



SEMPRE – Minutes of the 3rd transnational meeting 15-17 June 2016 at Esbjerg, Denmark

Venue: University College South Denmark, Esbjerg

Wednesday, 15 June

Welcome and Introduction

The participants were welcomed by ANNETTE NIELSEN and GUNDI SCHRÖTTER JOHANNSEN of the hosting partner organisation, University College South Denmark (UC Syd). METTE ERLUND, Head of UC Syd's International Department, then proceeded to introduce the University College with its different locations in Southern Denmark and its different study profiles as well as the town of Esbjerg and its surroundings.

DORIS SCHEER welcomed the participants on behalf of the Lead Partner, Diaconie Schleswig-Holstein and gave a brief overview of the **developments since the last meeting** in Luleå, Sweden in April. The minutes of that meeting were accepted by all partners. DORIS stated that the most important step forward is the preparation and signing of the SEMPRE Partnership Agreement. Most partners had brought their signature pages of the Partnership Agreement to Esbjerg and exchanged them for a pack of signatures of the other partners. Doris asked the remaining partners to send their signatures by mail right after the meeting and promised to distribute them to all partners immediately.

DORIS then asked HAUKE SIEMEN (REM • Consult) to provide an **overview of the project timeline**. HAUKE went through the work packages, mentioning accomplished and delayed activities and highlighting the tasks for this meeting and the months ahead.

See PPT "SEMPRE_3rd Meeting Esbjerg_ Project Progress.pdf" – Slides 2-8

WP 3 – Implementing Empowerment in Rural Areas

In the next session the partners were asked to present the **current developments in their Local Empowerment Networks**, with the following key findings:

- There were only minor changes in the locations of the LENs and the definition of the end-user groups. A current overview of LENs is attached to these minutes (Annex III).
- Most partners have already hired LEN coordinators or assigned existing staff to this position. Some partners had not been able to do so because of the missing Partnership Agreement.
- Whereas some partners had already carried out meetings with LEN/RCG stakeholders, other partners had only identified stakeholders and are planning meetings with them in August or September.



- Only very few partners had already started with the application of needs assessment tools or otherwise organised meetings with the end-user groups. Most partners plan these steps for August/September.

The partners were then asked by HAUKE to discuss in pairs the **challenges** that they had encountered **in their LEN activities** and possible solutions to these challenges. The following challenges and solutions were identified:

Challenge	Possible solution
Explaining the project to end-users and stakeholders	A leaflet or flyer describing the project would be helpful
Differing expectations of stakeholders	Meetings and informal discussions with stakeholders
Project/LEN could be considered a “newcomer” on the scene and a competition for established service providers. The SEMPRES approach could be perceived as arrogant.	Being sensitive and careful when introducing the project to local stakeholders
Large distances (geographical, structural, in service providers’ minds)	
Keeping identity while creating synergies with other service providers/initiatives	
How to organise the process in such a way that participants (end-users and stakeholders) feel that they have a say and that motivation to take part in project activities is kept high	Showing practical results as soon as they are available to motivate participants
Social workers are already overloaded with tasks and reluctant to get engaged in “another working group”	Talk to social workers’ bosses to convince them of the benefits of taking part in SEMPRES (e.g. arranging services differently and more efficiently) and to encourage them to give more room to their employees
Reaching end-user groups	Make use of everyday places (e.g. supermarkets, libraries)

Project communication

Following this exchange HAUKE SIEMEN gave a presentation on project communication. He reminded the partners on the correct use of the **logos and corporate design** (fonts and colours), outlined the structure of the foreseen communication plan and presented ideas and drafts for a project poster and flyer. HAUKE then asked the partners to brainstorm key messages for the SEMPRES projects in groups. This exercise was continued on the next day, and the results are listed in Annex II. The final topic of the day was the **Kick-off Conference in Berlin on 29 September**. HAUKE presented an updated draft agenda and received feedback from the partners. Of the suggestions for possible



speakers or panellists (such as a high-level journalist or human rights expert), some might be taken up for one of the other two conferences in 2017 and 2018.

See PPT “SEMPRE_3rd Meeting Esbjerg_ Project Communication.pdf”

In the evening the partners received a short introduction to the Esbjerg Gospel (“Esbjerg Evangeliet”, a large mural located in University College South Denmark).

Thursday, 16 June

WP2 – Empowerment tools

GoA 2.1 – Exchange of experience with the application of needs assessment tools

GoA Leader MARTIN URDZE (Diaconal Centre of Liepaja) reported about first experiences with the **“future workshop” method** in Liepaja. The questions had been prepared by the University of Latvia and the participants were four persons with wheelchairs who were quite depressed about their life situation. MARTIN reported that the end-users needed time to adapt to the situation and that the different stages of the future workshop method were rather blurred. Overall, he considered this first attempt as not very effective.

SUSANNE JUNGERSTAM (Novia University of Applied Sciences) reported about experiences with the method “citizen’s jury” which had been implemented in another project two years ago and had had similarities with the future workshop method. However, the process was very resource intensive (4 days with 20-30 older people). A report (in Swedish) is available. DORIS SCHEER followed up on this with her own experience with a future workshop in the single parents project and noted that it had led to positive side effects such as intensified networks between single mothers.

ANNETTE NIELSEN reported that UC South Denmark would have to use **interpreters** to carry out focus groups with the end-user group of refugees. It was discussed whether interpreters could also have a facilitating role in the process. The conclusion was that whatever the interpreter’s role is going to be, it should be clearly defined and communicated. The issue of protection of end-users’ data was also briefly discussed; all partners should check their national data protection laws. In case there are problems with data protection and reporting requirements (e.g. signature lists for end-user meetings), HAUKE advised the partners to clarify this with their respective First Level Controllers.

It was proposed to create a section for **exchanging good practices in needs assessment** in the internal section of the project website. Moreover, it was briefly discussed what term should be used for “end-users” when communicating the project. Previously used terms include *marginalised groups*, *vulnerable groups* and *disadvantaged groups*. One proposal received positively was *“individuals in vulnerable life situations”*. The idea was raised to prepare a **project glossary** to find a common terminology in the project. This glossary could become part of the communication plan.



GoA 2.2: Compiling a short list of service development tools

GoA Leaders NELLI VASSILA (Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church) and MERLE KRIGUL (Foundation for Social Action) opened the session by providing some examples from their organisations' work with different end-user groups in Estonia that showed that even if much time is spent on background work for the needs assessment, the picture gained is still frictional and more steps are needed to develop meaningful services. It is difficult to establish trust in communication with the vulnerable groups, and positive role models are rare.

NELLI and MERLE started an activity called knowledge safari and collected answers from the participants to questions such as: What are hopes and fears regarding the service development process? What are good and bad practices in service development? The answers were collected and compiled into a separate document (see below). This exercise was meant to obtain a **common understanding of service development tools** and to **prepare for the identification of tools** to be used in the project that should be finalised by the time of the next meeting in Berlin in the end of September. NELLI and MERLE announced that they would send a questionnaire in July and would ask partners to fill it out by 1st September 2016.

[See PDF "SEMPRE_GoA 2.2_Results Esbjerg Meeting.pdf"](#)

WP 5 - Evaluation

After the lunch break SUSANNE JUNGERSTAM (Novia University of Applied Sciences) gave a brief report about the meeting of GoA Leaders in Work Package 5 (Evaluation) that had taken place on 19 May at Stockholm Airport. Building upon her presentation given in Luleå she summed up the **objectives and methods for the different evaluation activities** concerning empowerment tools, micro projects and training modules.

To assess the increase in knowledge about end-users needs among service providers, SUSANNE prepared a proposal for **focus group interviews among the LEN stakeholders** that should be carried out *before* the needs assessment is taking place in the LENS to establish a baseline. A second round of focus group interviews should be carried out after the needs assessment has been finalised. SUSANNE asked the partners to send feedback and additional questions to her until mid-August.

It was asked whether partners were expected to carry out an evaluation of the project at the local level. DORIS SCHEER answered that the evaluation of the SEMPRE project (GoA 5.4) would focus on transnational cooperation aspects and that a detailed evaluation of the project at local level, while welcomed, is not required according to the application form.

[See PPT "SEMPRE Evaluation Esbjerg.pdf"](#)

The participants then proceeded to split into two working groups:



Working Group A -- GoAs 5.1 and 5.2: Evaluating the empowerment tools and micro projects

Empowerment is a key element for the SEMPRE project and should be recognizable in all project activities. For this reason, it is essential to see empowerment also reflected in the research methods. It is important to identify a research approach which allows to be person-centered, i.e. end-users are not objects but subjects of their lives, experiences and knowledge. SEMPRE works with end-users who find themselves in vulnerable life situations which often impact negatively on people's dignity and self-respect. For this reason, our research approach must avoid to reinforce such experiences.

Action research could be a helpful approach in the SEMPRE context as it is field based, focusses on individuals in the field, acknowledges and respects their particular experience, demands a change of perspective (the researcher is not the knowledgeable person), aims at change etc.

In order to learn more about "action research", which is more at home in the English speaking world and has a strong base in the field of education, Johanna and Kati (Chydenius) have volunteered to speak a colleague who is exploring action research, its possibilities and limitations, for her PhD. In case their Finish colleague agrees, Johanna and Kati will organize a lecture and a discussion for us on the Internet or by other technical devices in September. Here would be an excellent opportunity for the SEMPRE project partners to learn about action research with a Finish expert.

It was decided to focus on a few easily codable questions that allow for quantitative data that can be compared between LENSs. Additional questions can be added on an individual level for LENSs.

Johanna announced that she would send out a short questionnaire regarding the perceptions of micro projects in order to prepare for the evaluation of micro projects and asked the partners to send in their ideas.

Working Group B -- GoA 4.1: The exploration of socio-economic context – how to proceed further with the results

LARS SCHIEBER (REM • Consult) briefly showed possible indicators from Eurostat and ESPON research projects (TIPSE and TRACC) that can be gathered to underpin the socio-economic contexts of the partner regions with harmonised statistical data. He went on to present the preliminary input from the partners that have delivered their answers via the template. Several partners have yet to submit their questionnaires. It was discussed and concluded that the answers to the questions 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 are only for **project internal use**. The information is meant to help the partnership understand the specific context of each LEN and end-user group, but it will not be provided to external audiences. GoA leader ANNA STEPCHENKO (University of Latvia) and LARS will continue to gather the answers and synthesize the answers in short comprehensive ways. It was decided that the document will be available as **living document** (e.g. via google docs), so that the partners can easily update their information in the future.

See PPT „SEMORE_3rd Meeting Esbjerg_Group Work GoA 4.1.PDF”



Friday, 17 June

Next project meetings

The meeting started with a discussion concerning the dates for the next project meetings. The next meeting will take place in combination with the Kick-off Conference in **Berlin**, starting on **28 September with a full day** and resuming after the conference **with half a day on 30 September**. Since there is a long weekend following (3 October is a public holiday in Germany), participants should make their hotel reservations soon. A list of hotel options has been sent to all partners by WIEBKE HINZ (Diacony of Schleswig-Holstein). One session on 30 September will be dedicated to exchange of experience between LENSs, and all **partners are invited to bring their LEN coordinators**.

According to the work plan, there will only be one project meeting per half year after the conference. DORIS asked the partners if they would prefer to have additional meetings in between or to **extend the duration of each meeting from 2 days to 2,5 days**. The majority of partners preferred the latter.

It was decided that the **first meeting in 2017** will take place on **5-7 April 2017** (arrival on 4 April, start of meeting in the morning of 5 April, end at lunch time on 7 April) in Lithuania. The Lutheran Diaconia will inform the partnership about the place of the meeting. The **second meeting in 2017** will take place in combination with the **public mid-term conference on 13-15 September 2017 in Estonia**. It was decided that the conference itself would take place in Tallinn, whereas the project meeting will be organised in Tartu. One of the project meetings in 2018 will take place in Finland.

Hauke Siemen and Doris Scheer encouraged the **partners to organise online meetings or telephone conferences in between the meetings**, e.g. between GoA Leaders in a Work Package or partners working with the same end-user group. Such meetings should be organised by the WP Leaders, GoA leaders or partners themselves – this will not be done by the project management team.

See PPT “SEMPRE_3rd Meeting Esbjerg_Project Progress.pdf” – Slides 9-11

Finances and Reporting

HAUKE SIEMEN gave a presentation concerning financial management and reporting. He started with a reminder concerning important issues that had been discussed at the previous meetings in Rendsburg and Luleå (such as eligibility of costs, budget lines, public procurement or financing of micro projects) and asked the partners to refer to the minutes and presentations of these meetings. Hauke then went on to explain the **First Level Control system** and the **reporting procedures** in more detail and presented the **foreseen timeline for the first report**. DORIS SCHEER reminded the partners that they depend on each other in the reporting process. A delay caused by one partner may result in delayed payments of ERDF reimbursements to **all** partners. HAUKE therefore urged the partners to inform the project management team as soon as they can foresee that **a deadline cannot be kept**.

See PPT “SEMPRE_3rd Meeting Esbjerg_Finances and Reporting.pdf”



Because all questions regarding finances and reporting of the partners had been clarified at this point, the Financial Help Desk session was skipped.

WP4 – GoA 4.1 - Assessing the changing framework conditions for provision of social services and the state of the art of end-user involvement

LARS SCHIEBER asked all participants to fill out paper sheets answering the two questions: 1. What is changing [regarding framework conditions for social services] and 2. How to assess this. These answers will be further processed by Anna and Lars

Asked which barriers hinder a stronger end-user involvement the following answers were given by the participants:

- Language
- Literacy skills
- Distances (too far to involve)
- Missing Childcare
- Access to end-users
- other) Social service providers (that are sent from municipalities and sometimes cause the image of pressure)
- Time/patience
- Money
- Frustration of end-users due to bad experiences / history
- Prejudices

Asked how end-users are currently being involved by social service providers in the local context, the following answers were given by the participants:

- LEN end-user assessment
- More or less only "counselling"
- Networking with NGOs

Closure

DORIS SCHEER closed the meeting, thanking University College South Denmark for hosting the meeting and **reminding partners to keep in contact with each other** in the times between the meetings. Doris also highlighted the connections and links between activities in different work packages, e.g. the exploration of socio-economic context providing a framework for work in the LENs and the main output (empowerment handbook, road map for organisations).



Annex I – To-Dos

Project management	Collect missing signatures on Partnership Agreement and send them to partners	Doris/Wiebke	30/06
	Send final version of PA and annexes to all partners for printout		
	Send meeting minutes to all partners	REM	
Finances	Select First Level Controller	Partners from DE, LT, DK, FI	ASAP
	Clarify submission date for first partner report with FLC	All Partners	ASAP
	Prepare reporting templates	REM	31/07
	Submit first report to REM for pre-check	All partners	Before 30/09
	Submit certified first report to LP	All partners	31/10
Communication	Insert names into the SEMPRE mailing list (Google)	Everyone	23/06
	Send out save-the-date for Berlin conference	Doris / Wiebke	24/06
	Send Berlin speaker proposals to Hauke	Everyone	ASAP
	Send missing Partner Profiles, photos and contact for website	5, 7, 9, (10, 11)	ASAP
	Send text elements for Flyer, Poster to designer	REM	15/07
	Send improved PPT template to partners	REM	15/07
	Set up intranet platform	DW/REM	31/07
	Prepare LEN blog template	REM	31/07
	Prepare draft communication plan	REM	31/08
	Produce English Flyers	DW	31/08
WPs	Send missing explorations of socio-economic context to Anna Stepcenko (3.1/4.1)		ASAP
	Fill out Johanna's google questionnaire on micro projects (4.2)	Everyone	01/07
	Send instructions on collection of ideas for service development tools (2.2)	Nelli/Merle	01/07
	Send proposals for questions for focus group interviews with social service providers in LEN (4.1)	Susanne	15/08
	Send descriptions for ideas for development tools to Nelli/Merle (2.2)	All partners	01/09



Annex II – Ideas for SEMPRE Messages

SEMPRE facilitates participation and social inclusion in order to improve quality of life and social services in the Baltic Sea Region call for service innovation.

SEMPRE helps professionals to develop new skills on empowerment because people in rural areas are experts for their own life, but need support for developing their skills.

SEMPRE enhances mastery of life and cooperation for better social services.

The **SEMPRE** purpose is to develop new innovative social services in cooperation with people in exposed positions (in order to better their possibilities in life) with their needs as starting point. That is what we in SEMPRE call empowerment!

With empowerment as basic knowledge develop training tools and programmes for social service providers

Social services for everyone improving quality of life in rural areas by providing (social) services for individuals in vulnerable life situations

SEMPRE supports the creation of a good society for all.

SEMPRE is the first push for empowerment.

Empowering people by combining the knowledge of the Baltic Sea countries

SEMPRE brings power to empowerment.



Annex III – Current overview of LENS

Country	PP	Partner Organisation	LEN: Location	LEN: End-user group	LEN: coordinators
DE	01	Diaconie of Schleswig-Holstein	County of Dithmarschen	Single parents	Andrea Boyer, Kathrin Döring
DE	02	KDA / Nordkirche	County of Plön	Long-term unemployed people and families	Maike Hagemann-Schilling
DE	03	Academy of Economics Schleswig-Holstein	County of Nordfriesland	Migrants and Refugees	Kira Sönksen
FI	04	Novia University of Applied Sciences	Vaasa, Ostrobothnia	Older adults (65+)	Ulrica
FI	05	Kokkola University Consortium	Kokkola and Pietarsaari	Unemployed migrants	Johanna Hiitola + N.N.
LV	06	Talent Forge*	Cēsis, Vidzeme planning region	Unemployed younger and older people	
LV	07	Diaconal centre Liepaja	Liepaja city, counties of Grobina Priekule, Rucava	People with handicaps/disabilities	N.N.
LT	09	Lutheran diaconia	Taurage county	1) Single parents 2) persons suffering from addiction diseases	Sonata + one additional person
EE	10	Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church	Võrumaa	Ex-prisoners, youth, Families	Nelli Vassila
EE	11	Foundation for Social Action			N.N.
PL	12	The Foundation for Lifelong Learning PERITIA	Poznan region	Youth	N.N.
SE	13	Coompanion Norrbotten	Norrbotten County (Luleå and Övertorneå)	Women with migration background	Gunnel Mörtlund and Helen Nilsson
SE	14	Sunderby Folk High School	Norrbotten County (Borden and Luleå)	Young unemployed people ("homesitters")	N.N.
DK	15	University College South Denmark	Varde, Kolding, Tønder (TBC)	Migrants	N.N.