

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



FOR ORGANIZING RURAL EVENTS



Dear Reader of the Guide,

We are young people with different backgrounds, who came together to organize a festival in a small remote village in Georgia, called UDABNO. The Udabno Rural Fest, as we called it, was a result of a six-month planning and one-week youth exchange “EntreRural” financed by Erasmus+ programme.

We enjoyed every step of the process, and we think that our experience might be useful for you as well, so we decided to make this guide that will suggest you some tips and steps in case you are interested to make an event in a rural area of your country. We do hope you will find it helpful!

So here – a step-by-step guide based on our experience about how to organize events in rural areas. Starting from getting your head around the idea, followed by planning and implementation, ending with dissemination and evaluation of your project.

Enjoy the guide!

**Yours,
EntreRural Team**



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NEED ANALYSIS

If you're contemplating conducting a Rural Event, we think that you either have an idea, or a sketch of it, and you want to choose the venue, or you came across some area that made you want to organize something there, and you're searching for an idea. Either way is good. We will try to make your life easier by sharing our experience with you.

Before planning an event, it is important to research the needs of the chosen rural area. Even if you have an overall idea of the event, it is important to check with the locals if this idea is fitting the conditions of the place.

This can be done by:

Getting to know to the local community
Possibilities and limitations of the area
Gaining the trust
Involving partners



Getting to know to the local community - contact to the local community to present your idea/event. You should do it carefully.

- . Conduct some research and gain some knowledge about the local community, their cultural background, main occupation, problems, opportunities and so on.
- . Contact the local municipality, the school, local associations and local business owners - the 'important people';
- . Present your idea to them and listen to the feedback. Maybe they have ideas on their own that you can implement during your event or maybe you need to change the event all together. Do they have a problem that could be solved by another kind of event? (e.g., involving children in event organization during their summer vacation.)
- . Has something similar been done before in the area with or without success? What to do different and what to learn from the past events?

Possibilities and limitations of the area - take contact to the local authorities to know the possibilities of the area.

- . What is possible and what is not?
- . Are there any legal complications? (for example if you work with kids)
- . Are there any special local rules / cultural norms?

Gaining the trust – it is important to acquire trust of the locals. The more they are in, the more help and freedom you will have to carry out the event.

- . Show your respect – this is very important part – you do not want to disrespect their traditions and accepted behaviours;
- . Explain the benefits of the event – what will they gain? Why should they help you?
- . Explain the work of the association you represent. Show flyers, photos and merchandise from your association. Has your association done similar events before with success? Show pictures, videos and so on, so they can get an idea of your event.
- . Meet several times with potential partners or local authorities to show your engagement to the project.



Involving partners - consider including partners in your project/event. Maybe the local associations, schools, etc. have an interest in the event too and will help with organising the event.

- . Maybe they have a venue you can use or resources they are happy to share;
- . They can help you gain the trust of the locals;
- . You can use their contacts and get in touch with the target group easier. For example the kids from the school or the young people from the leisure activity club.



IDEA OF THE EVENT

Why – What – Who? – When – Where?



. Ask why!

.Why have you decided so? Go through all the above points again!

. What is the event going to be about?

.What is the event about in general? Is it a festival, an exhibition, a concert, a theater show, a bazaar, a sports event, a game event, a hiking event?

.What is the aim of the event? Why is it important?

.What will the results/outcome be of the event?

. For whom are you carrying out the event?

.Who is the target group for the event? What age? Gender? From which area? What social group?

.How many people do you expect to participate? Why that amount?

. When is the event going to happen?

.What is the duration of the event? Hours, days, weeks, etc. Why that amount of time? Maybe less or more would be better.

.Which month will it happen? What kind of weather is suitable for the event? Why?

.What day of the week is the best? In the weekend or on workdays? Why?

.Make sure your target group is able to participate at the chosen time/day. Maybe there is a local holiday or maybe the target group is busy in school/work or doing leisure activities.

.Think about cultural norms. When do the target group eat dinner/lunch? At what time are they normally available?



. Where is the event going to take place?

- .Pick a place where your type of event can take place. Open air area, sports center, local theater, village hall, etc.
- .Consider size of the place. Does it fit the amount of people you expect? Is it too big?
- .Decide if it should be indoor or outdoor. Have a backup plan if the weather doesn't support your intention.
- .How will the target group get to the place? Is it close? Is it reachable by public transportation? Bike lines? Do you have to rent busses to transport the people?

. Sharing good practices

- .Ask the partners to share their experience of similar events.
- .Look for other projects/events like yours in the internet and contact the people behind to get advice.
- .Ask the local news if they have covered similar events and contact the people of the event to get advice.



PLANNING



When you already have an idea for the project, you need to start planning. You should do it very carefully. First, you shall draft an overall basic plan with the different deadlines that will occur during the process.

Example: you can make a timeline with the beginning and ending times of different activities of the planning process. This will give you an overview of the whole process so that you know where you are at any moment, what you should do now and what you can schedule for later, so that you do not get lost.

You shall identify the resources you will need to carry out the event. You shall analyze the existing situation so that you know what resources you already have and can use for the project, and what you will have to get.

<u>What you have</u>	<u>What you need</u>
Human	Human
Materials	Materials
Financial	Financial

When you know what you need, you start to look for ways for getting it.

Human Resources

What you have: people who are already involved: project participants, organization members, interested friends, etc. You analyze their skills and think of what will be useful for the project.

What you need: apart from the people who are already in, think of what other skills you will need to carry out the project, find people with useful connections and necessary skills.

How to do it: talk to the people you know, spread the word about your needs, so that the people know what they can offer. Involve the local community and people in charge, youth organizations, and social media.

Example: On Udabno rural fest we had a participant who was a magician, so we did not need to get one. We talked to the local responsible people, like the head of the village and director of the local school, also the manager of the local Ensemble, and they raised awareness about our project. So the locals, mainly youngsters, were offering their skills and help to us. We had a lot of work to do, so they were of a good use. Also, for the final event, we involved the members of our organization. They came to Udabno and were helping us the day before the event, so that we could manage to be in time.



Materials

Have an overall view of the materials that you may need and make a list. Remember to keep it simple, efficient and flexible.

For example, you may need some seats for the locals. Instead of buying 200 chairs, you can simply borrow the benches from a local park, or bring the pallets and make the benches yourself.

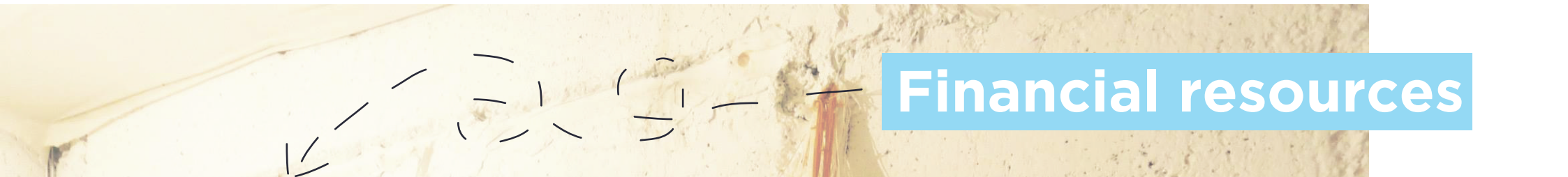
What you have: Remember that you are in a rural area, and there might already be some resources that you can borrow and use. You do not need to buy every material or bring them from the city in this case, and it is a great way to cut the costs. When visiting the venue, explore the local environment, try to use the different materials that are already out there.

What you need: take your initial list of the needed materials and cross the items you already managed to gather off from it.

How to do it: if you do not manage to find the things that are needed, you shall talk to the locals who may lend them to you. Or use the available raw materials and the people to build them.

Example: We needed to build some furniture for the Rural Fest. We found some materials in the area and bought the rest of the needed materials. And then we build the benches and tables from them, painted them and sprayed the organization logos on them. That way, we tried to use the materials efficiently and also left something to the village that they will use.





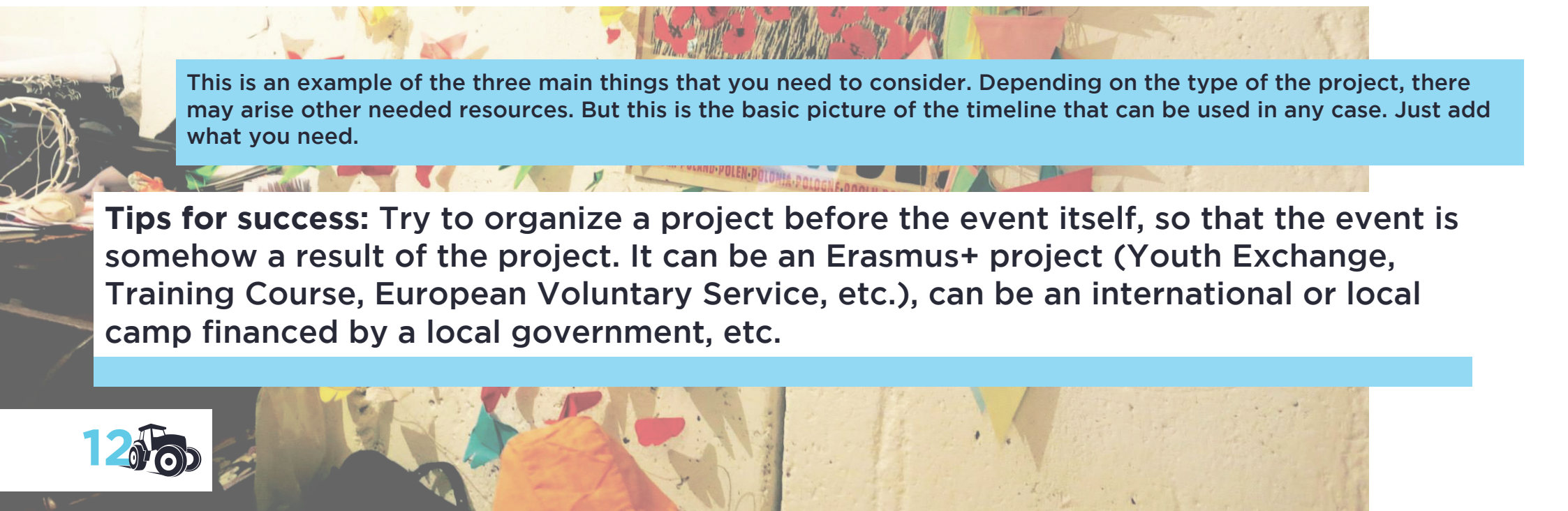
Financial resources

What you have: make an overview of how much finance you can allocate to the project from the existing budget.

What you need: make a budget for different things that will be needed, like food, material resources, transportation, etc. Try to allocate some money for the unexpected expenses or the plan B.

How to do it: try to figure out the best way for getting the money. Study the local reality – is it possible to get the money from the local government or some donors? Is it better to draft a project and apply it to some international organization for a grant? Is it possible to put your idea on some crowd-funding web-site? Maybe you can find some local companies that will contribute with their products or services in the exchange of the promotion they will get during the event.

Example: For the Rural Fest we tried different ways of getting the money. We asked for money to the local municipality, we applied to the embassy as well, but we didn't manage to get any funds. Then we tried a crowdfunding campaign on the indiegogo.com website, which actually worked and we collected the money for buying the palletes and some other stuff for the festival.



This is an example of the three main things that you need to consider. Depending on the type of the project, there may arise other needed resources. But this is the basic picture of the timeline that can be used in any case. Just add what you need.

Tips for success: Try to organize a project before the event itself, so that the event is somehow a result of the project. It can be an Erasmus+ project (Youth Exchange, Training Course, European Voluntary Service, etc.), can be an international or local camp financed by a local government, etc.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The management is really important. The responsible persons shall be appointed from the very beginning of the planning process. Apart from identifying the need for resources, you need to plan how you will promote your event so that it will be successful. Listed below are several key points of the promotion process.

Branding
Social Media/Direct Communication
Risk-Assessment and Prevention
Promotion

Branding: you need to make the event somehow unique. A nice branding will attract the eye and identify with your project. Remember this while choosing who to involve in the project – be sure to get several people with digital **competences**.

- . You need to design a **logo** first. We advise you to use only two or three colors and keep it as simple as possible, so that it looks nice in any size and even in black and white. People look at your logo and they remember it by colors, by shape, etc. Do not make any confusion by using anything similar to a known brand.
- . **Flyers**. Use the main colors of your branding and write the date and venue of the event on a noticeable place.
- . T-shirts, calendars, pens, notepads. It all depends on your budget and on the content and the scope of your project.
- . **Sound** – make a sound associate with your event. Make it unique and catchy. It can be just a tune or a YouTube video.



Social Media/Direct Communication: It's one of the most powerful tools that you can use to promote your event. Use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Maybe there are some local web-pages that announce the events that will happen in the area. You may need a blog as well, to make it more personalized. Use your organization's Facebook page to reach more people, and ask your friends to share it as well. Talk about it with the people that you meet who may be interested and spread the word about it as well.



Risk-Assessment and Prevention: you should be aware of the possible risks. Try to analyze what may happen and find possible solutions to every problem that may occur. In other words, have some back-up plans.



Promotion: you can start promoting the event as soon as you have a shaped idea of what you are going to do. Tell everyone you meet about it, and ask them to spread the word as well – tell their friends and colleagues who may be interested. Use social media – make a Facebook event and ask as many people as possible to share it, post about it in the groups you are a part of, use the Facebook page of your organization and other involved organizations as well. Send personal invitations to some important people so that they come and bring their surroundings as well.

Do not forget the locals – all in all, they are your direct target group. Remember the ‘important’ people you were talking to from the very beginning? Ask them to announce it to the locals. Maybe have an article published in a local newspaper, or go to a local radio station for half an hour and talk about your event – it all depends on the characteristics of your event and the local reality.

Do not be lazy on this stage – promotion is very important, because you may have a perfect event, but it will not have any impact if no one attends it.

IMPLEMENTATION

You shall have a carefully planned **schedule**. Try to think of the possible delays and consider them while making the plan of the project. Depending on your target group, try to keep it as flexible as possible.

If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail. **Prepare** the event spot in advance. Have it cleaned, allocate all the furnishings, decorations and other stuff, and assign responsible people to **facilitate** every key spot.

Make sure to **document the process**. Meaning, that you need to assign some people to take lots of pictures, shoot videos, record some interviews with the locals, etc. It will all be very useful during the dissemination part.

After the project is over, clean the area, take the trash with you and **thank the locals** who helped in organizing the event. You may give them some thank-you presents to leave positive memories about the team. Keep the connections in a good shape for possible further co-operations.

DISSEMINATION/VISIBILITY

After the activity itself it is finished, you are left with lots of digital materials. Take your time and your skilled friends to a cozy place where you will look through all the collected materials and decide what use can use for what. You can make video compilations, photo collages, send press releases to everyone you can, upload everything possible on social media, use hashtags, etc.

Create a blog that everyone can post on to make the after-part of the project more personalized and to get to read some stories of the attendees that you may not know. Some ideas for further events can be born on the blog too.

Talk to your friends and colleagues about your experience, show them the pictures and videos, and ask the others to do it so that more people will know what happened.



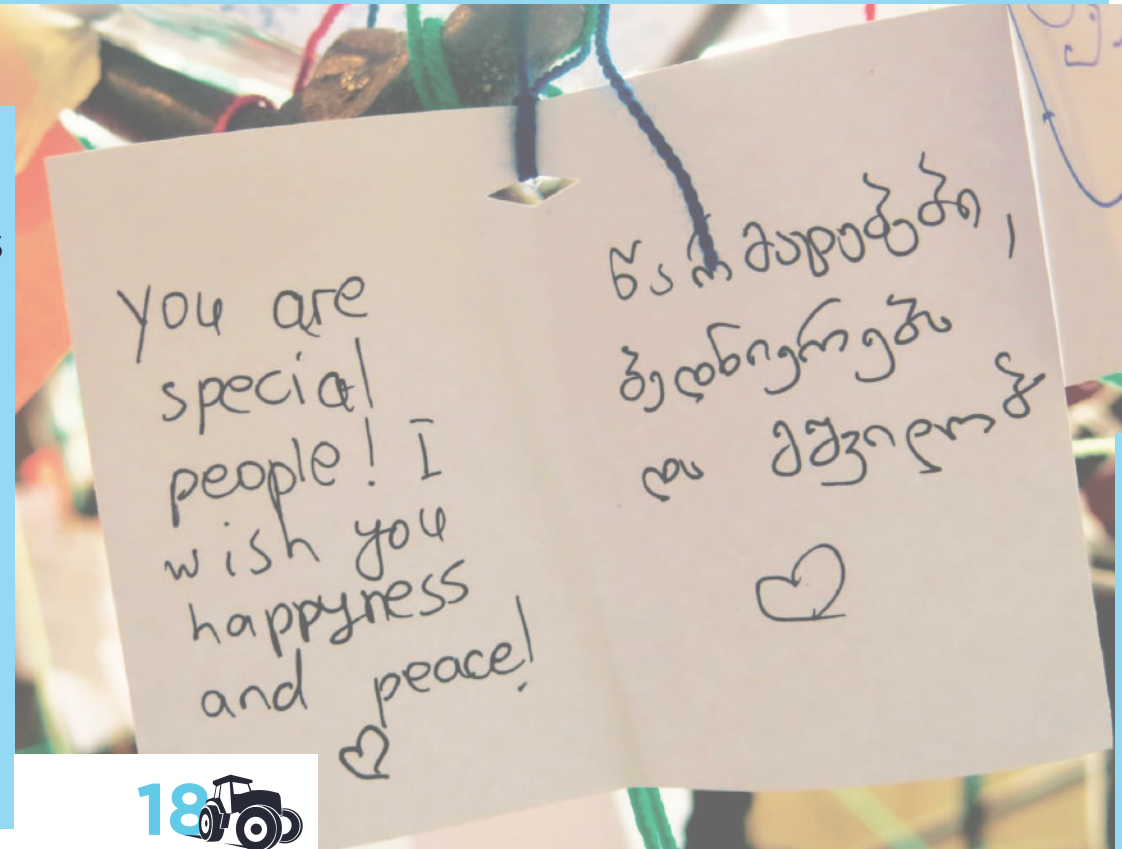
EVALUATION

After you are done with the event and dissemination of the results, you can gather the project team to make an evaluation. We advise you to write a summarizing report, so that you can collect all your learning points together and see the results more clearly.

If you made some mistakes on any stage, it is OK, you won't go to prison for it. But be sure to point them out on evaluation stage and keep them in mind for the further activities that you may conduct.

During the evaluation, you may come up with some ideas for further projects. Make sure to write them down and think about them when you have time. If you have good feedback from your project and from the locals, why not make it annual event? Planning will be easier for the next time.

Follow-up: If you want to somehow measure the impact of your project, keeping communication with the locals is vital. Be sure to keep in touch with the 'important' people. They will help you next time you may have an event in the same area, or may come up with some ideas for further collaboration. Even if you do not plan any further activity there, keeping in touch does not acquire a lot of time and energy from you, and connections are always useful.



This guide is a result of the project “EntreRural,” which was financed by European Commission’s Erasmus+ programme and was the chain of three Youth Exchanges and one training course implemented in Denmark, Georgia, Armenian and Estonia during the period of October 2014 and August 2015. The project was jointly implemented by the 4 partner organizations:



Dansk ICYE

International Cultural Youth Exchange

www.icye.dk/



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