



Practicing User Involvement

An Organisational Roadmap For Social Service Providers

OVERVIEW

Service providers in rural areas face many challenges.



Step 1 Explore empowerment

Empowerment and service user involvement help address current challenges in rural areas!



Step 2 Kick-start the idea

It's important to create an agreement with staff and stakeholders!

The project partners of SEMPRE brought together social service providers and service users.

Together they assessed life situations and social service needs. Ideas for social services were developed and micro projects were created in which the service users played an active role. The SEMPRE partners consulted and supported the micro projects to help make them self-sustaining.

SEMPRE aims to equip social service providers in rural areas of the Baltic Sea Region with tools for service innovation. SEMPRE promotes involvement of service users - namely members of disadvantaged groups - in the development and delivery of social services.

The Roadmap describes ...

- how user-driven service development can be implemented in the organisational practice of social service providers – be it public, private or third sector actors.
- practical experiences of social service providers that involved their users in the design of new offers or the review of an existing offer.

Long distances, lack of qualified workforce and budget cuts – these are common experiences of organisations providing social services to vulnerable groups in rural areas that face a high risk of social exclusion.

Supporting these people in asserting control over factors that affect their lives helps build social capital and provide high quality social services in rural areas, both now and in the future.



The Roadmap describes ...

- the essential aspects of empowerment at an individual, organisational and societal level.
- the emancipatory effect of empowerment and participation in the life situations of the service users.
- how action learning helps to build capacity for user involvement in your organisation.



The Roadmap describes ...

- how to present and communicate the empowerment concept in your organisation.
- which important aspects should be discussed with your staff.
- how you can test the feasibility of user involvement using scenarios.
- which decisions you should take before you start to implement a pilot.

Micro project Example 1:

The Tailor Cooperative in Norrbotten, Sweden



Tailor Cooperative

In Norrbotten County SEMPRE found that migrants lacked job opportunities in which they could use their skills.

SEMPRE helped a group of migrants create a cooperative producing textiles, e.g. fruit bags, that are supplied to local supermarkets.

The SEMPRE partner involved local service providers and supported the cooperative in business planning and entrepreneurial skills.

SEMPRE Partner: Coompanion Norrbotten

The Organisational Roadmap ...

- addresses leaders of social service providers.
- encourages you, as a leader, to tap into the wealth of resources which the SEMPRE project has collected.

In the Roadmap you find ...

- Step 1** • five steps which you, as a social service provider, can use to find the way to increased service user participation.
- Step 2**
- Step 3** • descriptions of helpful documents and templates.
- Step 4** • handouts, templates and tools in the appendix for you and your staff to use.
- Step 5**

In the Roadmap you find ...

- a synopsis of the empowerment concept that you can use to explain to your staff what you would like to work on.
- a brief introduction to "action learning" as a guiding principle.
- references to external literature for more information on empowerment.

In the Roadmap you find ...

- a concept for a team-engaging workshop that you can conduct with your staff to discuss the empowerment approach.
- tools for developing a concept for a pilot project together with your staff.
- hints on how to define objectives and success factors and how to identify key stakeholders.

The "Wirkstatt"

In the district of Plön, the SEMPRE partner carried out a "future workshop" with long-term unemployed people.

One result was the establishment of the WIRKstatt: a place to facilitate discussion between service users and social providers.

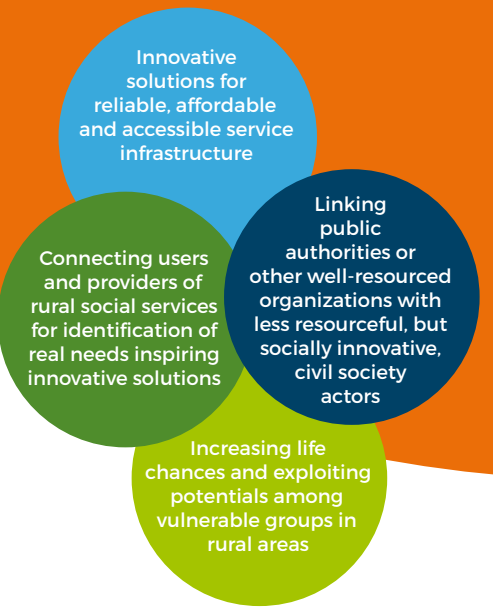
The service users learn to articulate their needs and interests and thus actively support their interests in the region.

SEMPRE Partner: Kirchlicher Dienst in der Arbeitswelt der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Norddeutschland

Micro project Example 2:

The WIRKstatt in the district of Plön, Germany





Source: Prof. Malin Lindberg, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden



Step 3 Identify a pilot

Empowering service users requires empowered staff. Support your staff in a spirit of partnership!



Step 4 Assess the outcomes

You and your team will learn much. Reflect and discuss your experiences!



Step 5 Keep the momentum

Great job! Spread the word and do more!

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You will find more results of the SEMPRE project at: www.sempre-project.eu/results

The Empowerment Handbook guides social service providers in the practical application of involving users in service design.

The Guidebook for Empowerment Training helps you build the empowerment competence of your staff.

The Policy Recommendations aim at a reliable, affordable and accessible service infrastructure in rural areas.



The Roadmap describes ...

- how leaders, together with their staff, can develop a pilot project for service user involvement.
- important aspects of supportive leadership.
- steps towards implementing a pilot project based on the "action learning" approach.



The Roadmap describes ...

- different levels of evaluation.
- the link between evaluation and the principles of empowerment.
- questions to ask when assessing the outcomes.

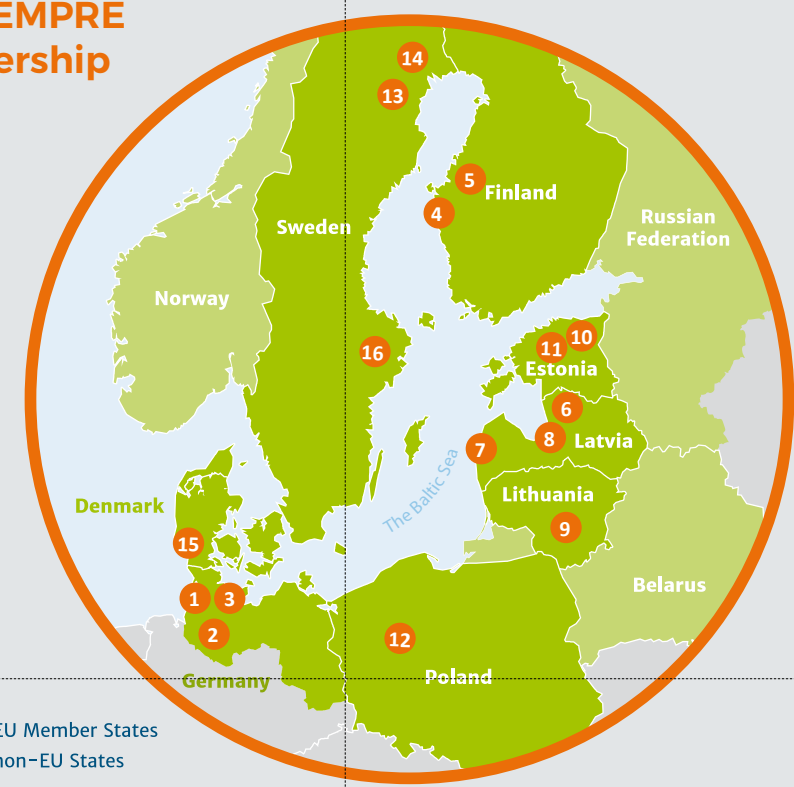


The Roadmap describes ...

- the challenge of holding onto the excitement:

It is the nature of new ideas that they are both exciting and scary. There are ways to cope with the concerns that come with new ideas and to keep the momentum going.
- how to make your project sustainable.

The SEMPRE Partnership



■ EU Member States
■ non-EU States

- 1 Diaconie of Schleswig-Holstein (DE)
- 2 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany (DE)
- 3 Academy of Economics Schleswig-Holstein (DE)
- 4 Novia University of Applied Sciences (FI)
- 5 Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius (FI)
- 6 Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (LV)
- 7 Diaconal Centre Liepaja (LV)
- 8 University of Latvia (LV)
- 9 Lutheran Diaconia (LT)
- 10 Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EE)
- 11 Foundation for Social Action (EE)
- 12 The Foundation for Lifelong Learning PERITIA (PL)
- 13 Coompanion Norrbotten (SE)
- 14 Sunderby Folk High School (SE)
- 15 University College South Denmark (DK)
- 16 Nordregio (SE)

This is a pocket version of the Organisational Roadmap. You will find the full version as well as valuable templates, tools and resources on the SEMPRE project website:



www.sempre-project.eu/roadmap

In the Roadmap you find ...

- practical recommendations for cooperative leadership and organisational management.
- hints on how to organise and manage the pilot process.
- links to the SEMPRE Empowerment Handbook and Guidebook for Empowerment Training that provide more in-depth advice for you and your staff to develop empowerment as an attitude and use it as a method.

In the Roadmap you find ...

- proposals for tools for assessing outcomes of your pilot, such as "After Action Review", "Appreciate Inquiry" and more.

»After all the messages from service users and social service providers, we drew a conclusion that it is vital to have users participating in all the stages of planning and providing services.«

Kati Turtiainen, University of Jyväskylä, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, Finland

In the Roadmap you find ...

- a number of strategies that will help you and your organisation continue to innovate and strengthen your social services.

We wish you great success! Please feel free to contact us.

www.sempre-project.eu