



ECSTR



Employability Competences for
Students Through Implementation
and Recognition of Activities



With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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BEFORE WE START

What?

We invite you to contribute to solving real-life problems by organising social initiative canvassing event that enables communities to take the initiative and tackle challenges themselves through social innovations.

What is a social initiative?

It is an activity aimed at addressing social problem(s) that creates value for the society. Social initiative can be either short-term activity with the concrete end-goal or project with long-term goal(s).

Why?

We believe that approach, which leaves ownership and decision power at the hands of the target group will provide a long-term effect.

How?

Engaging and empowering the community in such a way so they would stay in the driver's seat requires experience and preparation. Thus, to guide you throughout this process we have created this guidebook where we share with you:

- How to organise a social initiative canvassing event (both offline and online) and;
- How to create community-led initiatives with sustainable long-term impact.





KEY ROLES

Community manager – person responsible for enabling community members to take ownership of creating social innovations. Community manager organises social initiative canvassing events in the community and provides further guidance to appointed initiative coordinators on implementing selected initiatives.

Initiative coordinator – community member that have taken the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the initiative.

Volunteers – community members that participates in the implementation of the social initiative. It is not mandatory that volunteers should have been participated in the social initiative canvassing event. They can join the implementation of the initiative at any point.

Let's begin!

HOW DOES SOCIAL INITIATIVE CANVASSING EVENT LOOKS LIKE?

Why?

To encourage communities to take initiative and tackle challenges themselves.

Where?

The event can take place both in offline or online settings.

Who?

The event is organised by trained community manager.

According to the end-goal the organised event can be **general** or **theme-based**.

- In **general event** participants can choose any challenge(s) among their community.
- In **theme-based event** participants are introduced to chosen topic and decides the concrete challenge(s) based on the provided information. Topics for this type of events can be aligned with [Sustainable Development Goals](#) or selected on the basis of the challenges community face.

The main parts of social initiative canvassing event are (1) **idea generation** (recommended to carry out separately from the event) and (2) **planning of their chosen challenge using community canvas**.

Additional parts of the event are to communicate the idea of creating the social initiative and to help participants to get to know each other. These parts are optional and can be either left-out or changed by other activities.



OVERVIEW OF THE EVENT

Before the event:

- Identify the idea or challenge (takes place in online platform)

During the event:

- Introduction of the canvassing event
- [Optional] Ice-breaking activities: getting to know each other!
- Let's plan: filling in canvas
- [Optional] Round presentations
- Wrap-up

General initiative canvassing event

Introduce the main question: *how your dream university [or other community] looks like?*

Theme-based initiative canvassing event

Define the concrete challenge – *what do you want for the community to solve?* The challenge should be clear for all participants and actionable.

- You can use the beginning: *How might we ... ?*
- Your challenge should be not too vague or too simple as well as not too big and not too small.



TIP Introduce the challenge to the participants and share what you know. You can have a short presentation explaining the challenge and provide participants all the relevant information/data that would be helpful in a process.

Feel free to suggest the alternatives for the titles

Main messages:

- failing is part of the process*
- Roles – not everyone needs to be a leader*

To discuss the need of these parts. Do we record a video? Prepare a presentation?

SHORTLY ABOUT EACH PART

Identify the idea or challenge (takes place in online platform)

The aim of this part is to choose the idea(s) or challenge(s) students or student teams will further develop. However, to select truly innovative idea(s) or challenge(s) it is crucial to encourage participants to “step out of the box” and generate numbers of possible ideas before choosing the main one. Main steps of this part depend on the format of the event.

Ideas generation BEFORE THE EVENT

To save some time in the main event we suggest to generate all ideas before the main event. This can be done on the online program, for instance as Microsoft Teams. This shift of idea registration to MS Teams saves time during the event and makes it easier for the moderators to assess how many and which initiatives they will need to work on during the event.

What is the difference?

Idea – refers to initiative aimed to create a value for the community or beyond.

Challenge – refers to concrete problem that for which to solve the initiative is being developed.



Main steps

1. Registered students are added to the MS Teams team created for the project. Here, participants form groups by posting messages on the common channel and looking for like-minded people who want to implement similar ideas (opening a student café, setting up a scientific society, a geology club, etc.)
2. Each team must create a channel next to the main channel with the name of their idea in MS Teams. 3 days before the event team have to post their team list in the chat and send a description of their ideas to the email address provided.
3. From time to time, one of the group moderators prompts the participants to complete one or another item. For example: reminding them of the deadline, encouraging people to introduce themselves. It is important to mention in the group that if there is a need to get in touch with experts in a certain field, we can help them to get their contact details (university representatives, entrepreneurs...).
4. A week or 5 days before the event, we no longer register ideas for new initiatives, now new members can only join existing initiatives

DURING EVENT

Introduction: the aim of his part is to present the overview of the canvassing event (what to expect throughout the event) and to spark interest of the participants.

[Optional] Ice-breaker activities: to create a cosy atmosphere where participants feel more freely to express their thoughts it is recommended to include activities for the participants to get to know each other better.

In this event ice breaker activities can take place a) at the beginning with all participants all together or b) immediately after the participants chooses the team they will be working with.

Let's plan: filling in canvas

The aim of this part is guide participants in creating initiatives with sustainable long-term impact using the community canvas. Detailed information is provided in [Community canvas section.](#)





DURING EVENT

[Optional] Round presentations

This part is for sharing the results between the participants. Every group pitches their idea up to 5 minutes) to other participants. Then, other groups are invited to ask questions and to provide feedback for the group.

Questions for the feedback:

- How do you evaluate the general idea? What are the strengths? What could be improved?
- How did you like the presentation of the idea? Was it clear? Was it inspirable?
- What do you recommend for the group?


Wrap-up


At the end of the event, share what are the next steps for the implementation of the developed initiatives. Do not forget to thank the participants for the active involvement.

COMMUNITY CANVAS – DEVELOP YOUR INITIATIVE!

Community canvas is a template created to guide community members through further developing their chosen idea or challenge they aim to tackle. By filling each part, participants are encouraged to answer questions that helps to concretise their vision and plans how to achieve it.

Detailed descriptions of each part are provided below.

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Write down your IDEA or CHALLENGE	What is your SMART goal? <i>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-framed</i>	Define your success <i>After a month.. after one or more years..</i>
Who is your idea or challenge for?	Main activities <i>What? When? Who?</i>	
	Check-ins <i>when & how will you evaluate the progress?</i>	
What value you will create?	What are the main obstacles? How can you overcome them?	What is your first step?

Picture 1. Community canvas

Idea or Challenge

Write down your IDEA or CHALLENGE in a **one sentence** describing the concrete aspect you will concentrate on. Ensure that the sentence is clear and understandable to other readers.

Why: Having a well-defined idea/challenge helps to focus discussions and to ensure that all participants have the same vision in mind.

How: firstly, share your team expectations about the challenge/idea and write down initial rough thoughts (at the beginning, the text can be longer than one sentence and abstract). Then try to summarised them and little by little develop one sentence representing the main idea that is concrete and simple to read. Make sure that your sentence would clearly state the main aspect you will concentrate further on and could be easily understood by person from the outside of the group.



Tip: Be patient throughout the process and avoid trying to come up with “perfect” sentence from the start.





What is your idea/challenge for?

Describe the main end-user of your project.

Why: Having a concrete target group helps narrow down the scope of the project and to better identify the needs or challenges of the specific group who most likely are to benefit from the social innovation.

How: Identify who is your project aimed at. How do you describe this group? What are their needs? What problems do they face? How they would benefit from the developed social innovation?

What value you will create?

Answer the question, what is the additional value for the community your social innovation will create?

Why: Social innovation is aimed at addressing social problem(s) that creates value for the society, therefore this step is important to better understanding the concrete impact you are creating for the society.

How: Discuss in a team, what value your project creates for the community.

What is your SMART goal?

Develop a SMART goal of your project.

Why: Having a well-defined goal is one of the key aspects for the successful project implementation.

How: The goal is formulated according to the SMART principle. There must be **only one goal**.

Formulate a goal according to SMART principles, i.e. the aim must be:

- **Specific** – the wording is clear, understandable, it is obvious what is desired to be achieved in concrete terms;
- **Measurable** – it is clearly stated which indicators or criteria you will measure after the set deadline. In other words, it must be clear when the goal will be achieved not in terms of time but in terms of the result;
- **Achievable** – realistic achievement of the set goal;
- **Relevant** – the aim is to make a relevant, substantial change;
- **Time-framed** – the exact beginning and end of the goal.



Tip: start with a rough idea of what do you want to achieve and the step by step improve it by each aspect of SMART goal characteristics.



Main activities

Develop a plan of what should be done to achieve the goal and who will be responsible for each activity.

Why: In order to ensure smooth implementation of the goal it is important to have a clear understanding of the steps that leads to the achievement o the result.

How: Firstly, write down the main activities that lead to the achievement of the goal. Then, decide until when each activity has to be completed. Lastly, agree on who will be responsible for each activity.



Tip: Everyone can contribute to the implementation of the decided activities. However, decide only one person per each activity who will be responsible for initiating and monitoring the completion of the task.

What are the main obstacles? And how to overcome them?

Identify the biggest risks of your project and think what you can do to avoid them and how to tackle them, if they will occur.

Why: To be prepared for challenges throughout the project implementation. Even if the discuss risks will not occur or new, not though-through obstacles will occur, taking time to discuss various alternatives at the planning stage, helps to be better prepared for any unexpected event.

How: Brainstorm all the obstacles your project may face. Then evaluate each obstacle by the probability of occurrence (high vs low) and impact for the project (high vs low). Highlight those of obstacles that has high probability of occurrence and high impact. Discuss and write down a) what you can do to avoid these obstacles; b) how to overcome if you face this obstacle.



Define your success

Answer the question, how the success of your project looks like?

Why: Besides a concrete goal it is helpful to have a the long-term vision of how the social innovation looks like in a future, after the set goal is achieved.

How: Describe in a concrete sentence how your team imagine the success a) After a month.. b) after one or more years..

Check-inns

Decide how you monitor the implementation of the developed plan.

Why: Having a regular check-in helps to keep track on the implementation of the tasks.

How: Decide frequency of how often you will meet to discuss the implementation of the project. How you will do that?

Tip: Be as concrete as possible. Deciding to meet "according to the need" has tendency not to work.

What is your first step?

Decide first concrete step your team will make after the event.

Why: The best way to ensure smooth implementation of a project is simply to start. Do not wait for the perfect day or perfect mood.

How: Write down the concrete task, deadline for it and responsible person. The task should be as concrete as possible.

Good luck!

Provisional agenda: with optional parts

10:00–10:10 Welcoming participants and introduction of the event

10:10–10:30 Ice-breaker activities: getting to know each other!

10:30–11:30 Identify the idea or challenge

11:30–11:45 Break

11:45–14:00 Let's plan: filling in canvas

14:00–14:30 Round presentations

14:30–14:45 Wrap-up: what is next?

Total duration: 4 hours 45 min

Provisional agenda: without optional parts

10:00–10:10 Welcoming participants and introduction of the event

10:10–11:10 Identify the idea or challenge

11:10–11:20 Break

11:20–13:35 Let's plan: filling in canvas

13:35–13:50 Wrap-up: what is next?

Total duration: 3 hours 50 min



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