



LLP Erasmus intensive Programme - Innovation in Rural Development II, Networking Skills for Professional Master Students

## **Development of Social Communication between Students and Residents of Lednice**

Topic

### **Village Development**

Place, date: **Mendel University in Brno, Faculty of Horticulture in Lednice, Czech Republic, 14th March - 25th March 2011**

Team	Tutor
Peter Kary	Mr. Richard Kubišta
Simona Buta	Ms. Barbora Matáková
Hana Krábková	Ms. Ana-Maria Hlaciuc
Kimmo Pennanen	
Angela-Nicoleta Cozorici	
Fanni Poller Emese	
Tu-Trinh Thi Vo	

## Table of Content

---

	Introduction
1	Description of the case
1.1	Stakeholders/beneficiaries
1.2	Operational environment
1.3	Problem definition
2.	Description of group work process & Conclusion
2.1	Team roles
2.2	Methods
2.3	Evaluation of Methods
2.4	Creativity tools
2.5	Evaluation of creativity tools
2.6	Progress & Feelings
2.7	Meeting with stakeholders
2.8	Meeting with student council
3	Innovation plan
3.1	The get together between students and the municipality
3.2	Student Representant in Municipality
3.3	Creative use of Local Newspaper
4	Self assessment and applicability to group members' home country
5	Sources of Information
6	Annex
6.1	Questionnaire for students and locals
6.2	Questionnaire results

## Introduction

---

In this report, we are going to present our case study, findings, group process and more. We want to thank everyone who helped us with our research.



## 1. Description of the case

---

The key idea in this study case is to improve the communication and mutual relations between local people of Lednice and students of Mendel University (because the lack of information and poor information flow) and how to take it into consideration in the village development throughout the proposal of free time activities.

Lednice is a village in South Moravia in the Czech Republic. In 1996 it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as an exceptional example of the designed landscape that evolved in the Enlightenment and afterwards under the care of a single family." It contains a palace and the largest park in the country, which covers 200 km<sup>2</sup>.

The municipality Lednice has a rich history. This fact was appreciated by the inscription of Lednice-Valtice area into the World Heritage List UNESCO. The village of Lednice has 2.300 locals and around 600 students come at the Faculty of Horticulture in Lednice every year.

Thanks to the relatively long tradition of horticulture landscape architecture at the University, combined with quality teachers and the extraordinary natural resources at its disposal Lednice campus has become well-known in the field of horticulture. There are 50 members of teaching staff and over 1.100 students studying presently at the Faculty of horticulture.

### 1.1 Stakeholders & Target groups

Our stakeholders are the municipality of Lednice and the Village Association:

- Mr. Jan Vodáček (head of cultural committee)
- Ing. Eva Horsáková (member of municipality)
- Village Association: Mr. Jaroslav Martinek (head of Village Association, member of cultural committee)

Between the two significant groups (Mendel University and the Municipality of Lednice) the only form of cooperation is an exhibition of students flower arrangements at a Pont Chateau twice a year, at Christmas and Easter time. Usually, the social and cultural activities are organized by Village Lednice, Lednice Spa and other association and clubs. The main target groups in our case study are the *local residents and students*.

#### Main ideas

- Improvement of communication by creating places for communication
- Creating an information centre
- Propose new activities

There are four basic steps in problem solving:

1. Defining the problem
2. Generating alternatives
3. Evaluating and selecting alternatives
4. Implementing solutions

## 1.2 Operational environment

The environment of our case study is Lednice in Czech Republic (see figure below).



## 1.3 Problem definition

The key to a good problem definition is ensuring that you deal with the real problem, not its symptoms. For example, if communication between locals and student is minimal, you might think the problem is with the individuals group. However, if you look a bit deeper, the real problem might be a lack of information, or a poor information flow.

These two social groups, locals from Lednice and students live independently next to each other where communication and information flow is poor, due to the passivity.

- No interesting activities for both
- Lack of information for both about activities that can do together
- Poor information flow
- Misunderstanding of each other lifestyle
- Passivity of people
- No student representant in the Municipal Council

## 2. Description of group work process

---

According to *Tuckman's stages of group development*, these phases are all necessary in order for a team to grow, to face up to challenges, to tackle problems, to find solutions, to plan work, and to deliver results. On the basis of these phases, we will give a short description.

1. **Forming:** the team members meet each other for the first time in this team. Everyone was a bit detached even though we got to know each other a bit better, by sharing new personal information. We noticed that in this stage we weren't a team, we were all individuals. We started to make some rules of engagement and started to work on our problem definition.
2. **Storming:** During this phase, we discussed a lot of new ideas. Even though our storming wasn't that heavy, still people weren't really listening to each other. The team was a bit more open and confronted each other ideas. The storming phase was short; this also has to do with the consultation of Michiel Hupkes who is a trainer in communication and project management. He showed us a mirror where we started to realise and see how we were as a team and what great opportunities we can have.
3. **Norming:** In this phase, we noticed that everyone was willing to work towards the same goal. The group process went more efficiently and everyone was also more relaxed and happy during the day.
4. **Performing:** the team still worked more efficiently without less facilitation. Results started to show and even more ideas could be added.

### Conclusion

Our team went through these different phases. It was remarkable that even though work wasn't always efficiently, everyone was willing to work for the same goal. The respect from everyone towards each other was high and this was valuable. Next to the work we delivered, we also enjoyed each other's presence and had fun.

### 2.1 Team roles

In the beginning of the team process, we decided to have a different facilitator and secretary for each day, so that different people can have the opportunity to work on their skills as a facilitator and secretary. Not all team members choose to increase their facilitation skill and that is why we changed the structure. Towards the end of the process, there was one constant facilitator and when people wanted to do a part of the facilitation for that day or the whole day, they can announce it.

### 2.2 Methods

During the group process, we used different methods to advance our group work process:

- Brainstorming
- Divergence & Convergence (modes of thinking)
- Voting method

### 2.3 Evaluation of method

We used a lot of brainstorming to generate new ideas but also to create the problem definition. Because the level of speaking in English was so diverse, we used brainstorming in combination with Divergence & Convergence. Everyone has some time to write his/her idea on paper and explain it to the other team members. In the end we had more ideas, because everyone was free to write whatever he wanted. After this the ideas were narrowed down to concrete ideas where many ideas from before were included/combined. We also used the voting method regularly to make some decisions.

## 2.4 Creativity Tools

Our group used many creativity tools to increase the level of creativity but also to get more active after, for example, a break. We used the following creativity tools:

- 2 truths and 1 lie
- Words to create one sentence game (on paper), where, who, when, what and how?
- Zip, Zap & Zop
- Who is the killer? Detective & Murderer
- Differences between the pictures (target groups)
- Communication-drawing game, see, tell and draw, forcing to communicate..
- Words-association game (Verbally and on paper)

## 2.5 Evaluation of creativity tools

The mentioned creativity games were good for the atmosphere of the group. Instead of working all the time, there was also space to increase our own creativity, to laugh and to relax again. After each session, everyone turned to work again with a positive attitude. You can say that this increases the cohesion in our group.

## 2.6 Progress & Feelings

After every meeting we also did a round of progress and feelings. This helped us to express ourselves every day about something what we find positive or negative during the day. This was very good for the process, because you could feel everyone listening carefully and towards the end of the week opinions were more positive than negative.

## 2.7 Meeting with stakeholders

On Tuesday 15th of March, we had our first meeting with the stakeholders. They gave us a tour around the village and informed us about the current situation between the students and locals in Lednice. After this we started to work on our problem definition and started to create some ideas. In the end of the week, we gave a presentation to the stakeholders including our draft ideas what we have done so far. In the second meeting, they directed us to focus more on the communication between the target groups but also with our idea to connect students of the student council to the municipality. After this meeting, we started to work more focused on a couple of topics. Now we had a concrete task to work with.

## 2.8 Meeting with student council

On Wednesday 23th of March, we had a meeting with the representative of the student council. In this meeting, we discovered that they were very enthusiastic and open to create a sort of cooperation with the municipality. They weren't aware that the municipality was so open and willing to contact them. This meeting gave us an energy boost, because now we realized that one of our ideas is really possible.

## 3. Innovation plan

---

During the whole group process, we had many different ideas. We narrowed them down to 3 concrete ideas what might be implemented. In the coming section, we are going to present our 3 final innovation plans:

1. The Get Together between Students and the Municipality
2. Student Representant in Municipality
3. Creative use of Local Newspaper

### 3.1 The Get Together between Students and the Municipality

Where: Informal setting (wine-tasting)

Who: Students and the municipality

How: Communication tool

Objective: The students and the municipality will get to know each other better and obtain information about their needs, interests and current activities, while being in an informal setting.

#### *Description 'The Get Together'*

In Lednice, there are many students who have a passive attitude related to the activities in their surroundings. One of the problems is the poor information flow between these two groups. By bringing the students and the municipality together in an informal setting, they will get to know each other better and obtain information about their needs, interests and current activities. The informal setting is a place where they both feel comfortable. The wine tasting can be an event where both groups meet each other for the first time in an interactive setting (theatre room). One of the places that can be a good location for this event is the theatre room at the square.

In the gathering, some people will meet each other for the first time, like mentioned in the first section, by using the communication tool/game. This can be a short presentation of every group or another communication method, both will obtain more information about their needs, interests and activities.

#### *Utilisation of innovation system*

In the early days students and locals were more involved in the same activities. Due to the change in the education system changed student's lifestyle. Students began to create their own activities which excluded the locals. The municipality realised that these two groups live next to each other with minimal social contact. Nowadays, the municipality tries to involve both groups into the same activities.

### *Condition for realisation of innovation*

To realise this innovation a number of municipality and the students have to be willing to cooperate with each other.

### *Stages of realisation of innovation*

1. The municipality does research about the current situation (target groups and their needs, communication platform, and current/future activities).
2. The municipality determine the place for 'The Get Together'.
3. The municipality invites the students.
4. The facilitator will implement the communication tool/game during 'The Get Together'.
5. Both groups come to a certain agreement and can create a following activity.

### *Estimation of resources needed and funding possibilities*

By approaching a sponsor for financing the first gathering, this can be a good start of something on the long run. We also want to approach the municipality, because we have heard that they have a separate financial budget for these kinds of gatherings.

## 3.2 Student Representant in Municipality

### Groups

Municipality has some strengths, for example: resources (money, people, places, experiences), good will, relationship with companies and other important target groups. Also the student has different strength, which can be useful for the Municipality. The following are the strengths of the students: education (landscape planning), new perspective (learn new methods to solve a problem), active (in other way), young power (the new generation).

### Why we want to do it?

The students have new and different strengths than the municipality, and a municipality can use this new ones. So if they can work each other, they can influence the other group in a positive way, which can help them make better decisions. And that cooperation can give more or new information.

### Our opinion on how we can do it.

At first we have some questions for that, such as: How we can encourage one or two students for the Municipality? How we can connect the problem to the Student Council's focus?

We couldn't discuss that alone so we asked some students for help. We agreed with them that it could be nice to have a responsible person who can mediate between these two groups. And it could be good if the person administer this job for a year and even later, because it shouldn't be changed too often.

We think that the best motivation for going into the municipality is willingness. But we can also thinking about some advantage for them. One of the most important point is, that the student, who can get a place in the Municipality council, he/she can say his/her opinion about what the student is representing. The other important point is that, the student gets awareness about the possibilities. Important thing is to share the problem and the

processing of solving with the locals and also the student. Because they know something about that problem, they want to take part in to solve in their own life.

#### Student's interest

We were discussing with students from the Student Council and they said that they are a little bit surprised and they would like to cooperate with the municipality, because they are interested in events organization, especially open air festival 'Majales'. Following step will be on Friday 25th March when our stakeholders meet the student representant.

### 3.3 Creative use of Local Newspaper

Newspapers still play a vital role even in the change in technologies, creating challenges and opportunities for this media. The local newspaper is a main source of handing information, providing up-to-date information. It is accessible for everyone. It gives the sophisticated approach towards life in social, political, economical and in entertainment framework. It provides knowledgeable information, available for all ages and societal status. Because it is not necessary that everyone has a TV, or internet resources, radio, as these are the technological resources. It is a global need of every culture. It is also beneficial to the different organizations to sell their products through advertisements. It creates reading and research skills especially for children. It promotes freedom for journalism to project the truth in the society and awareness with global happenings.

#### Objectives of Newspaper in Lednice:

- keep the people informed about the activities;
- description of student problems, labours, farmers and other working people and suggested their solutions;
- put a right title for newspaper
- a true and correct picture of society;
- describe the activities of the people in different fields like education, business, industry, law, medicine, science, and so on; They tell us about the activities of students and teachers, businessmen, industrialists, lawyers, doctors, scientists and all categories of working people, etc.
- newspapers tell about the political, economic and social changes;
- newspapers can be use to publish research work of student or locals;

#### Newspapers typically meet 4 criteria:

1. Publicity: Its contents are reasonably accessible to the public
2. Periodicity: It is published at regular intervals
3. Currency: Its information is up to date
4. Universality: It covers a range of topics

#### Aims:

1. Raise levels of communication across the locals of Lednice and students of Horticulture Faculty. People tend to become more open, particularly when they understand the issues.

2. Reduce barriers in communications. Lednice is still characterized by inequalities in the access of people to information. Reducing inequality is a major issue for the municipality and the university.
3. The actual newspaper is only for people in Lednice.
4. Think of a News Site Design.

#### Ways to Improve Newspaper for Young People:

1. Use Road Signs and Context
2. Offer Wisdom Journalism
3. Personalize
4. Proposal to submit an article about student life
5. Experiment with New Formats
6. Expand Civic Journalism and Community Coverage
7. Put Young People in the News
8. Reinvent, Expand News-in-Schools and News Literacy Programs
9. Improve Sharing Features and Create Self-Supporting Content
10. Explore New Approaches to Television News

#### Structure of editors of the newspaper:

- Business editor      The newspaper editor responsible for business news
- City editor            The newspaper editor in charge of editing local news
- Sports editor         The newspaper editor responsible for sports news
- Student editor        Student of Horticulture Faculty in Lednice responsible for the activities of students (events, competition, lesson of floral arrangements, etc.)
- Editor in chief        The person who determines the final content of a text; responsible for all aspects of the news operation, including the content of the paper, hiring, budgets, etc.

We propose that there will be only two people that share these responsibilities, a student and a local, it will be printed in the same location as the current newspaper from the public funds and sponsorships. The newspapers could be distributed to residents and students by students or placed in three key points of the village, in some special ballot boxes at time initially established.

#### *iPad vs. Newspapers*

Many would argue for an indefinite extent that the *iPad* or any other tablet is the perfect replacement for the *Newspapers*. Agreed. But don't you think there are things that the *iPad* can never do what your *Newspaper* can? Can you light a fire in the middle of a forest with the *iPad*? Can you think of more ways that the *Newspaper* has an extra edge over the *iPad*? Killing flies is one of them at the breakfast table. What do you actually think of doing such a heinous thing with your *iPad*? I bet even a billionaire would think twice doing what is shown in the video, of course it won't be a problem if you have the cheapest *iPad*!

#### **4. Self assessment and applicability to group members' home country**

---

##### *Tu-Trinh Thi Vo - The Netherlands*

Looking at the current situation in Lednice, I see some similarities between here and my own country the Netherlands. In the Netherlands there are many municipalities who don't have a lot of communication with their local residents and are trying to improve the communication between them. Also in Lednice, the municipality is trying to improve the communication between them and the students and also between the students and the locals. In the end you can't really compare it because the different cultures makes people behave differently and make different choices. What I have learned here is it might be handy to compare different situations, but I have to be real to the situation and the different influences as it is.

What I find most valuable of the IP course is working with other students with different nationalities. Through this I have learned a lot more about group processes and also about myself working in these groups.

##### *Peter Kary - Slovakia*

In Slovakia, all universities are located in urban areas and the situation is different. I have to say that this kind of problem could also occurs in my country because of the fact that once we were one republic and we shared similar cultures, the student lifestyle is on the same level.

I really appreciate working in a group with many different cultures and nationalities, talking about our ideas. I found out that we are a little bit different but we always try to find the right way to work through these two weeks. It was a great opportunity and it helped me in my personal growth.

##### *Kimmo Pennanen - Finland*

I think that I am quite typical Finnish. I am emphatic, friendly and a little bit shy. If I am insecure about myself, I will stay in the background. My English is quite poor but I still enjoy being here. I think that this is good for me, I like our group a lot.

In my opinion, in Finland we have the same kind of problems like here in Lednice, but the problem there is not so big. In my hometown Pyhäjärvi, the students are active and they are involved in the municipality council. In Pyhäjärvi there is not an University but there is a high school and almost all of the students are coming from Pyhäjärvi and know each other. I think that is the one of the reasons why they are so active and involved in the municipality council.

##### *Fanni Poller Emese - Hungary*

If I have some problems with anyone, I try to sit down with that person, and ask to tell me about his/her opinion and ideas. And also ask him or her to say that to me, what their problem is with my opinion or idea. After that I love to make discussions about the problem. If we can find a common point or we can solve the problem as much as possible.

The Hungarian people are so stubborn, so they usually can't make a cooperation in a certain topic. Sometimes they think the following way: If my cow is dead, then my neighbour's cow also had to die. This can be the mentality of the Hungarian people sometimes.

Most of the Hungarian people are usually crafty, so if we want something we can make anything to reach that. If we have common interests in something, we can make really good decisions and we can solve any kind of problem.

After the IP course, I think that I can solve the problem, which I have described in my case study. I think it has the same problem like the problems between the students and locals in Lednice. So I think I will built that trick to my future work.

*Angela-Nicoleta Cozorici & Simona Buta - Romania*

We are very pleased that the issues related to the organization of training and those who are related to social life are in attention of the municipality. The fact was also confirmed through the sustained interest in the discussions of the meetings that took place during this period with municipal officials from Lednice.

The municipality is not indifferent in the communication problems between students and locals. The municipality was present at our presentation in the faculty, this proofs that they are willing to solve the problem. Through this, it confirms once again that the manifests and interests of the stakeholders to ensure optimal conditions for recreation, sports, social events and literacy of students and locals in Lednice.

It should be mentioned that in our country, Romania, we have not encountered such a situation because all universities are located in urban areas and the situation is different

*Hana Krábková - Czech Republic*

Although I am also from Czech Republic, I think that the Case of Lednice is somewhat different than the rest of the country. Lednice does not have such problems with unemployment and old age population, people are moving here for work and thanks Mendel University residence is the youngest village in Czech Republic.

However this Case Study is mainly about communication and poor information flow and this problem is really common across Europe. I think, that solving this Case Study is very useful for everybody of us, because it is important to learn how we can solve the problem with misunderstandings and lack of information between different groups.

## 5. Sources of information

---

Stakeholders:

- Municipality of Lednice
- Mr. Jan Vodáček (head of cultural committee)
- Ing. Eva Horsáková (member of municipality)
- Village Association: Mr. Jaroslav Martinek (head of Village Association, member of cultural committee)

Case study description:

Internet web sites:

- <http://www.lednice.cz>
- <http://www.okraslovacispolek-lednice.eu>
- <http://www.maps.google.cz>
- [http://www.mendelu.cz/dok\\_server/slozka.pl?id=19185;download=39270](http://www.mendelu.cz/dok_server/slozka.pl?id=19185;download=39270)

Tutors

- Ms. Barbora Matáková
- Mr. Richard Kubišta
- Ms. Ana-Maria Hlaciuc

Interactive games:

[www.creativeminds.org](http://www.creativeminds.org)

PowerPoint slides of lecturers