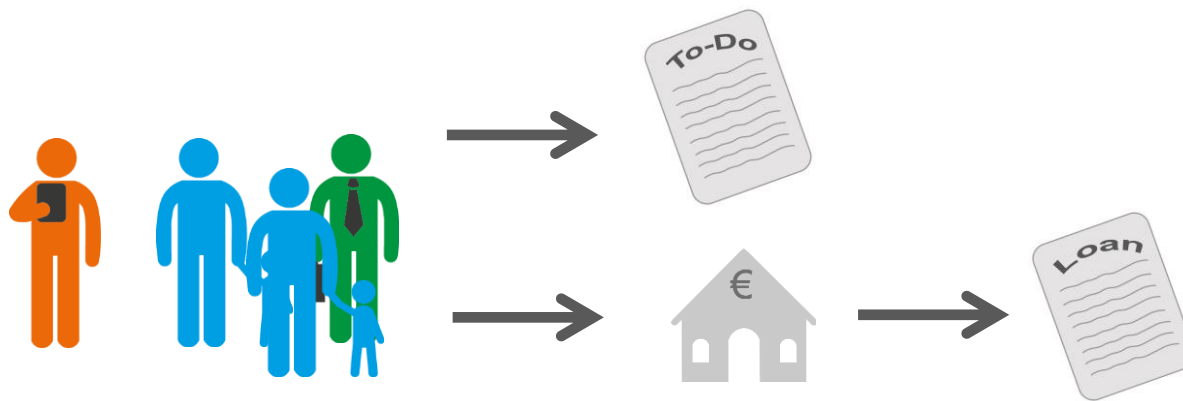
The needs assessment resulted in many ideas for new or missing social services in the area. Some of the ideas were immediately taken up by the established social service providers.



In other cases, the service users, together with local social service providers, developed an idea into a micro project.

SEMPRE: From local needs to micro projects

The facilitator organised assistance for the micro project – in terms of coaching, training or management support – to enable them to become self-sustaining and independent.



The micro projects did not receive direct financing. Instead, our approach was to empower the service users to set up working structures and acquire financing from other sources.

Micro project examples

- A tailor cooperative founded by migrants together with an entrepreneur in Norrbotten, Sweden
- A coffee shop that offers employment and space for activities in Vidzeme, Latvia
- An website run for and by single parents in Dithmarschen, Germany
- An empty church that turned into a self-organised community centre in Harkujärve, Estonia

More about all of our micro projects:
<https://www.sempre-project.eu/micro-projects>



From micro projects to inclusive social start-ups

- Co-creation process: Project partners started the initiatives, but the idea was to leave ownership of the micro projects to the service users
- Aim: Micro projects develop into self-sustaining initiatives and continue to exist after the project
- Extension stage project **SEMPRE Accelerators**: continuing support to turn micro projects into inclusive social start-ups
- „Accelerator Teams“ set up around the micro projects

The SEMPRES Outputs – new editions online soon!



www.sempre-project.eu/results

Some conclusions

- It's definitely worth the effort, especially in rural areas!
- Social service providers must walk the line between effectively supporting micro projects/service users, but also letting them take ownership of the micro project
- Established social service providers should reflect on their working methods and open up for new approaches
- There is a missing link between social work and innovation/entrepreneurship support in rural areas

Find out more!



The screenshot shows the homepage of the SEMPRE Accelerators website. At the top, there are logos for Interreg Baltic Sea Region, the European Union, and SEMPRE Accelerators. Below the logos is a navigation menu with a home icon and links for 'ABOUT SEMPRE ACCELERATORS', 'NEWS', 'SOCIAL START-UP BIOGRAPHIES', and 'RESULTS & DOWNLOADS'. The main content area features a large image of two young women laughing. Below the image is a 'WELCOME TO SEMPRE ACCELERATORS' section with introductory text and a list of resources. To the right, there is a 'OUR LATEST NEWS' section with a 'View all' button and a grid of news images. Below the news grid is a featured article titled 'Online Seminar: From "micro projects" to "inclusive social start-...'.

WELCOME TO SEMPRE ACCELERATORS

You may be familiar with the SEMPRE brand: from 2016 to 2019, we were jointly exploring innovative forms of social service delivery in rural areas, based on the idea of empowering service users. Now it is time to lift our project to the next level: **SEMPRE becomes SEMPRE Accelerators**.

The primary objective of our new project is to “accelerate” the most promising social initiatives co-created during the preceding project. Until 2021, SEMPRE Accelerators empowers providers and users of social services to co-develop their initiatives into self-sustained social start-ups. To learn more about our project, these are the most important resources:

- Our [micro project biographies](#) show the progress of our micro projects and their paths towards becoming social start-ups.
- Basic concepts and principles of SEMPRE Accelerators are explained [here](#).
- Explore the latest news from the project and insights from other social innovation stakeholders on our [Twitter Feed](#).

OUR LATEST NEWS [View all](#)

Online Seminar: From “micro projects” to “inclusive social start-...

www.sempre-accelerators.eu

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