Narrative approach

A tool for the ecological transition in priority neighbourhoods

Inspiration and methods for actors and inhabitants

Narrative approach

A tool for the ecological transition in priority neighbourhoods

Inspiration and methods for actors and inhabitants

The story is not written...
Especially if you decide to change the script!
But who is the real author of their life today?

Raising our heads and overturning clichés while gleaning at the market; escaping the stories of domination that trap us in prejudice; revealing the value of alternative, preferred and liberating stories that make us proud of who we are and what we do in the city: this is the open, unresolved quest, but one shared generously by a group of European practitioners, social facilitators and coaches, architects of change. We thank them all.

Narrative approach is a powerful tool for managing transitions.

Over and above the techniques of storytelling or the performative self-conviction, it helps actors and regions to situate themselves in their past, present and future trajectories. It lends credence to the idea of a future that is chosen rather than imposed. It puts the sciences of non-violent communication at the heart of exchanges and helps institutions to progress in their cooperative relationships with citizens. It encourages learning loops and feedback, secures risk-taking and allows people to dare.

To dare, to transform, not to suffer. Narrative approach decolonises our imaginations and opens up new possibilities. It reveals its full value. It's a powerful tool, but one that's hard to handle. It is based on a logic of exploration and keep with the spirit of the Compagnons. At a time when we need to build another development model...

Julian PERDRIGEAT,
General Delegate of the Fabrique des transitions

Table of contents

1

Context

Why did we create this guide?

All over the world, people in precarious situations are and will be the most exposed to climate and environmental changes, and their consequences. In priority neighbourhoods, many actors are working with residents tackling these issues, but these are most often one-off actions, not part of a global dynamic and affecting only a small number of people. The ecological challenge is confronted with a form of incompatibility between everyday material difficulties and "ecological principles" that may appear as injunctions from a far too distant elsewhere. This "class ecology, which is primarily aimed at urban, white and middle-class people"[1], tends to mask a popular ecology, which must be brought to light. Indeed, budgetary constraints are not the only justification for the low environmental impact of the working classes, it is also because they have other lifestyles and cultivate different imaginations [2].

In this context of environmental, social and economic crises or changes, each partner, through its responsibilities, skills and actions at the heart of the territory, finds itself confronted with the climate emergency and its repercussions on the lives of populations. Each develops and implements tools and methods that it deems appropriate, adapted to the particularities of the field and the audiences. Nevertheless, all of them identify and express the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the efforts made so far to initiate real transformation.

Here or elsewhere, neither calibrated and formal discourses nor infrastructural projects are enough to bring about socio-cultural and systemic change. It is necessary to explore new paths, to enchant the ecological transition, to build new narratives by involving all inhabitants in their diversity.

We chose to rely on the "methodology of change management through narrative approach", resulting from the work of the Fabrique des transitions and the CERDD[3] based on the pioneering experiences of several territories, including Loos-en-Gohelle. This guide is the result of work aiming to adapt this methodology to the context of priority neighbourhoods. It is intended to promote the inclusion of all audiences on the challenges of ecological transition, by equipping the actors who work with them on a daily basis.

The choice of the "narrative approach tool" is a way to involve associations, social actors, local authorities, all the stakeholders of the life of the neighbourhoods, but above all, to work in a transversal way with the inhabitants and to promote broad participation.

This methodological guide is produced by and for people who live and act in the neighbourhoods. It contains both feedback and inspiring ideas, with variations depending on the specificities of the territories (richness resulting from cooperation at the European level).

[1] Fatima Ouassak, Pour une écologie pirate, Editions La Découverte, février 2023, 198 pages
[2] Quelle place pour l'écologie populaire dans la transition écologique ? Théodore Tallent, Article du 9 mai 2023,
URL : https://www.latribune.fr/opinions/tribunes/quelle-place-pour-l-ecologie-populaire-dans-la-transition-ecologique-961436.html
[3] Repères sur la mise en récit(s) de vos projets de transitions, La Fabrique des transitions / Le CERDD, 2021.

The project and its partners

At all scales, the actors contacted or involved confirmed the importance of carrying out such a project, whether for the methodological reference of the narrative approach, for the ecological emergency, for the reduction of the vulnerabilities of the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods or for all these reasons at the same time. The Erasmus+ European partnership has been an opportunity to give local projects a global, multi-scale and multi-stakeholder dynamic. These are coherent and convergent initiatives, which allow for the sharing of experiences and transdisciplinary work.

Artéfacts – Tours - France

Created in 2010, Artéfacts is a cultural activity and employment cooperative (CAE) dedicated to cultural professions (visual arts, crafts, digital, environment, advice and training, cultural mediation). Located in Orléans, Tours, Blois and Nantes, it welcomes project leaders who wish to create their own professional activity, while freeing themselves from the creation of a company, thus benefiting from the status of salaried entrepreneurs. Within this cooperative, a "Récits'danses" group has been set up, with the aim of participating in the ecological transition by supporting actors and local authorities in their narrative approach project. The cooperative is an ally of the Fabrique des Transitions.

EuroVértice – Murcie – Espagne

EuroVértice is a forward-looking SME dedicated to European funding, sustainable urban development, innovation, environment and energy. With a strong commitment to the environment and sustainability, we have actively participated in the Erasmus+, LIFE and H2020 projects, demonstrating our commitment to creating a greener and more sustainable future. Since its creation in 2006 in Murcia, Spain, EuroVértice has aimed to promote the engagement of public and private entities in innovative and sustainable projects, financed by European funds. We work closely with municipalities, regional governments and the private sector to achieve our shared vision of a more sustainable and prosperous world.

Fondation E-35 – Reggio Emilia - Italie

The E-35 Foundation was born in July 2015 from a project shared between representative entities of the Reggio Emilia region, including the municipality, the province, the banking foundation Pietro Manodori, the Reggio Emilia Chamber of Commerce and the CRPA, centre for research and animal production dealing with agriculture and sustainability. The E-35 Foundation supports the European and international promotion of the territory and the "Reggio Emilia System'' with the aim of attracting skills, economic resources, entrepreneurial realities, partnerships and conditions of support for local development policies and support for local authorities and their aggregations. In particular, it involves its institutions, companies and associations on economic, social and international cooperation issues.
.

Polytechnic Institute of Porto (IPP) – Porto - Portugal

It is the largest Portuguese polytechnic institution, with around 20,000 people studying, teaching and conducting research at its eight schools, developing 56 undergraduate programmes and 62 master's degrees, in several fields. The School of Education (ESE-IPP) offers a range of undergraduate and master's programmes, in the areas of teacher education and social education, other converging fields, as well as a joint doctorate in education (with the University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain). The Centre for Research and Innovation in Education (inED), one of the two research centres of ESE-IPP, brings together researchers from different interrelated fields of knowledge contributing to the systematic study of education.

3 territoires of experimentation

A priority neighbourhood is usually defined by the average income of the inhabitants. Behind this statistical notion, there is a great diversity of situations and especially inhabitants who live in the heart of territories that concentrate socio-economic vulnerabilities and a high exposure to environmental risks. In these respects, the three territories that participated in this project are similar, and yet they illustrate this diversity. The Sanitas district in Tours is located in the heart of the urban centre of a French metropolis. The town of Lorqui is a small town located in the industrial basin of the city of Murcia in Spain. The Carrozone district is a residential and "transition" neighbourhood located in an industrial area in the immediate vicinity of the city centre of Reggio Emilia in Italy.

	Carrozzone	*Lorquí*	*Sanitas*
Population	3 550 personnes	7 246 personnes	7 815 personnes
Density of the population	2218 hab/km²	483 hab/km²	19537 hab/km²
Surface	1,6 km²	15,8 km²	0,45 km²
Administrative territorial level	Neighbourhood	Municipality	Neighbourhood
Principale fonction territoriale	Industrial & Residential Zone	Industrial & Residential Zone	Residential Zone
Environnemental issues	Heat waves due to high levels of soil sealing; structural lack of green spaces or trees	Flood risk: water management and soil sealing; heat waves; desertification;	Structural lack of green spaces or trees

Figure 1: brief comparison of socio-demographic, institutional and socio-environmental realities.

Project timeline

The project was carried out in two main phases.

First of all, a study phase was implemented, in order to better understand the relationship between the inhabitants of priority neighbourhoods and the ecological transition.

This sociological research [4], conducted in conjunction with the actors and inhabitants of the three districts, highlights the levers and obstacles that characterise the ecological transition for the most precarious populations.

Figure 2 : European partners in Italy - April 2023

Based on the results of this study and the change management [5] method disseminated by the Fabrique des Transitions, we organised monthly workshops to work on the 5 dimensions of storytelling and international meetings that resulted in this guide by and for the people who live and act in the neighbourhoods.

[4] Vera Diogo et Al., Ecotransition stories, Recherche sur les multiples dimensions des conditions de la transition écologique dans les trois quartiers prioritaires, URL : https://www.ecotransition-stories.eu/fr/rapport-de

Change management through narrative approach

Loos en Gohelle, a source of inspiration

This city in the mining basin of northern France experienced economic collapse from the 1960s. Marcel Caron, Mayor of the city from 1977 to 2001, practiced the narrative approach in order to bring out an alternative story from his first term onwards.

The dynamic has been extended by Jean-François Caron until 2023. Currently, the new mayor, Geoffrey Mathon, continues the mission.

It was in 2014 that ADEME [6] i identified Loos-en-Gohelle as a model of change management towards a sustainable city [7] and made it possible to describe the strategy that had been implemented for 40 years. We can mention emblematic creations such as the Ch'ti TAIDx conferences, the Gohelliades or the fifty-fifty [8].

Figure 3 : a view on Loos-en-Gohelle. Crédit : croiseedarchi.fr

La Fabrique des transitions

The Transition Factory was born from the convergence of the experiences of Loos-en-Gohelle, Grande Synthe, Malaunay and Le Mené. It is an alliance of 1000 people or organisations (local authorities, civil society groups, companies, universities, etc.) who have signed a charter that defines its strategic objectives and values. La Fabrique des Transitions is inspired by the experiences of pioneering territories in promoting the development of local transition dynamics and their change of scale. By forming a community of exchange and accompaniment, it works to transform the frameworks of thought, organisation and action to renew the way in which transitions are conducted.

[5] Change management is a systematic approach to dealing with the transition or transformation of goals, processes or technologies. It is a set of operations carried out within an organisation to enable it to adapt to change and developments in its environment. (Source : Wikipedia)

6] French Environment and Energy Management Agency

[7] URL : https://www.cerdd.org/Parcours-thematiques/Changement-climatique/Ressources-climat/Loos-en-Gohelle-un-demonstrateur-de-la-conduite-du-changement-vers-une-ville-durable

[8] L'implication des citoyen.nes : retour d'expérience de la Commune de Loos-en-Gohelle, Julian Perdrige, Jean-François Caron, Geoffrey Mathon, Antoine Raynaud, décembre 2019.

5 dimensions of the narrative approach

Managing change through narrative approach is a new method, proposed by the Transition Factory, which stems from the analysis of a successful experience in the field.

It is based on 5 fundamental dimensions that form the basis of the process and the conditions for success. These dimensions, which we will return to throughout this guide, are as follows:

- Mettre en trajectoire
- Communiquer honnêtement
- Organiser et vivre la coopération
- Impliquer réellement
- Evaluer le changement

Even though experience suggests that some dimensions should be considered before others, there is no ideal recipe. In addition, they work and resonate with each other, can overlap, be updated or restarted, there are no rules but rather a list of ingredients that everyone can use to initiate the ecological transition in their territory. These 5 dimensions that we have explored, analysed, sometimes renamed, confronted with our own experiences in the neighbourhoods, and then on the basis of which we have formulated proposals, presented to you here. These have not always been tested, and we cannot guarantee success in all contexts. We invite you to receive them as sources of inspiration, whose relevance you will be the judges and architects of their implementation in your territory.

Letting go and taking the time

Every day, as part of our missions, we have to meet pressing expectations, adapt to changes and unforeseen events, and face thousands of financial, technical, social and administrative constraints. It's tempting to use the methods we already master to try to solve problems, to solve challenges quickly and efficiently. This classic practice responds neither to the urgency nor to the systemic aspect of the transformations that need to be undertaken.

Yet, in the midst of this tumult, we must take time to extract ourselves, read, learn, listen to ourselves, observe, understand, raise our heads and look into the distance. Each partner of this project decided to take this time, to embark on an adventure which outcome he or she did not know, and was able to find a form of constructive tranquillity, a reflective bubble in the midst of the emergency.

At the end of this collective experience, beyond the result detailed in the following pages, it seems essential to us to share the process, the path that was followed:

1. Constitute a group of people from the neighbourhood or the territory, members of essential organisations (ideally the Fantastic Four[9]), sensitive to the challenges of ecological transition and aware that there is still a lot to be done, ready to devote time to integrating a sensitive and complex methodology.
2. Establish a shared timeframe for the process, with reasonable deadlines and objectives to be achieved. Understanding the narrative approach method can seem long and sometimes confusing, which is why it is important to follow a marked and safe path.
3. Organise regular meeting times, during which the 5 dimensions of the narrative approach will be addressed, discussed, debated, tested and confronted with the realities of the neighbourhood.
4. Build on what is already done, as there is sometimes a profusion of actors taking action and interacting. Narrative approach is not a new plan of action, it is a new way of looking at the past, present and future. It's a way to give even more meaning to action.
5. Apply the dimensions of the narrative approach as soon as possible, and at all scales.

Change management through the narrative approach is not a "turnkey" solution. The more we handle the concepts, the more we perceive their relevance and the more we look at the actions carried out, the projects, the partnerships and the opportunities that arise. After weeks of maturation, the members of the group give meaning to all these dimensions and their interweaving. It is a kind of common culture that will undoubtedly facilitate cooperation between actors in the context of ecological transitions.

Quite quickly, the initiating group may experience a dissonant feeling: on the one hand, the need to master more the systemic approach and this subtle methodology, within a group that moves at the same pace, and on the other hand, the deep conviction that the mastery of this process should not rest solely on a few trained and informed people and that it should be disseminated as much as possible, to ensure that all this becomes common ground.

Many questions arise and the list is long of answers to be found and choices to be made:

Is the group initiating the narrative approach the custodian of the project, of the dynamics?

How should the group share, disseminate, widen the circle, get on board?

What message should be conveyed and how should it be conveyed?

How do you simply express the real and sincere intention?

Should we open right away, in stages and concentric circles, or to everyone?

Should we share the narrative approach methodology, or simply use this method to get as many people on board as possible?

You won't necessarily find precise answers to all of these questions in this guide, but they are questions that you will probably find along the way. And it is precisely this path, with all these questions and the answers that you will come up with collectively, that will be truly transformative and will allow you to better understand change management through narrative approach.

Figure 4: illustrations of narrative inspirations in the 3 territories
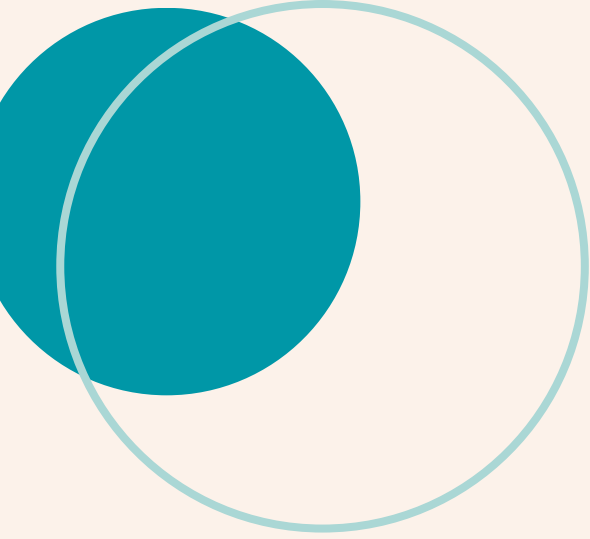
3

Inspirations and methods of action

Embracing narratives and defining a trajectory

The "ecological transition" is an expression commonly used in a wide variety of circumstances, ranging from citizens' associations to the public authorities responsible for ecological transition. At first glance, we perceive an evolution towards more environmentally friendly practices, but this says absolutely nothing about the extent of this evolution, nor the means to be mobilised.

LLiterally, a transition is a change from one state to another, but this does not define the initial state, its limits, the problems that need to be solved, the things that need to be given up. Nor does it define the horizon, the destination, the "star" we should be aiming for together, this new, improved territory that takes into account the needs of the population and contemporary issues.

In a territory, even if there are shared issues and convergences, each story is unique, especially in working-class neighbourhoods where many cultures intersect. There isn't a single history of the neighbourhood, there are as many as there are inhabitants. Whether they are large, small, anecdotal, positive, negative, traumatic or motivating, stories must be recognized and embraced in order to form the framework of a collective narrative where each inhabitant finds his or her place as a full member of a community.
It's people's lives that determine the neighbourhood, much more than statistics.

This convergence of past and contemporary narratives forms the basis of a collectively drawn trajectory: to know where we come from, to decide where we want to go. It is therefore necessary to create the conditions for welcoming, sharing and compiling these stories, which can sometimes create conflict and sometimes bring people together. The "walks through the orchards", inspired by the (see sheet 1) "Jane Jacobs walks"[10] are a series of walks in the heart of the district, guided by locals. They allow you to get in touch with the environment, the other inhabitants, while discovering the local history and culture, the needs and problems of the people who live there.

Figure 5: image from the game Sanikart-Crédit : wiki.funlab.fr

The recurrent organisation of walks can promote the link with nature, change the way we look at it and the local cultural heritage. These walks can be an opportunity to promote virtuous, ecological, social and meaningful practices. They can be evolving, theatrical, intergenerational and they must bring together, ideally, residents and institutions

Discovering the area can be as simple as that, or it can be the subject of more complex collective artistic or technological creations, such as virtual walks that allow you to navigate through the life of the neighbourhood. Karto-Party (see sheet 2) is an activity that combines two ingredients: a game involving a virtual stroll through the neighbourhood to discover stories in time and space, and entertainment through the creation of an intergenerational collective work.

Figure 6: projection of the game on the wall of a building-Crédit : wiki.funlab.fr

While the technical part of the design is more likely to attract young people, the material that allows the content to be created involves a stage of listening, meetings to better know and understand the history, the places and the life of the neighbourhood.

Building or strengthening this shared culture, this collective history, is a prerequisite if we are to envisage a transition to a better, sustainable future. But how can we chart this course together? How do we define a star, a destination, a common goal?

The tools to be mobilised must be varied and use different means of expression so that no one is left by the wayside.

The workshop offered in the narrative approach kit [11]   is very inspiring and allows you to lay the foundations of a common story.

After drawing a line representing the trajectory of the neighbourhood, taking its roots in the past, passing through the present to project themselves into the future, each participant is invited to put the striking elements of the territory, whether positive or negative, whether they are events, decisions, facts, etc.

Sufficient time must be devoted to debating conflicting representations of facts, when they arise, even before discussing the future.

Figure 7: The narrative approach kit proposed by CERDD

In the same spirit, we also carried out the exercise during a working seminar between the partners. Each team from the three countries had to represent freely, without necessarily starting from a line, its trajectory from the beginning of the Erasmus+ project to the star it wants to reach.

Here, we have combined drawing and writing, but any creative form is welcome to achieve astonishingly rich results.

Figure 8: presentation of the project of Carrozzone

Figure 9: representation of the projet of Lorqui

[11]The narrative approach kit was developed by the Sustainable Development Resource Centre (CERDD). It is available on-line and free of charge. URL : https://www.cerdd.org/Parcours-thematiques/Transitions-economiques/Ressources-transitions-economiques/1-2-et-3-ressources-pour-explorer-la-mise-en-recits-des projets-de-transitions

What might this trajectory be that we want to follow collectively? What does transition mean in our neighbourhood? What are we seeing today and where do we want to go? This was the exercise we undertook, with rich exchanges that were not always light-hearted, but which enabled us to land on this shared vision. We wanted to give concrete meaning to the idea of "ecological transition", by cross-referencing the points of view of the members of the working group, based on their own experience, their lived experience and their knowledge of the neighbourhood and its residents. Following this discussion, a summary was proposed, amended and validated by the group.

Current views of the neighbourhood: There is a model, a narrative that can be described as "dominant" for our society as a whole, and therefore for the neighbourhood. It's based on consumerism, competition, relationships of domination and inequality. In the Sanitas district, this model rubs shoulders with alternative lifestyles developed for cultural, social, economic or other reasons.

A small number of residents find their place in the dominant model (income, lifestyle, social relations, etc.). A larger number seek their place in this model, but don't really find it, resulting in debt, financial insecurity, frustration and insecurity. We can also include here "outlaw" models such as drug trafficking, prostitution, etc.

On the other hand, part of the population develops habits outside the dominant model. These can be described as good practices (mutual aid, solidarity, recovery, repair, etc.). But it is more often than not out of necessity, and with a certain shame because of the place of reference occupied by the other model. Some players and residents have managed to find their place in these alternative practices, and are proud and happy about it, or are in the process of doing so (e.g. Map'cooking, TIPI, échange ta fripe, etc.).

Finally, some people are excluded from these lifestyles, or even from society in general.

The Sanitas in 2040: A large part of the population has become proud of its daily practices, sharing them and improving them. They have become an inspiration to other residents.

LTransition is not a matter of eco-gestures, but of changing the way we look at lifestyles that are already frugal and virtuous, and by their very nature environmentally friendly, and making best practice more widespread. This change will enable residents to become more self-sufficient, lifting them out of precariousness and insecurity. The dominant model of 2020 has become a secondary way of life.
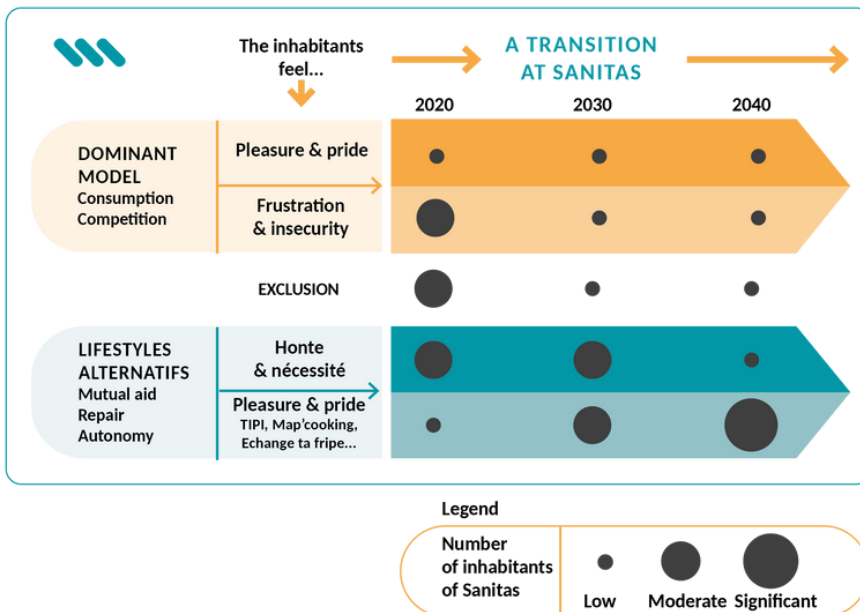
Dimension 2

Communicate honestly, to express intent

Since we are talking about "change management", it is worth asking "who" should lead the change and how. A neighbourhood is not a city or a village, it is a part of the territory with particular characteristics. Governance is therefore different and the organisation of democratic life is adapted to the context.

The people who decide to initiate a narrative approach process within a priority neighbourhood are not necessarily from the municipality and the communication can take an upward, downward or horizontal direction. Regardless of the sender and receiver of the message, communication as a tool is essential. Of course, it must be connected to local life, articulated in time and space and above all to be "handled with care", sincerity and honesty to avoid the trap of propaganda[12].

This complex topic is not fully resolved at the time of writing . However, we decided to explore several different avenues for each territory.

Honest communication to build trust at Carrozzone

The presence of a trusted outsider who is active in the district can be a real asset for communication. If he or she is the driving force behind the storytelling process, then his or her role, identity and relationship to the neighbourhood are essential. The posture to adopt is that of a facilitator, a megaphone, building fluid bridges, communicating horizontally and vertically (see sheet 3).

For this reason, it is essential to identify the right person or persons capable of adjusting the codes and adapting to the codes to facilitate exchanges and create a climate of trust: this particular position of mediation can facilitate dialogue between public stakeholders, residents and their collectives, and social actors. Organising focus groups, meetings between old and new residents, between volunteers and professionals, between citizens and institutions is an opportunity to establish a climate of confidence and to hear people's stories.

The creation of an effective communication context enables this actor to propose a starting point for the approach, while making it clear that the trajectory and the process will be constructed by the participants. Honest communication is therefore more than just a method; it becomes a meaningful process that is open to listening and values everyone's contributions.

[12] Propaganda is a set of persuasive techniques used to propagate, by any means available, an opinion or ideology (Source: Wikipedia

Slogan and opening event at Sanitas

A good way to extract the essence of the purpose is to find a slogan that will express, in a few words, the intention shared by the stakeholders. After conducting our work on the trajectory and clarifying what the ecological transition could mean at Sanitas, we carried out this difficult exercise in several stages:

- Brainstorming with all the keywords that can resonate with the trajectory

- Discussions in pairs to make "unfiltered" proposals of slogans

- Classification of proposals by theme, category

- Open discussion and selection by elimination.

Following these sequences, which have passed for several weeks, a final discussion was launched, starting from the initial proposals and leaving open to new proposals.

This whole process took several months, allowing time for maturation and reflection.

Thus, the last sequence led to a slogan that was unanimously agreed upon within the working group.

Volte-face au Sanitas
S'accorder au présent pour prendre soin du futur

Figure 10: a slogan for the narrative approach in the Sanitas district - "Volte-Face au Sanitas - tuning into the present to take care of the future".

In addition to this work on the slogan, it was decided to organise a "multi-purpose" communication event to widen the circle.

The morning is designed in a fairly classic format for an institutional audience, in order to communicate in a bottom-up manner and turned towards the outside of the district (city, metropolis, department, region, State, neighbouring territories and other partners, etc.).

The afternoon is dedicated to residents and actors already involved in the life of the neighbourhood, in order to share with them the 5 dimensions of narrative approach, through workshops, experiences and testimonies of the members of the initiating group.

External outreach morning	Local involvement afternoon
• **80 people** • **Institutional and professional actors** • **Conferences/round tables** • **Speeches and reactions from the public**	• **50 people** • **Residents, neighbourhood stakeholders** • **Workshops and forum theatre** • **Testimonials**

Dealing with the difficulties
of municipal communication in Lorqui

From the experience of Lorquí City Council, which can be extrapolated to many organisations, there is a feeling within the institution that the messages they send do not reach citizens. Similarly, some citizens consider that there is no effective communication with the authorities. This leads to statements such as "Public authorities don't listen to us" or "We ask citizens and they don't reply".

How can a climate of trust emerge, a desire to cooperate and transform, if there is no communication, and if the same observation is made by the institutions and the public?

Narrative approach is also about "offering doors to embark" in a story that we want to experience in the heart of the neighbourhood. These doors must be open for everyone, whether they are shopkeepers, parents, associations or residents.
We can use marketing and communication tools here because they allow us to be effective, and highlight several determining elements (see diagram below).
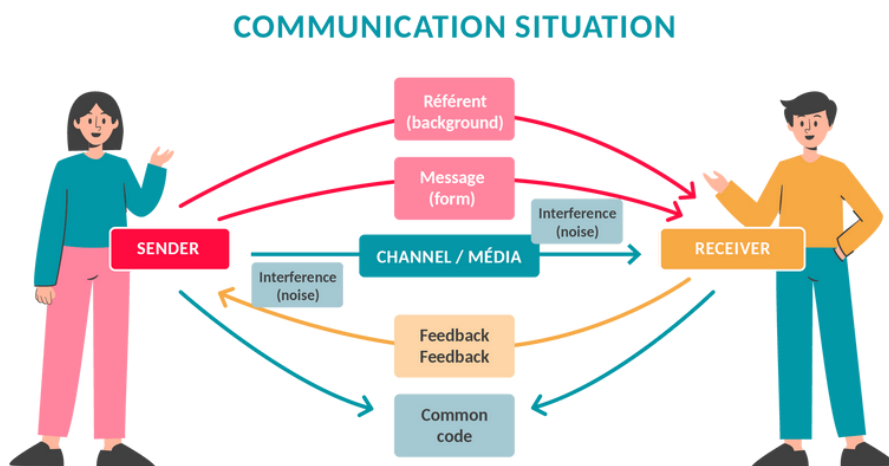
Figure 11 : schéma de la communication

However, we must not fall into the trap of propaganda.

The story to be told in the neighbourhood will have been worked on collectively, and will be the result of a sincere and transparent process.

And the purpose of the local storytelling process will be precisely to welcome alternative, sometimes contradictory or clearly opposed, stories, to take them into account and enrich the trajectory, the shared vision.

Really engage to embody change

The public must not just be spectators, but also agents of change. The public needs to be able to observe - we'll come back to this in the evaluation section - but it also needs to take the initiative, to be put in a position to act, to have an impact on everyday life, on the life of the neighbourhood. The more visible the impact, the more pride it generates, the more commitment it fosters.

Figure 12: planting a shrub in the flowers district

Lorqui's experience has provided an important lesson from his work on a major subject: the greening of the city. From the initiative of the municipality, an invitation to flower the doors and facades, as well as the public spaces was carried out to offer plants, pots etc. to the inhabitants. Not only has no real dynamic emerged within the population to maintain and bring this plant to life, but there have been thefts and damage that have caused a feeling of disappointment. In another neighbourhood, residents spontaneously planted flowers and this time the result was great: the birth of the self-proclaimed "Barrio de las flores" ("flower district"), a name change that was the subject of a petition filed to the municipality (see sheet 5)

Real involvement is a posture of welcoming, facilitating, supporting, amplifying projects driven by and for citizens. It is a practice and a posture radically different from an expectation of participation in projects decided elsewhere and imposed. Success and sustainability are also very different.

OA similar result can be observed with the experience of the Planitas, a citizen project for an urban and shared vegetable garden at the foot of the Sanitas buildings. Driven by a local resident on the inspiration of the international movement [13] of incredible edibles, this project consists of creating a vegetable production area at the foot of the buildings, in which everyone can come and help themselves freely.

This project was supported by a local association, in conjunction with the social landlord who made the spaces dedicated to culture available. Here again, the project is not driven by associative, social or municipal actors, but they provide support, accompaniment and multiplication to enable the inhabitants to have the means to act.

Figure 13: planters at Planitas in Tours

Here we propose an action (see sheet 6) inspired by this initiative, with an idea of scaling up food production in the neighbourhood.
The visibility of vegetable production and related activities (wooden constructions, seed exchanges, plantations, etc.) at the foot of the buildings is a way of making involvement, action and cooperation very concrete and observable by the inhabitants.

[13] URL : https://lesincroyablescomestibles.fr/

Dimension 4

Organising and living cooperation for a strong and sustainable dynamic

Neighbourhood's stakeholders are used to work together, as projects are often numerous and sometimes intertwined, involving several actors. So, what characterises cooperation in the context of narrative approach? If the subject is essential, it is because there is often, in organisations, a mode of operation based on "coordination", consisting of effectively distributing tasks to achieve a goal. To put it briefly, "some think, others act" with one priority: the result.

While this principle may seem comfortable and efficient, it is not adapted to the challenges of systemic transition, in a world of continuous reconfiguration in which everyone must face complex, non-standardizable, non-replicable situation [14] .

In priority neighbourhoods, this complexity is already a daily occurrence and cooperative processes are often very present, in different ways. After an initial reflex that could lead us to think "I know what is cooperation, we do it every day", we must nevertheless look further into this area, because the management of change through narrative approach is different from the usual cooperation. It is an approach designed to transform organisations, teams, working relationships, to gradually involve everyone, all actors, over an indefinite period of time.

Figure 14: conditions for successful cooperation - Sanitas team
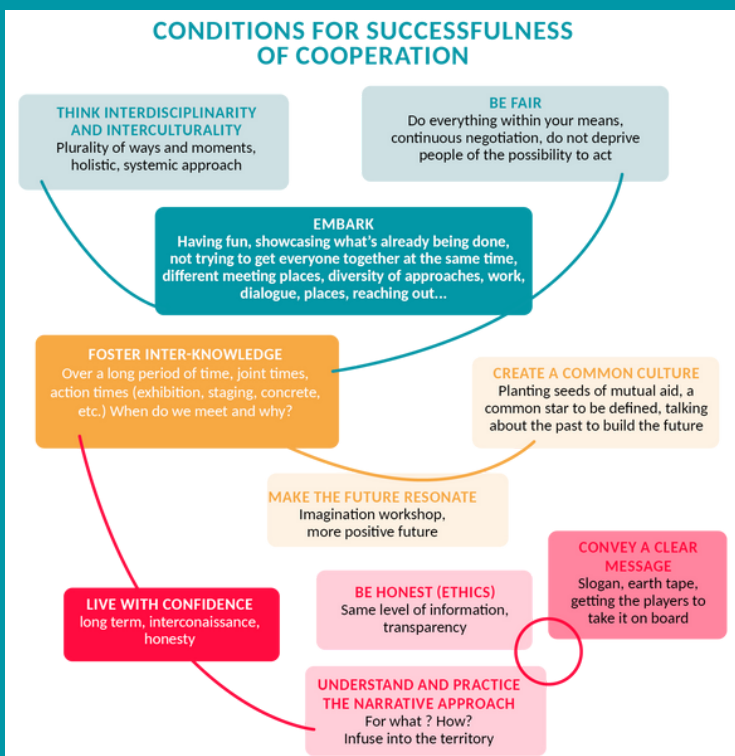
LCooperation here is a way of living together sustainably, without limits of time and space. It is also an opportunity to put conflicts to work, not to be satisfied with the "soft consensus" that slows down transitions by evacuating essential issues.

The first stage of the work therefore consists of looking at our own practices and find a common definition of cooperation as part of the storytelling process.

This work enabled us to formalize the conditions for successful cooperation.

Each initiating group in each country has carried out its own work, and we reproduce here that of Sanitas and a more complete sheet on that of Carrozzone (see sheet4)

[14] The 4 Fundamentals of Change Management, La Fabrique des transitions, 2022, p32..

The second step involves working on postures, whether they are hierarchical, institutional, expert, reputational or principled.

While it is sometimes necessary to maintain a position in debates, it can also prevent people from speaking out, and create mistrust at a time when we need to rely on collective intelligence and mutual trust.

What better way to understand the other than to find yourself in their place

The experience of a role-playing game in which everyone is assigned an unusual function and a position to defend, allows you to instantly get out of the usual conditioning. It destabilises points of view, arguments, narratives are very different and sometimes contradictory even if they coexist.

Cooperation requires this meeting.

In this exercise, each actor in each neighbourhood was assigned a role:

- *The urban planner who wants to develop and construct buildings;*

- *The naturalist who wants to revegetate and give nature as much space as possible ;*

- *The economist who wants to attract businesses at all costs for the sake of economic development;*

-
- *The cartographer who needs to collect the viewpoints and represent them on a map Etc.*

With everyone defending their own point of view, the goal is to come up with a sketch of the ideal and resilient neighbourhood in 2043!
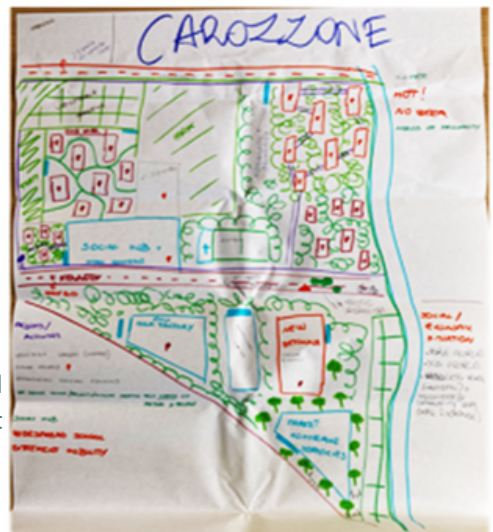
Figure 15: representation of the Carrozzone in 2043 produced during a workshop

Another aspect of cooperation is to better know and understand the ecosystem of the neighbourhood, the actors, the relationships and influences, the connections and interdependencies [15].

This ecosystem can be represented in different ways, as illustrated by the following two diagrams from our work.

[15] CEERD has developed the Carto-Party mapping tool to better understand its territory. Freely accessible tool.. URL : https://www.cerdd.org/Actualites/Transitions-economiques-vers-le-DD/Carto-Party-le-kit-pour-reveler-toutes-les-ressources-des-acteur-rices-de-votre-territoire

This first diagram represents a galaxy of actors present or interacting with the neighbourhood.
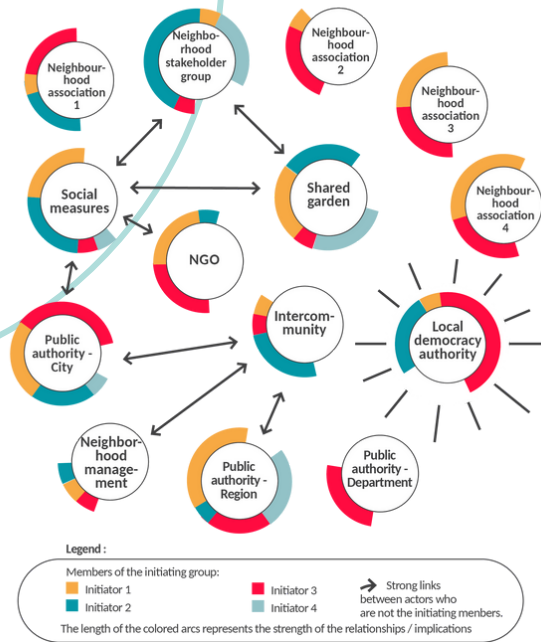
In this example, each member of the initiating group indicates, with a colour, what his or her level of interaction with other actors is, so that everyone understands the importance of relationships and the entry points to engage in this process of narrative approach

In this second scheme, we seek to represent the extension of the circle of cooperation, gradually integrating new inhabitants, new organisations, and new people within the organisations.

CIRCLES OF PARTNERS - NARRATIVE APPROACH
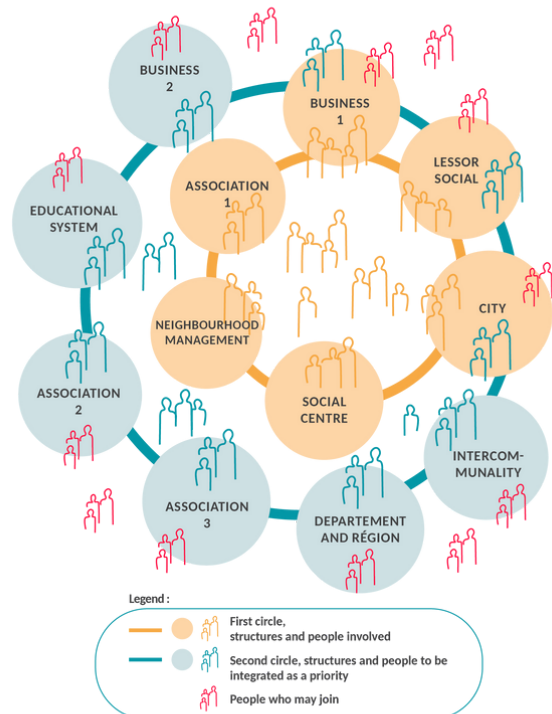
At the centre are the people who constitute the initiating group. They may be residents of the neighbourhood, and/or members of certain organisations.

Gradually, it is necessary to widen the circle and share this "culture" of cooperation and narrative approach within the structures already involved, but also with other collectives and inhabitants.

Dimension 5

Evaluating change through narrative approach

The ecological and social transition has been part of our daily lives for years and at all levels. But is society really changing? Are the transformations that are taking place up to the challenge?
Today, the figures speak for themselves and tell us that, collectively, we are not on the right paths, whether it is our impact on biodiversity, pollution, energy consumption or the climate.

As Agathe Devaux-Spatarakis, PhD in Political Science, explains[16], evaluation is essential [17] and can have several roles:

Instrumental	Enlightening	Persuasive
Allows you to use the results to correct the action if necessary	Sheds light on phenomena, provides inspiration, knowledge and new insights	Legitimate a choice, a decision, provides a demonstration, serves as an argument
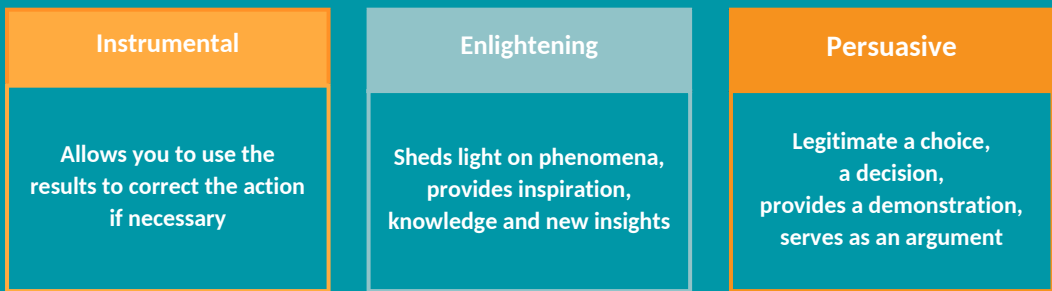
Thus, evaluation allows us to perceive any discrepancies between reality and what was desired, it helps us to understand developments, whether positive or negative. Finally, it provides us with essential decision-making support when it comes to making difficult or restrictive choices. However, our society is saturated with numerical indicators that lead us into an "accounting" approach to life, far removed from the systemic approach.

Julian Perdrigeat, General Delegate of the Transition Factory, testifies to the fact that: "ce qui compte vraiment ne se compte pas toujours, mais se raconte" ("what really counts is not always counted, but is told"). We must therefore find ways to evaluate the perceptible, qualitative changes, which do not necessarily fit into spreadsheets to be translated into charts and graphs, but which can be told, drawn, sung, played, observed...

However, people in precarious situations are often not very present in the public space, in traditional meetings or places of expression and speech. This is why it is necessary to create or use spaces to observe, to make the invisible visible, to welcome narratives whatever they may be, wherever they come from, because they are the only way to perceive if changes are at work

[16] https://scienceetbiencommun.pressbooks.pub/evaluationanthologie/chapter/introduction-a-quoi-sert-levaluation/,
[17] fundamentals of the narrative approach

The TIPI : a laboratory for narrative approach at Sanitas

Collecting unsold goods at the end of the market before they are thrown away is an activity that we practice "with our heads down" when the lack of means does not allow us to buy food. However, "good ecological practices" tell us that we must recover, avoid waste, and recycle. This means that not only is there nothing to be ashamed of, but there is something to be proud of in this best practice.

Organising this activity, making it normal and even inspiring, then reproducing or amplifying it, highlighting it through press articles or visits from personalities are evolutions that transform people, looks, desires, opinions.

Figure 16: participation of a Member of Parliament in TIPI activities

This is what is observed under the "Intervention Tent for Unsold Goods" set up by the Pluriel(le)s Social Centre at Sanitas.

We must take advantage of these moments, whether they are habitual or exceptional, to listen, observe and evaluate the changes. It is necessary to allow the people concerned to measure what is happening in their lives and those of their neighbours, and also to allow the inhabitants to take the measure of these positive transformations. At the time of writing this guide, the work is not complete but interviews and podcasts must be carried out on site by trusted people or organisations.

Evaluation experimented in the Erasmus+ project

As part of the project, the IPP team carried out the assessment mission. They drew some lessons from this, including the fact that evaluation is a continuous, transversal, contextualised and embodied activity.

To assess within the framework of the narrative approach for the ecological transition, it is necessary to situate oneself in the spatio-temporal framework, in the collectively elaborated trajectory, towards a socially and ecologically sustainable future. This is the common thread to be followed that will determine the very framework of the evaluation.

To evaluate activities, participants should always be invited to freely share their ideas and views, sometimes collaborative brainstorming or questionnaires should be prepared, and participants should be motivated to respond in a targeted manner. This must make sense for the actors involved, in terms of the substance of the subjects addressed and the form of the evaluation.

Based on our experience, we believe that it is also important to take moments during the activities for the participants to express their interpretations and evaluations on how things are going so far and how they position themselves in relation to the different aspects of the qualities and expected objectives of the project, as well as the means to achieve them.

For example, during a working seminar, we created an outdoor group assessment, asking people to situate themselves in the space on a scale of 0 to 10, concerning the following points:

- people's confidence in the use of the narrative approach;

- people's motivation to continue this work after the project is completed;

- the opportunity to make cooperative management a reality in their organisation and in their local community;

Figure 17: outdoor project evaluation

Finally, evaluation must also be a cooperative process, meaning that we need the involvement of as many participants as possible. The same actors and residents must not only take part in the activities and contribute content, but also develop the evaluation methods and implement them. In this way, we can ensure that all the participants are actually involved in the evaluation. For example, in this project, the evaluation model was proposed by the IPP, the university partner, on the basis of discussions with the project coordinators, and then presented to all the consortium partners for their opinion.

It can be useful to have a research team as external observers to support the work of the project, which offer a broader perspective from a less involved observer and provide an evaluation framework. This research team can, as happened in our project, also take part in and energize the activities, encouraging participants to reflect on their realities and experiences during the project and to share these with others.

In the course of this project, the role played by IPP has enabled us to observe very clearly a solid change in the local teams, in terms of their appropriation of the narrative approach and a clearer perspective of their ecological transition horizons.

Since the narrative approach is a methodology for facilitating change, the evaluation must be eminently formative and qualitative in nature. In this sense, it is very important for evaluation to be continuous and thoughtful from the start of the construction of the narrative, so that it can contribute to the development and progression of the process.

We have identified the following dimensions to be taken into account for the evaluation:

- Diversity and representativeness of the stakeholders involved

- Level of participation by the stakeholders/actors involved

- Scope of participation of the stakeholders/actors

- Transparency, clarity and fairness in communication

- Degree of dissemination of processes and proposals

4

Conclusion

Driving change through narrative approach is an exciting and fascinating path.

It's not a simple, magical solution that you can simply call on the experts for.

It's a collective learning process that calls for humility, benevolence and creativity, and that gives us hope.

Priority neighbourhoods are at the heart of this guide, and narrative approach is a way to change the way we look at things. These territories are rich in unparalleled cultural diversity and exemplary lifestyles through their frugality and the plurality of imaginations. Let's bet that the ecology of beautiful neighbourhoods will soon draw its inspiration from the daily practices of residents who have become proud of who they are, where they live and the future they are shaping collectively.

This guide is both the culmination of a European approach and, for the actors of Carrozzone, Lorqui and Sanitas, a first step in a process that has only just begun.

Inspiration
and method sheets

Walks in the Huerta

IN A NUTSHELL

"Paseo Huertano" or "walk through the orchards" is an intergenerational themed walk through symbolic places and spaces in the neighbourhood. Walking and talking, neighbours look back on past lifestyles and inspire each other for the future. The main theme of the shared example is the huerta.

DESCRIPTION

"Paseo Huertano" is an activity inspired by the "Jane's walks" movement.
This series of neighbourhood walks was launched in honour of the North American activist Jane Jacobs, who campaigned for the conservation of neighbourhoods on a human scale in the 1960s. [18] Organised every year, Jane's walks are voluntary and can be led by anyone with an interest in the neighbourhood in which they live, work or visit. It's a human experience that reinforces solidarity and civic commitment. It's also a call to urban professionals to get out, walk and meet the local people and their day-to-day expertise. These walks offer a personal insight into local culture, social history and the problems faced by local residents. Since its creation in 2007, Jane's Walk has taken place in many cities around the world[19].

 For Jacobs, residents are the ones who best understand the place in which they live, and this knowledge is necessary to improve and strengthen the neighbourhood. The fact that such a project is their initiative is the essential ingredient.

 If you are a professional from a local association or if you represent public institution, focus on the process, on creating favourable conditions, an environment conducive to the emergence of such a project and on providing the means to enable it to be carried out and repeated. Participate, support, listen and develop your understanding, pay attention to weak signals, notice critical points, collect stories...
 All this could feed into your future strategies and actions. Don't hesitate to suggest complementary activities or ways of strengthening the dynamics.

 If you're a local resident, invite your neighbours (and their families) to take a walk in the natural areas of your neighbourhood, and suggest a single route or several alternatives.

 Huerta, horta, orto, garden... urban gardening to meet the needs of a family or to share within the neighbourhood: a life style and values that form the backdrop to this example.

[18] https://mobilitepietonne.ch/janes-walk/
[19] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane's_Walk#cite_note-janeswalk.org-1

Huerta culture is rooted primarily in the traditions of the Iberian Peninsula. However, it can be universally understood as an invitation to open up a discussion and reflection on what the ecological transition means for the earth and for human beings.

Walking from huerta to huerta, neighbours take the time to reflect on past practices, perhaps forgotten or neglected today. And they connect with each other and with nature, simply*.

Mills, irrigation ditches, troglodyte houses, vegetable gardens, canneries... at each stage of the trail, you can explain the importance of the place, go back to its origins, highlight the sustainability of the practices that have grown out of it, open a discussion on the values it embodies and its relevance to today's challenges. Encourage your participants to share their stories and perceptions.

When constructing a route, intergenerational exchange is the dynamic we are looking for.

For the younger generations, an orienteering race could increase the motivation of teenagers and children to research and explore the history, values and traditions of the region by adding an element of challenge. As part of the preparations for the event, you could entrust them with mapping resources, collecting images, etc.

All these discoveries, encounters and personal accounts will change the way residents see their own neighbourhood. This work on the past, the present and the future is helping to nurture and build a common, shared trajectory.

IDEAS

- *Simple tools and uncomplicated activities can be powerful moments for triggering changes in perception;

- Questions that can guide your preparation:

How can you see your home town, your neighbourhood with different eyes? How to look to see what your grandparents see? How to listen to hear what the children hear? How can you express yourself so that your neighbours can hear you? How can you share so as to help build a common path? How can we make the link between the past, in which we may or may not have participated, and the present? How can this richness pave the way for the future?

SHEET 2

Karto-Party

IN A NUTSHELL

Karto-Party is based on two main ingredients - a video game and a community animation method. Karto-Party is a pedagogy of action and a tool for decompartmentalization that can be adapted to different circumstances and serve multiple objectives.
It ends with a party.

DESCRIPTION

"Karto-Party" is a process of co-creation, with a group of young local residents, of a video game to be played by their neighbours at a public event.

The game is based on the free software SuperTuxKart[20], a go-kart racing game distributed under the terms of the GNU General Public Licence. When you create a personalised version of the game, the SuperTuxKart engine is your base. The game is designed, programmed and mapped by young people, accompanied by technical facilitators who are skilled in the use of open-source software.

The district is reproduced from OpenStreetMap resources[21], a geographic database that has been populated by participants with images and other (collected) data about their neighbourhood. The more complete the Open Street Map database, the richer the game.

The environment is modelled in 3D. The karts featured in the game may be the result of the creative work of the contributors involved.

The game is a circuit that can be covered on foot, running or racing a vehicle. Players find themselves in a representation of their own neighbourhood, with its iconic and lesser-known landmarks and buildings.

Once the game is ready, it can be played by anyone on any number of occasions, displayed on a screen or projected onto a building facade for a one-off or regular event.

The teenagers can then run the game as part of indoor workshops, or in the street as part of an open event. Welcoming the public, explaining the rules and engaging in conversations along the (virtual) route can be an intergenerational ice-breaker, a community turning point, a simple but powerful tool for initiating the trajectory of a population and its neighbourhood.

It's the animation that makes the difference and enables the game, initially conceived as a go-kart racing platform, to become (for example) a tool that mobilises and empowers young people to play the role of mediators with the community's elderly.

33

[20] supertuxkart.net
[21] https://www.openstreetmap.fr/

The tour can be thematic, enabling players to discover and explore the area through its nature (natural heritage), its resilient/frugal practices and its solidarity initiatives and, in so doing, initiate a discussion on socio-environmental challenges and opportunities. Exchanges between the young facilitators and the public can help to discover the existing wealth of alternative names given to emblematic places in the neighbourhood, highlight changes in the landscape - the before and after of "our favourite square" or "what has become of the oak tree that used to grow near the primary school we used to attend".

It can be a moment of enriching confrontation between our own perceptions of life in the neighbourhood and the experiences of our neighbours.

It can be a simple "food for thought" or a prolific opportunity to collect stories from the past, share the energy of current events and imagine what the desired situation/state might be.

You can set up a film booth to capture testimonies or become an attentive listener and write down what you hear. You can invite visitors to leave a word or two in a guest book or on a dedicated "expression wall".

IDEAS

To strengthen the link with the ecological transition, you could:
- Create several possible routes that explore the natural heritage of the district, for example by following the garden circuit, presenting the aromatic herbs that grow in the district, ... ;
- Rework the game's audio track, adding sounds of nature, urban noise, etc. that could be designed by local players;

Mapping the ecosystem of local associations and businesses, noting the skills present in the district and referencing existing initiatives and actions;

Integrate additional functionalities, for example: while some members of the public are testing the game, others can vote for project ideas or add neighbourhood skills to the map...

Link to the activity that inspired us:

https://savoirscommuns.comptoir.net/operation_SaniKart

Communication: a story of perspectives

IN A NUTSHELL

This is an example of learning by doing, experienced by a local organisation which, while adopting and putting into practice the narrative approach, has understood and taken on board the complexity of the communication dimension of the method.

DESCRIPTION

Communication is not always institutional, and storytelling is a process that can be initiated by any local actor. Here, we share the experience of a local structure (IPES [22]), at the interface between the public and private sectors, which has set itself the mission of taking the neighbourhood ecosystem and the municipality on a journey exploring the potential of the narrative approach in the context of transitions.

STARTING POINT:

After working on and integrating the dimensions of the narrative approach internally, IPES embarked on a process of honest communication, starting by clearly identifying the advantages and limitations of its intermediary position. How can we adopt and embody a sincere narrative approach with the municipality, local stakeholders and the general public?

The question of communication seems to be at the core of the success of its mission.

Because of its position and the nature of the process, IPES, from one side dialogues with local policies and local public priorities, from the other side, it experiments horizontal approach (IPES facilitates exchanges between stakeholders and residents, etc.) and bottom-up approach (the progress and results of the mission are forwarded to the institution for consideration).

DESIGN:

In order to get to grips with narrative approach, IPES places the entire mission (the method and its content) within its principles and framework. In the activities proposed, we find elements of the "trajectory" dimension of the territory. The questions related to the posture come under the "cooperation". The way in which we think about co-constructing a common future with local residents calls for "real involvement".

· ·
[22] IPES is an made-up name used to identify this organisation throughout the text.

The organisation therefore notes that the quest for honest communication cuts across all levels of the mission and applies to all these dimensions of narrative approach.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The activities are designed to provide a framework for exploring and experimenting with communication postures and tools.

For example, in order to explore the subject of the past, present and future, peer-to-peer discussions (horizontal communication) and focus-group type meetings, bringing together mixed audiences, are proposed to local residents and stakeholders. In addition, to go beyond words and open up other channels of communication, participants are invited to explore the district through a sensory and immersive experience.

The composition of the group and the people taking part in the activity, form the environment that creates the conditions, good or bad, for communication. Inviting long-standing residents, newcomers and former residents, volunteers and professionals currently working in the neighbourhood, private and public social workers... open the door to a richness of stories. The starting point, therefore, is the awareness that alternative viewpoints and possible conflicts must be given space and tools to be expressed and experienced, and that they can subsequently be the subject of upward communication. This awareness must be shared by all interested parties. The involvement of external observers can also be proven useful in achieving this sensitive environment.

IPES facilitates exchanges and brings together these different voices and perspectives.

The aim of his work is to co-create a trajectory marked by the events that have contributed to the identity of the place. The aim is to bring these stories together into a common thread and, ultimately, to work with the local authority to produce a narration that everyone can relate to.

To convey the narrative approach effectively, it needs to be embodied. With this in mind, and in relation to the population and professional stakeholders, IPES is assessing its position as an intermediary organisation and remains vigilant to the way in which it may be perceived by the participants, in order to fullfil properly the role of a third party.

- *Embodying the spirit of narrative approach is a matter of posture.*

The professionals who lead or facilitate the activities do not bring a story that has already been written, but start from the stories of those who have experienced or witnessed the transformations.

Gathered, discussed and reflected upon, the stories add up to a multi-perspective representation of what happened in the neighbourhood, why it happened and what the consequences were.

Single narratives and single readings are not the goal. Multiperspectivity makes individual stories visible.

- *Tools and methods ensure the consistency of the process.*

Working with mixed groups raises the issue of different communication codes. When trying to create a communication context in a multicultural neighbourhood, it is necessary to look at this aspect in greater depth.

When does navigating different codes to reach different populations become a genuine engagement strategy?

Given the complexity of the process, the choice of tools and methods is strategic. Identifying emblematic community locations and establishing relationships with key people who can act as dialogue facilitators are essential. In this case, we go well beyond the simple linguistic translation of content, seeking to understand the meanings and representations rooted in different cultures.

The messages must be inclusive, using sufficient codes, and the strategies must be appropriable by the different audiences. Consequently, communication in the context of narrative approach must guarantee the dignity of expression and respect the commitment in order to provide honest results in which all participants are able to recognise themselves.

CONCLUSION FOR THE FUTURE:

 PES's intermediary position can facilitate dialogue with local residents and professionals, and provide an interface with other public organisations.

If the posture is consistent and adapted to the context we have just described, the intermediary position and the role of accompanier give to this type of actor the ability to "shortening" the distance that sometimes develops between institutions and residents.

Paying attention to weak signals

Coming forward to meet people

Let the project live

Accompagner la réflexion

Provide technical and economic support

Laying the foundations for the project

Help with implementation

The conditions for successfulness of cooperation in the narrative approach

The diagram illustrates the result of a brainstorming developed with educators, social workers and project managers whom were asked the following question:

What are the conditions for a successful cooperation within the narrative approach?
The participants began to answer this question by defining 9 areas for reflection, which in turn were developed specifically with regard to potential and risks:

1. Roles: sharing roles helps the participants to find their own position, to define who the reference persons are when necessary. At the same time, it allows those who take the initiative to find their place in the dynamic and the group, to take account of favourable or unfavourable "leaderships".

2. The consensus method: this method ensures broad involvement and the collection of many points of view, as well as facilitating continuity in the future. It is about recognizing conflict and not denying it.
! The important thing is that the search for consensus at all costs does not lead the group to become "hostage to opposition minorities".

3. The temporal dimension: clarifying the chronology of a process enables all the participants to give themselves a clear time horizon with regard to the results and to organise time as a key resource in the process.

4. The context: knowing the pre-existing conditions of the process allows each person to respect the context and its specificities while respecting their identity and history.

5. Commitment: the aim is to value each contribution by creating confidence in the contribution that each person can make and by strengthening the position of those who show a real and sincere interest.

6. Objectives: it is important to start by identifying common objectives and making them clear to all participants from the outset. These must not be confused with the means to be used to achieve them.

7. Reality: It is necessary to go beyond the officialdom in search of reality. That's why it's essential to be - even physically - in the spaces and places you want to animate through co-operation.

8. Continuity: cooperation must know its own continuous development, with a perspective that goes beyond clearly defined projects.

9. The role and attitude of the public authority: the participating public body must adopt an attitude of listening and respect of what already exists, trying to put itself on the same level as the participants.

CONDITION OF SUCCESS

METHOD CONSENSUAL

- Ensure involvement and raise personal points of view
- Ensure the continuity and future sustainability
- do not be a hostage of a minority but work to find the real consensus
- Recognise the conflict and not deny it
- ask and share everyone's real roles

Before / After

TEMPORAL DIMENSION

- Clarify the actual timing to achieve the desired changes
- Share commitment and time dedicated

ROLES

- clarify the role of coordinator and the methodologies from the beginning

THE BACKGROUND

- Respect all the conditions of the context
- Know the existing conditions to build the prerogatives of the future consensus
- Preserve the history and the identity, reassure
- Value any type of contribution (ideas, relationship, skills...)

ROLE AND ATTITUDE OF PUBLIC ENTITIES

- be able to participate at the same level as the audience
- approach the context respecting existing roles

COMMITMENT

- Genuinely participative moments with genuinely interested people
- Trust in the contribution of others

CONTINUITY

- Empower people to ensure continuity of participation
- Work to ensure continuity of results

REALITY

- Go beyond officiality, real participation
- to live, to be «in» the places of cooperation

OBJECTIVES

- Clarify the objective from the beginning
- Find common goals
- Don't confuse the process with the goal (often the only goal left is the process itself. If the process is the real goal, it needs to be clarified)

39

Blossoming neighbourhood

IN A NUTSHELL

The "Blossoming neighbourhood" project is an example of the evolution of posture of a local authority which, in search to "improve the participation of residents" through top-down projects, found itself at a dead-end and had to take a step aside.

DESCRIPTION

The starting point is a local authority's will to address the local population's lack of involvement in the activities on offer.

The reasons for this non-participation are identified as a lack of confidence in the local authorities and therefore in the projects they run/launch, under-information of the population, a lack of understanding of municipal initiatives, and a weak sense of belonging to the community. Incentive measures are being proposed and several projects are being implemented to remedy this.

One of the actions being tested is a municipal initiative aimed at beautifying the streets of a selected district by inviting the local population to put flowers on the doors and facades of houses and to add plants in public parks [21].

Communication around the project focuses on the aesthetic aspects of the action and highlights the thermoregulatory and air-purifying benefits of increasing the amount of vegetation in urban areas. Several residents promote the activities to their neighbours, in the hope that the residents' motivation will blossom like the flowers planted in the neighbourhood streets.

However, the plants do not flourish as expected, and neither is the local involvement. There was no follow-up and no local ownership of the results.

Almost at the same time, a group of residents from the neighbouring district launches their own flower-planting activities. As the project grow and the plants began to bloom in different areas, the residents decide that a neighbourhood embellished in this way deserves a name worthy of its new-found beauty. This is how the self-proclaimed "Barrio de las flores" ("neighbourhood of flowers") is born. The residents petitioned the local council to officially change the name of their neighbourhood.

[21]   Facing the street, the front of the house is the place where the beauty of private space also becomes the beauty of public space. By decorating their facades, residents are invited to make the public space their own.

SO WHAT HAS HAPPENED ?

Experiences gained, lessons learnt, the municipality returns to action/ resumes action. The narrative approach comes in handy here with a set of guiding principles. As the posture evolves and the language gradually changes, the means are adapted and a new strategy emerges.

The change can be seen in the way the municipal team looks at public action. In particular, we are no longer asking ourselves what might be of interest to local residents, but rather what conditions need to be in place to create an environment conducive to active citizen participation and the genuine involvement of local players.

1/ On cooperation and involvement

The question is no longer what tools to provide, but how to create local dynamics that inspire, motivate and empower residents to take action. The local action group, made up of members from different council departments, takes a cooperative approach to coordinate a project.
The preparation phase involves co-designing the action with local residents, based on their needs. A survey of their preferences and needs (decorative plants, food, etc.) is used to choose the appropriate flowers, plants and pots (available free of charge to all neighbours).

2/ On communication

We absolutely avoid any exploitation or instrumentalization, and we ask ourselves what actions we can take as an institution to really encourage bottom-up initiatives and promote their results. In this case, a competition will be organised at the end of the activity, inviting neighbours to choose the most beautiful facade and the best-tended flowers. Perhaps recognition would be motivating. We wonder when a local authority's external viewpoint will recognise the value of local residents and their actions, and what impact it will have. External communication can emphasise the possible benefits, particularly socio-ecological.

3/ On implementation and governance

We are seeking to co-create projects with sustainable results by redefining the role and function of a municipality, assessing when to abstain, leaving space to adequately support citizen-led actions. For example, a series of workshops will be organised to help residents look after their plants, but perhaps some neighbours could take the initiative and pass on their knowledge to others, or an ongoing exchange of practices could be envisaged.

Shared gardening space

IN A NUTSHELL

CIt's an inspiring example of citizen involvement - a project initiated by a local resident and run by a group of volunteers that lasts over time and evolves in a positive way.

DESCRIPTION

The shared garden is a long-term project set up by a local resident who, inspired by the Incredible Edible[23] movement, has decided to experiment this approach on a neighbourhood scale. Her aim was to create "a space where local residents grow vegetables, fruit or edible flowers, where everyone can garden and pick what they want".

Thanks to her, a group of volunteer residents are working together to create a public gardening space that is open to all and shared. Supported by professionals (a landscape gardener and a carpenter), the group meets every week to develop the garden and propose activities to promote biodiversity.

The initiative is run in the spirit of the Incredible Edible. Harvesting is free, and not just for those who garden. It's a place where people can meet, talk, ask questions about our environment and how we use our space, and build a positive outlook on the neighbourhood together. It's an unfenced garden that's intended to be a public space in its own right, welcoming other uses also in the absence of the members of the collective.
The garden grows in size and becomes a public space in continuous development (part of a soft urban[24] planning approach)...

Based on this process of a successful citizen involvement, we propose to retrace the main stages enabling citizens to play an increasingly important role in the life of the neighbourhood.

1/ Paying attention to weak signals
Emergence of the "Incredible Edible" project imagined by a local resident.

2/ Coming forward to meet people
Meeting between the resident and a local community group, who commissioned a professional landscape gardener to provide technical support.

3/ Support and lay the foundations for the project
Development of the project and administrative procedures.
The municipality and the social housing landlord choose a site for the garden.
Co-design of the landscaping project (plan and drawings) with the help of the landscape gardener.

....

[23] https://lesincroyablescomestibles.fr/
[24]"Soft urbanism" (or "slow urbanism") - In reference to an exchange with geographer and researcher Nora Semmoud, who has analysed this type of practice. This term is used to refer to practices that involve respecting the people for whom projects are intended, developing gently and over a very long period of time, in ongoing consultation with users·es, as opposed to violent, very rapid urban development processes.

4/ Help with implementation

Installation of the first 15 raised beds with initial funding (for materials only), start of informal gardening and spontaneous meetings initiated by the group of residents involved and the landscape gardener.

5/ Supporting the development of the project

Expanding the project, getting additional funding for facilities, activities and equipment, and bringing in additional skills: wood construction workshops.

6/ Technical and financial support

First financial assistance from institutions for development workshops (reflection and construction), gardening workshops and consolidation of technical support by a neighbourhood's collective.

7/ Letting the project live

Workshops every Wednesday's afternoon from April to October, run by local residents and professionals.

8/ If possible, support the professionalisation of the involved individuals

Professionalisation of the project leader, who sets up her own business as a garden organiser, based on her 7 years' experience and a "garden coordinator" training course.

On the basis of this cycle, we think it would be desirable to extend such an approach as part of the ecological transition. Below, we share an imaginary scenario of the evolution of the project in the context of a local environment imbued with storytelling.

With a change of perspective, new stories are told and additional dimensions of the project emerge. This is the story of that adventure.

These days, everyone likes to see people gardening, even if they don't want to do it themselves. It tells a common story: "I'm proud to live in a neighbourhood where there's fruit, vegetables, herbs...". So neighbours are helping to transform the environment, giving nature its rightful place and producing good food in urban areas, all by their own efforts. The power to transform the landscape and decide on the appearance of their neighbourhood motivates residents to get involved. The communication surrounding the project invites everyone to contribute to the extent of their desires and possibilities, without judgement.

Of course, some people criticise the aesthetics of this new way of gardening, saying that it's not beautiful, especially in winter. So a dialogue has been set up to grow different plants in different ways depending on the season, and with great aesthetic diversity.
The members of the residents' collective want to increase the number of public garden areas in the neighbourhood. They want to live in a place where life is good and sustainable, where residents are part of the solution to resilience.

To make this possible, they imagine actions to initiate, resources to mobilise and attitudes to adopt to complement what already exists. They are regularly present in the space to inspire by example. Some of their neighbours, seeing them gardening every week, feel motivated to join them. The idea of growing edible plants appeals more to them than purely decorative gardens.

The layout of the gardens has had to be harmonised with other uses, to avoid some people feeling dispossessed of these common, shared spaces. What's more, since growing plants takes time, the collective is offering other activities to meet the need for a regular rhythm. Workshops related to the garden's philosophy are organised, such as creating wooden furniture or making shade sails, which help to transform the garden into a real living place.

The collective's role doesn't stop there, as it lobbies the public authorities and social landlords to ensure that residents have the right to set up vegetable patches at the foot of each block of flats. The close proximity between the gardens and the living space is essential for day-to-day maintenance. What's more, systems have been devised to collect rainwater from the roofs of the buildings to water the vegetable patches.

The collective has also been inspired by the fifty-fifty system in Loos-en-Gohelle[24], and is now offering to give residents recycled materials so that they can build and assemble their own communal gardening planters downstairs.

There remains the question of seeds, which are offered or exchanged with people who have gardens around the neighbourhood and in neighbouring villages. Seeds are also collected in the countryside during collective walks. Cooperation with neighbouring farms provides natural fertiliser, which complements the compost bins installed near the vegetable gardens. Some residents with gardening experience act as resource people, knowing seed production is not an easy task.

Finally, more recently, and outside the neighbourhood with the support of social cooperative, plots of land have been made available by the Chamber of Agriculture for residents who want to make a living out of it.

[24] « Les Fifty-Fifty et les initiatives de Loos-en-Gohelle »

Artéfacts
Coopérative d'activités et d'emploi

FONDAZIONE
E★35
PER LA PROGETTAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE

EUROVÉRTICE
EXPERTS IN EUROPEAN FUNDING

P.PORTO

Co-funded by
the European Union