



**VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE  
(VDP & LG)**

**Final Seminar  
Vara, Sweden**

**January 22-23, 2008**

**Seminar results**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Goals of the Seminar

The Seminar aimed to:

- present the outcomes of the transnational Leader project, developed over the course of 2007
- to point out emergent issues and topics for future collaboration

## 1.2. Target group and attendants

The seminar hosted both villagers, administrative officials and politicians, mainly from the partners in the current network, but also from other countries.

Represented countries were:

Partners current network: Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark,

Representatives other countries: Hungary, Finland, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania and Leader observatory.

A full list of participants can be found on the website, [www.villagedevelopment.eu](http://www.villagedevelopment.eu)

Participants listed by category

Villager	11
Municipality	16
Regional government	8
National government	4
LAG	10
EU	1
Others	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

## 1.3 Seminar programme

The seminar was structured as follows:

Tuesday morning:	setting the scene: what is the subject we talk about?
Tuesday afternoon:	field excursion
Wednesday morning:	local governance and multi-stakeholder alliances
Wednesday afternoon:	exploring emerging issues

On both mornings, 5 identical workshops were held, enabling partners to attend two different workshops over the course of two days, leading to a total of 10 workshops. All workshops were hosted by project partners. The first half was dedicated to a presentation of the outcomes of the transnational project. The second half aimed to identify, through a discussion with attendants, new emergent issues related to village development plans & local governance, for further discussion on Wednesday afternoon.

Tuesday morning was initiated by an overview of the goals, process, achievements and challenges of the current transnational project on Village Development Plans and Local Governance, by co-ordinator Gaston Remmers.

Wednesday morning started with a key-note address by Ciaran Lynch, Tipperary Institute (IR), on multilevel governance and the relevance for village development planning.

Wednesday afternoon was inspired by a kick-off by Jan-Erik Wallin, Chairman of the municipal board of Vara municipality, on Vara's experience and trust in transnational cooperation. It was followed by a presentation by Judith Török, from the European Leader Observatory, providing background information on transnational co-operation.

The Open Space in the first half of Wednesday afternoon was used for two more presentations: by the Hungarian delegation on the experience of the village of Kozard, and by the Finish delegation on their experience in village development planning and local governance in the Joensuu region (Karelia).

Due to large interest, one of the workshops was repeated after formal closure of the seminar on Wednesday afternoon (*Towards new stakeholder alliances for rural development: the 'werkplaats' concept and the case of Drenthe*).

See for full programme details table below. See website [www.villagedevelopment.eu](http://www.villagedevelopment.eu) for power-point presentations.

<b>When</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Who?</b>
21-jan	Evening	Buffet & Welcome	
		Register for workshops	
	After dinner	Coordination meeting	All coordinators
Tuesday morning 22 jan		<b>Setting the scene</b>	
22-jan	9.00	Informal walk-in: viewing poster presentations of the participating countries	
		press meeting	
		Coffee	
	10.00	Official opening	Elof Jonsson, Chairman of the Municipal Council
	10.15	Setting the frame for this seminar	Gaston Remmers, project coordinator and Seminar chairman
	10.45	To the workshops	
	10.50	Workshops 1 – 6 following the themes defined in project proposal	
		1. match between formal & informal plans, 11-step approach	DK - Jørgen Krogh Hessellund CANCELED (illness)
		2. Work towards the integration of a diversity of local activities in a coherent local plan at village level	SE – Maria & Ann-Britt
		3. Enhance capacity-building and democratic inclusion of volunteers in local development processes	NL – Saskia Croes
		4. Strengthen the implementation of plans	IR – Catherine & Kieran
		5. Improve regional learning and scaling-up of local plans	DK – Bodil Bertelsen
		6. villagers meet villagers – village meeting room	NL - Wouter Roozendaal (Croes en Horst)

	12.30	Lunch	
<b>Tuesday afternoon</b>		Field excursion	
	13.30	Introduction on VDP and LG in Vara	Maria Eriksson, Vara Municipality
	14.00	Transport to Kvånum	
		Transport to Vedum	
	14.30	Kvånum/Vedum	
	15.15	Coffee	
	16.45	Transport back	
	17.15	Leisure time	
	18.15	Transport to Arentorp through Vara	
	19.00	Dinner in the community centre	
<b>Wednesday 23 jan morning</b>		<b>Governance and multistakeholder alliances</b>	
23-jan	9.00 – 10.30	Keynote address – <i>Multilevel governance and the relevance for village development planning</i>	Ciaran Lynch, Tipperary institute
	11.00	Workshop sessions as day before (see above). Extra workshop: <i>Towards new stakeholder alliances for rural development: the 'werkplaats' concept and the case of Drenthe.</i>	Workshop leaders as above (except villager to villagers). Extra workshop by Rianne Vos (VanHall Larenstein Higher Education), an Alex Hollemans (Europeawerkstatt) - NL
	12.30	Lunch	Coordinators review the emerging issues, and decide on focus for the afternoon
<b>Wednesday afternoon</b>		emerging issues for further exploration	
	14.00	Key note address: the importance of transnational collaboration, also for small villages and municipalities – the experience of Vara	Jan-Erik Wallin, Chairman of the Municipal Board
	14.20	Transnational cooperation between rural areas	Judith Török – European Leader Observatory
	14.30	Open space Workshops based on outcomes of Tuesday and Wednesday morning sessions	
	14.30	Work in groups, breaks as desired	
	16.30	Plenary concluding session.	Gaston Remmers  Jan-Erik Wallin, Chairman of the Municipal Board
	17.00	End of final Seminar	
	17.00	Informal drink and networking	
	18.30	Leisure time	
	19.00	Dinner	
<b>Thursday Morning 24 Jan</b>		<b>Breakfast together and departure</b>	

## 2. Seminar results

### 2.1 Workshop results

The workshops yielded the following points for further elaboration.

Workshop hosted by IR - *Strengthen the implementation of plans*

- How can more and untagged budget be made available to the villages?
- What is the role of LAG's in stimulating or even funding local planning? Can they assume the role of an independent negotiator between villages and municipality?
- How to stimulate an active network of villages?
- How to reinforce the commitment of building companies to deliver community infrastructure?

Workshop hosted by SE - *Work towards the integration of a diversity of local activities in a coherent local plan at village level*

- How to bring together the visions of villages and municipalities? What methods do we dispose of?
- Would the identification of who funds what projects be helpful in generating integrated and implemented plans?
- How can funding be made available for villages? This is a burning question especially for Latvia: the villages are small, control of funds is centralized, and decision making on funds is politically informed (size of electorate)

Workshop hosted by NL - *Enhance capacity-building and democratic inclusion of volunteers in local development processes*

- How to deal with 'destructive' volunteers?
- Which democratic process do you need to facilitate Village Development Planning? Put differently: in which democratic system can VDP thrive best?
- How can the sustainability of VDP's be strengthened?
- What are the conditions for really integrated planning?

Workshop hosted by DK - *Improve regional learning and scaling-up of local plans*

- What are the competences for raising funds?
- If you start a new project to develop a VDP, which village do you choose as a reference to work with?
- Get your objectives SMART
- Use media
- Set out common guidelines and references
- Provide clear objectives

Workshop hosted by NL – *Villager to villager*

This workshop had a slightly different goal and output. It aimed to facilitate a conversation between villagers of the participating countries. Villagers of Branderup (DK), Arentorp (SE), Kvånum (SE), Bentelo (NL) and some villages in Latvia shared

the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of their villages with each other. See box below for a summary.

*Summary of the villager to villager workshop*

*S (Strength)*

- Geographical location (Arentorp & village Latvia)
- Beautiful nature (Arentorp)
- Active Community center and school (Branderup)
- Vara concert hall (Vara)
- Nature area (Kvånum)
- Volunteers ( Branderup)
- Helping each other in the village if needed (Benterlo)
- School (service community) (Branderup)
- Active people (Arentorp)
- Nature walking route (Branderup)
- Companies (1 good person) (Kvånum)

*W (Weakness)*

- Not active people (Latvia)
- No entry houses (young like to stay) (Arentorp)
- No store (Branderup)
- Few new people want to live here (Kvånum)
- The area around is sleeping (Branderup)
- Few stores (Kvånum)
- People on 30-40 year don't involve in development (Kvånum)
- No place for youth between 12-16 year (Benterlo)
- No work opportunities (Kvånum)

*O (Opportunities)*

- Association + money for Michael to keep on working (Kvånum)
- More tourists (development) (Branderup)
- More people living here in 2030 (Branderup)
- Castle Twickel (Bentelo)
- Make the development plan come true. Keep people involved (Branderup)
- The free school + kindergarden (Branderup)
- Good location (train + roads) (Vara)

*T (Threats)*

- A lack of villagers identity (Latvia)
- No shops
- Centralizing wishes from community Politicians and municipality (Branderup + Kvånum)
- School can't carry on (lack of money) (Branderup)

## 2.2 Summary of workshop results

The above mentioned emerging issues, together with issues that emerged in informal conversations over the breaks, were grouped by the partners as follows:

1. How to clarify and strengthen the role & effectiveness of LAG's in VDP planning
2. How to stimulate networking between villagers
3. How to reinforce commitment of builders to deliver community infrastructure?
4. How to bring together visions of villagers and municipalities?
5. Which democratic processes facilitate VDP best
6. How to create a new VDP & LG project with new partners
7. How to generate funding (villagers, vdp's competences)
8. How to involve Higher Educational in VDP's
9. How to integrate issues of sustainability and integrality in VDP's

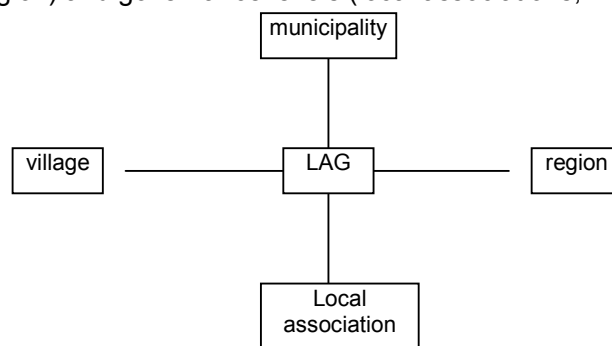
From these issues, the following were selected by the plenary for further elaboration:

1. How to clarify and strengthen the role & effectiveness of LAG's in VDP planning?
2. How to bring together visions of villagers and municipalities?
3. Which democratic processes facilitate VDP best?
4. How to integrate issues of sustainability and integrality in VDP's?
5. How to create a new VDP & LG project with new partners?
6. How to stimulate networking between villagers?

### Group 1

#### How to clarify and strengthen the role & effectiveness of LAG's in VDP planning

1. Increase cooperation with local associations
2. Organize seminars (practical support to solve problems)
3. Use other funds than Leader too!
4. A coordinator can do important work by documenting progress of the project/process
5. Vote for politicians willing to take risks
6. Good preparation for getting support
7. Liaise with all sectors (also politicians)  
Provoke the other! And offer what is on your mind (exchange values)
8. LAG can take a stronger role as a local developer. It is not only there for Leader's sake. The LAG is at the crossroads of the line between geographical levels (villages, region) and governance levels (local associations, municipality)



9. LAG should be more pro-active

## **Group 2**

### **How to bring together visions of villagers and municipalities?**

1. Develop a common language between Villagers + municipality
  - a. Create an informal round table Organizer = outsider
  - b. Yearly village visit/tour by politicians
  - c. Show profit of VDP for municipality (time or money saving)
  - d. Politicians should be part of the planning process
2. Empower the villages
  - a. Let villagers be owners of their plan; don't expropriate or steal their views
  - b. Personal contact person for villagers in municipalities (2-way communication)
  - c. Villages should work together to get more power
  - d. Use elections and media to sell village plans
  - e. Update the VDP at the same time as municipality plan
3. Ideas for new transnational projects:
  - a) how to bring visions together?
  - b) share experiences in implementing VDP's

## **Group 4**

### **How to integrate issues of sustainability and integrality in VDP's**

1. View VDP projects as ongoing processes
  - Local people must continue to bring political pressure on elected representatives not to abandon the process once the plan is agreed. (continual involvement)
2. Bring new people into the process. Avoid exhaustion and reliance on the same people in the community.
3. Programs and instruments take too long to establish (Why not a 'rolling' program)
4. Honesty about what is achievable and the timescales that will apply.
5. Environmental Sustainability
  - This must be 'built-in' to all plans and programs or else they will eventually fail
  - Realize that we can not use all natural resources today because it will be creating problems in the future. I.e. development → Water quality ↔ tourism
6. Be clear about social and environmental and economic consequences of all plans and programs
7. Scenario planning is very useful in seeing consequences (helps us see beyond 'short term' issues).

## **Group 5**

### **How to create a new VDP & LG project with new partners? Ideas for new transnational projects**

1. Finland and Hungary are interested in new projects, preferably including village to village contact
2. Latvia and Lithuania are interested in cooperation with other countries on the subject 'Marketing of local products'
3. Latvia is also interested in a new edition of the current VDP project.
4. Involve in a new project at least one partner with more experience
5. More efforts is needed to find out on what subjects LAG's could collaborate
6. Potential topics for exchange:
  - marketing of local products

- Develop VDP
  - c) Methods
  - d) how to bring visions of different actors together (see also group 1)
  - e) share experiences in implementing VDP's (see also group 1)

**Group 3 and 6**

Both group 3 (Which democratic processes facilitate VDP best) and group 6 (How to stimulate networking between villagers) generated lively discussions. However, no specific outcome was recorded.

### **3. Conclusion**

The final seminar brought a lot of mutual recognition between attendants, and inspired them to continue and improve the work at home. Several participants agreed to keep track of each other, to examine the possibility to engage in future transnational collaboration.