

The Strategic Planning workshop, organized from 14 till 18 October 2018 in Anjalankoski, Finland was the last part of the [Branching out: \(re\)connecting ideas project](#), that was happening throughout the whole year of 2018. From the preparation meeting in April until the last meeting in October, the Branching out project was flourishing and it gave opportunities to people in Europe to join different activities and share their experiences, knowledge and outcomes when it comes to social inclusion of diverse groups in their local community.



Alongside with Exchange Platform Meeting (EPM), an annual SCI event, Branching out team gathered in Finland and dedicated their time to evaluate the project, discussing the main challenges, suggesting future improvements and approaches, and spreading the word about the project results to the bigger SCI network.

## 1. EVALUATION

### Highlights from the evaluation of Local activities (Activity 2 of the Work Plan)

#### Promotion

- Mostly happened through social media (Facebook, Instagram) - fast and useful.
- Yet mouth-to-mouth promotion works as well: e.g. CVS Bulgaria - on first event they told people about the second.

#### Participants list

- We managed to gather many attendees of our local events (more than estimated), yet we are struggling in gathering signatures of all, especially if an event is happening outdoors. Point this out to next projects to organizers to prepare better for it - as we need the signatures as a proof to the donors.

## Project funding

- How to approach local municipality/project to support international activities? Maybe something to think about for next year.

## Meeting with local organizations

- There was not always a follow up/meeting after the event. The reflection mostly happened spontaneously/immediately after the project they would start planning the next event.
- How to secure a follow up?

## Local Activities evaluation forms

*19 activities were initiated from the people that participated in Community forum in June*

- Community forum participation gave focus and structure to the organization of the event, but it was not the crucial factor (Georg)

*17 activities had partly new connections/partner organizations*

*15 groups said they involved the target group in the organization of the event*

- Colours of a Journey, cooking events, 3 Human Libraries
- Not shared on Community forum, but happened on Local Activities: Storytelling through art, workcamps

*15 events used methodologies which were shared on the Community Forum*

*10 groups said they included the local community*

*Discussable: What is local community for organizers? How they interpret it?*

## How do we motivate/inspire new groups to be part of international activities?

Part of discussion in other groups on EPM.

## Organizers of local activities

- Involvement of prep team members from different countries had a crucial role for Local Activities and number of participants in the Community forum
- Personal contact of local organizers to local partners and target group was fundamental to realize the scale of Local Activities
- Certain deadlines were not always respected from the branches (reporting, not saying on time what their plans are)
- Improvement for future projects: Line out a communication strategy for the project team including organizing groups to improve the visibility in Social Media
- Proposal to avoid misunderstandings: fund maximum 2 events, if the reporting goes fine we agree to fund more than that (if possible)

## Involving refugees/asylum seekers in workcamps and activities

- It depends on the country and the general situation in reception centers/refugee camps. The local context should be taken into consideration.

## Interesting lessons learnt throughout Branching out: (re)connecting ideas

While evaluating our project we came to few surprising tips, conclusions and information while looking at the evaluation forms of our activities: might be useful for you too, so continue reading!

- **The more you share, the more you have:** during the [Community Forum](#) that took place in June in Antwerp, most of the people shared their projects and best practices with the rest of the group. Many of these best practices were later on implemented by different SCI branches in the next stage of the project – Local Activities.
- **Tip from CVS Bulgaria:** provide a space for children on your events! That way you will attract more crowd - parents will be more willing to attend and start a conversation with other people.
- **Mouth-to-mouth promotion does work:** Informing people about your activities and events just by telling them what and where it's happening can still bring people to your activities. It doesn't always have to be through Social Media - sometimes more personal contact can do a lot!



Branching Out Team is branching out... everywhere, all the time :)

## 2. SHARING THE RESULTS & BEST PRACTICES

### TOUR DE BRANCHING OUT: THE EXHIBITION

The Branching out team wanted to share the outcomes of the project visually, and there is no better way to do it than an exhibition!



Visual presentation of the project and its results: Exhibition of photos from [local activities](#) and first hand stories broad by local organizers from Bulgaria, Finland and Germany, Diverse Communities: Visual Method Cards overview and a photo exhibition of people passing through the Balkan Route - in short: a full impression was given to participants of EPM when it comes to Branching out project and what was done so far. Team members were there to answer specific questions; a photo booth was set up to announce a new topic SCI will focus on next year, with a tiny bit of help of hashtags focusing on gender issues... and much more.



And besides that, project' experiences and lessons were presented to and evaluated together with the Strategic Plan Team of SCI to transform the project into a strategic approach improving SCI's practices to engage refugees and migrants into volunteering opportunities.

## WORKSHOPS

The Branching out team also reached out to EPM crowd by taking an active role in facilitating several topical workshops that were linked with the 3 main objectives of our meeting.

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Objective 1: **Gauge the success of the tools/structures** already used within SCI and partners for the movement and identify gaps

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### **Inclusion of asylum seekers in volunteering activities**

A special focus was laid on the Local Activities organized in the framework of the WP by **KVT Finland**, as we had a chance to invite co-leaders with migrant background for a panel discussion and sharing their experience in general.



**Ideas Forum: How can we encourage and involve refugees/asylum seekers in volunteer activities**, organized as a World Café focusing on the following themes: *Challenges*: Including refugees in voluntary work); *Future of the Refugee Fund* (SCI's financial structure to support small projects including refugees); *Local Partner(s)* for actions; *How to get started* (involving refugees into volunteer activities).



### **Inspiration for Diverse Communities: Visual Method Cards** (cards [here](#), instructions [here](#))

A practical workshop on how to use the newly developed interactive and easy-to-use tool that can help when looking for ways to cherish diversity and to encourage intercultural dialogue in a local community or during international activity. The reactions were very positive!

## IDEAS FORUM: WORLD CAFÉ DISCUSSION TABLES (NOTES)

### CHALLENGES: INCLUDING REFUGEES IN VOLUNTARY WORK

#### Technical difficulties

Keeping a donor suited participant list  
Implementation of GDPR

#### Visibility

Documentation of activities  
Good EPK (Electronic press kit, preferably video)

#### How to engage more branches?

Volunteer exchange between branches  
bi-/multilateral fundraising cooperation & implementation of project

#### Motivation

Lacking awareness of branch members  
→ “Connecting the dots”:  
\*Gathering necessary knowledge  
\*Seeing the big and the small picture

Topic is not present in mainstream media anymore

#### Motivation in the society:

\*Combating representation, public opinion and official policy  
\*Combating racism in society/Political education

#### The role of the Branch

Being aware of own potential and limits  
Know your local network  
Forward people in need to appropriate local partners

### REFUGEE FUND

#### SCI Branches

Certain SCI branches are without capacity to follow grants for such small projects or does not know how to do projects with refugees: this can be possibly bridged by creating **BILATERAL PROJECTS** with other, more experienced SCI branches (more experienced branch to be kind of a mentorship support for the other branch)

**Idea:** email the experienced branches about this idea to see what they think about it (?)  
Many SCI branches on the meeting were not aware of the existence of the Refugee Fund: due to constant change of staff members they did not transfer certain knowledge including the RF

#### Future of the Refugee Fund

##### Sources of funding

- SCI Branches contributions
- External donations (fundraising campaign)

**Mercator (Switzerland)** – was financing the Building Bridges toolkit project; might be useful to contact them as they might be happy to see the Toolkit methods are used and are part of Refugee Fund projects.

## Communication & Visibility

Having a personal contact with a person within the SCI branch

Emails: some people said it's useful, some said it is not – but most of the people agreed there are too many emails and sometimes information gets lost

Social media - must be beautiful, nice colours :)

Training proposal: how to be more inclusive in communication? – this training was already proposed on EPM by MIDI working group and a girl from SCI Catalonia proposed the same idea on our workshop

## Fundraising campaign:

create a fundraising page; motivate people to contribute (what is in there for them? – hand out/send small presents depends on the amount they donate; a badge, a notebook, a sticker etc.

## LOCAL PARTNERS (HOW TO IDENTIFY GOOD PARTNERSHIPS AND HOW TACKLE CHALLENGES)

**Identification:** How do you identify a potential partner for a local project?

- Filling the gap/tackles need(s)
- Established in the field
- Already connected to target group
- Connected to other organizations/networks
- Sharing **differences**
- Access to visibility

To find a **common sustainable approach** it is needed...:

- \*Learn from partner's experience
- \*Commitment to long term partnership

To find a **complementary partnership:**

Ask yourself "*what does the partner need and what can I provide?*"!

Obstacles that need to be tackled starting a new cooperation:

\***Shared values:** Working in good atmosphere

\*Not collaborating for reputation

Not falling for a trend

Limited resources

Clear responsibilities

Communication

Insight into partner (values and approach)

## Finding compromises

Diverse ideas that come together

## Suggestions:

Take your time

Balance the partnership to work on eye level

Listen to the network

Define clear responsibilities, accountabilities and support in partnership

Clear goals

Find a **common mission and vision**

Know your **needs!**

Be creative and communicative

## HOW TO GET STARTED (INVOLVING REFUGEES INTO VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES)

### Finding partners

Starting networking with no money

\*Arts and culture: music, dance, street party

\*Sports: playing football with local refugees, etc.

\*Language exchange: starting a language cafe in local community

### Building trust

Finding out about the needs and interests of the community

### Finding volunteers

Finding people that will later become partners

### Finding resources: people to work, funding

Starting a new project requires people with skills and knowledge about the topic.

Starting a new project requires funding.

### Finding participants

Offering placement to workcamps - how to find participants?

\*networking with Reception centers / NGO's

Offering the opportunity to be a camp leader

\*individual situation / interest

\*Refugee situation in the surrounding society

Is it easier to commit to a short activity or a workcamp?

\*short activities are easier to commit to for many

\*Chance to test the responsibility

### Keeping up the work

Forming guidelines to all parties

\*organizer

\*Camp hosts

\*Camp leaders



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Objective 2: **Analyze and discuss different approaches** currently being used within the movement for addressing the topic of refugees and migration:

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Presented initiatives:

**OpenDoors + Artemisszio Hungary**

Artistic and community place, creative hub in Hungary; later 2018 ranked the first for the UNHCR Innovation Award, watch their [video](#)

- for social inclusion of refugees **through arts**
- Training for refugees for creative tools
- Video

**SCI Switzerland**

- Activities for kids (database for games)
- Workcamp for asylum-seeking children: Leisure activities for a week in a mountain cottage, inclusion of older kids who then also become camp leaders
- Workcamp going to asylum center
- Also inclusion of adult refugees. Now difficult due to language/integration course requirements for refugees
  
- Visibility in media: especially **reaching out to local newspapers and radio stations**

**TheaterFlucht:** Theater camp and activities involving asylum seekers in Switzerland; **Theater camp: incentive for local kids and refugee kids to join together**

**SCI Hellas**

EVS in a squat

Unofficial work with refugees: English lessons, Theater workshops, Workcamp **Together Stronger** (2018)(2 months!) in Athens together with different refugee communities, Training of volunteers(!), Planning activities together(sports), Music workshop, Dari and English lessons, Dance as common language :, Excursions to nature(seaside+forest), Handcrafting, Aghani community is willing to host EVS volunteers

Methods: Human library

Activities organized together with the [Greek Forum of Refugees](#) in Greece;





# STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP: REPORT

## ***SCI Italy***

[Tutti Inclusi Initiative](#): Inclusion of volunteers with migrant backgrounds to workcamps

Many different workcamps with migratory participation: Environmental, Festival organization ([No Border Festival](#))

## ***CVS Bulgaria***

Volunteer Academy - [The Refugee Project](#): Local volunteers for workshops at asylum centers in Sofia, Mostly kids, Long term projects

[Tolerance Project](#) (with schools)

Solidarity Festival

Employment for inclusion (Recruiting event for refugees)

[IntegraTrain](#) (Integration Workshops in centres)

### Best practice - summary

#### **Promotion**

Extensive documentation, for example EPK (Electronic Press Kit) in the form of videos presenting the activities

#### **Methods**

- Music, Theatre, Dancing & Cooking workshops
- Games, especially for children
- Festival Organisation
- Excursions
- Language lessons
- handcrafting
- Physical work, for example farm work, collecting trash, forest cultivation



SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL



europäische youth foundation  
fonds européen pour la jeunesse



COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## 3. PLANNING THE FUTURE

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**Objective 3: To create recommendations for the future Strategic plan, effective from 2019-22**

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**Vision and strategy in the field of migration and diversity - recommendations for the new strategic plan**



### Common topics

- Work with refugees/groups with difficulties, Youth empowerment
- Strong local groups, local vols, more volunteers
- Cooperate more with different groups in society, vols from other continents
- Awareness raising and raising integration
- To be a proposition against right wing movement in Europe
- Working on active and local citizenship
- Peace education
- Diversity of projects and participants - Stress on project against xenophobia

### Remarks

- Integrate refugees, to reach them to get their trust, more careful sensitive approach
- Find global common topics: environment, prevention (conflicts), global integration, peace building, cultural diversity, inclusion + time to work on the topics (resources)
- Keep in mind the different context
- Diversity and quantity
- A prerequisite for all the mentioned above is a collaborative thinking as a method
- By enforcing our volunteerism we are partially eradicating extremism and exclusion

## Common trends

### Challenges

- Mentality, open minded
- Lack of HR, staff, time
- Funding: limited, dependent, and dependency on people
- Unstable government

### Helping factors

- Collaboration with others, partnerships (local+international)
- Committed volunteers
- Support from local communities
- Awareness raising
- Common approach within CCIVS network



## Building bridges campaign - together or apart?

Discussing the current Building bridges campaign of SCI, its opportunities and future; first discussion happened already at the Community Forum, 2nd discussion here.

**Aim of the workshop:** to engage people from different SCI branches into discussion on future of Building Bridges. Pointing out and listing the needs of their branches related to topic of refugees and asylum seekers. Thinking forward with the campaign - what is the next logical step? Is there still a need to work on this topic in SCI and how?

**Introduction:** BB campaign in history and as it is now (important data from 2016/2017/2018 listed on flipchart: how many RF projects happened, how many BB labelled workcamps, how many international projects etc)

Giving out flipcharts to participants with a title "Building Bridges ... what if ... " and encouraging them to think of BB as a future working group.

- o What would be the objectives of this WG?
- o Which resources they would need?
- o How the team would look like - task division?
- o Remarks/hopes and dreams

So, if participants of the workshop would be a BB working group they would have...

## **Objectives:**

*To show the civil society that refugees are not dangerous part of the community*

**Rephrasing:** raise awareness about the conditions and refugees and asylum seekers in the local context

*Connect communities with migrants in order to fight xenophobia and exclusion*

**Rephrasing:** Work on social inclusion and lean towards creating more inclusive and peaceful society

*Collaboration with SCI community (long term)*

**Rephrasing:** Creating new connections and enhancing the existing ones within SCI community working on the topic of refugees and asylum seekers

**Potential risk:** if BB becomes a WG it might happen it will die out/fall asleep and nothing will happen.

## **Activities:**

- Appropriation of public space
- Use social media to share good practices in SCI
- Integrate the topic with other activities (other projects, workcamps, seminars and trainings etc)
- Share info about different contexts in different countries - that would mean to include other countries in BB working group (South America, Africa, Asia)

**Roles in the team:** Coordinator, Treasurer (for RF), Promotion/media manager, Knowledge preservation, Toolkit manager, Legal advisor (in case there is a certain situation that should be taken care of legally in terms of leading a project, including an asylum seeker in an activity for example)

## **Hopes and dreams:**

- Include other countries in the working group from Africa, South America, Asia etc.
- Provide possibility for partners to apply for RF projects.



# STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP: REPORT



The team found it very useful to be part of big and important meeting such as EPM, where everybody can learn and get useful tips from each other. The Branching Out project gave an example of successful cooperation between SCI branches and their local groups while working together for a greater cause - including the marginalized ones in their communities and trying to make the world a better place - at least locally.

In Antwerp, November 2018.

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