

COP ACTION PLAN

(work package 4)



COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE FOR HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
(COP4HL)



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SUMMARY

In this Action planning document, the main objectives that are present from the overall KA COP4HL perspective to the local COPs are described. At the level of the local level of the COP the shared objective, which came out of the needs analysis process, are described per COP.

In COP Groningen, the shared objective/goal will be: *“stimulating a Healthy environment (physical & social) with focus on physical activity”*.

COP Malaga had three potential shared objectives but after a shared decision making procedure the unanimously decision was towards: *“developing, implementing and evaluating outdoor fitness”*.

COP Odense will elaborate on an intermediary approach with the focus on the: *“further develop and educate professionals who work on stimulating physical activity in community dwelling older adult”*.

COP Kaunas defined the following shared objective: *“to provide opportunities for primary school children and Kaunas district community members older than 50 more opportunities for exercising and physical activity”*.

COP Cascais will contribute the goal to: *“develop, organize for and together with the stakeholders and end users (youngsters from 12-24 years old) activities focused on healthy lifestyle (e.g., healthy cooking workshops, parent-child physical activities etc.) embedded in approach GERAÇÃO S+ “*.

The next phase, after the decision on the shared objective of the COPs, is the action planning for the further COP development. A total of 7 steps are described



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INTRODUCTION

The Action Plan (AP) will make sure that the Project Design elaborated in WP1 will be made concrete and the needs identified through WP4's needs analysis will be tackled. The Plan will allow the Consortium to monitor its progress and take each task step-by-step, therefore allowing it to handle the KA efficiently. The Action Plan involves:

1. Identifying objectives;
2. Setting objectives which are achievable & measurable;
3. Prioritizing tasks effectively;
4. Identifying the steps needed to achieve goals;
5. Having a contingency plan.

IDENTIFYING OBJECTIVES

Within our overall project COP4HL we have various objectives at different levels which are distinguished in our multilevel project structure. All these levels and their objectives need to be interconnected. Therefore, the following paragraphs will describe the objectives from the overall KA perspective to the local COP objectives which are assess in work package 4 needs analysis.

Knowledge Alliance objectives

The main objective of the Knowledge Alliance (KA) for Communities of Practice for Healthy Lifestyle (COP4HL) is to develop sustainable communities of practice (COP) to stimulate innovation and socio-economic development in the area of Healthy Ageing. The KA is composed of higher education institutes and businesses, supported by public authorities, who

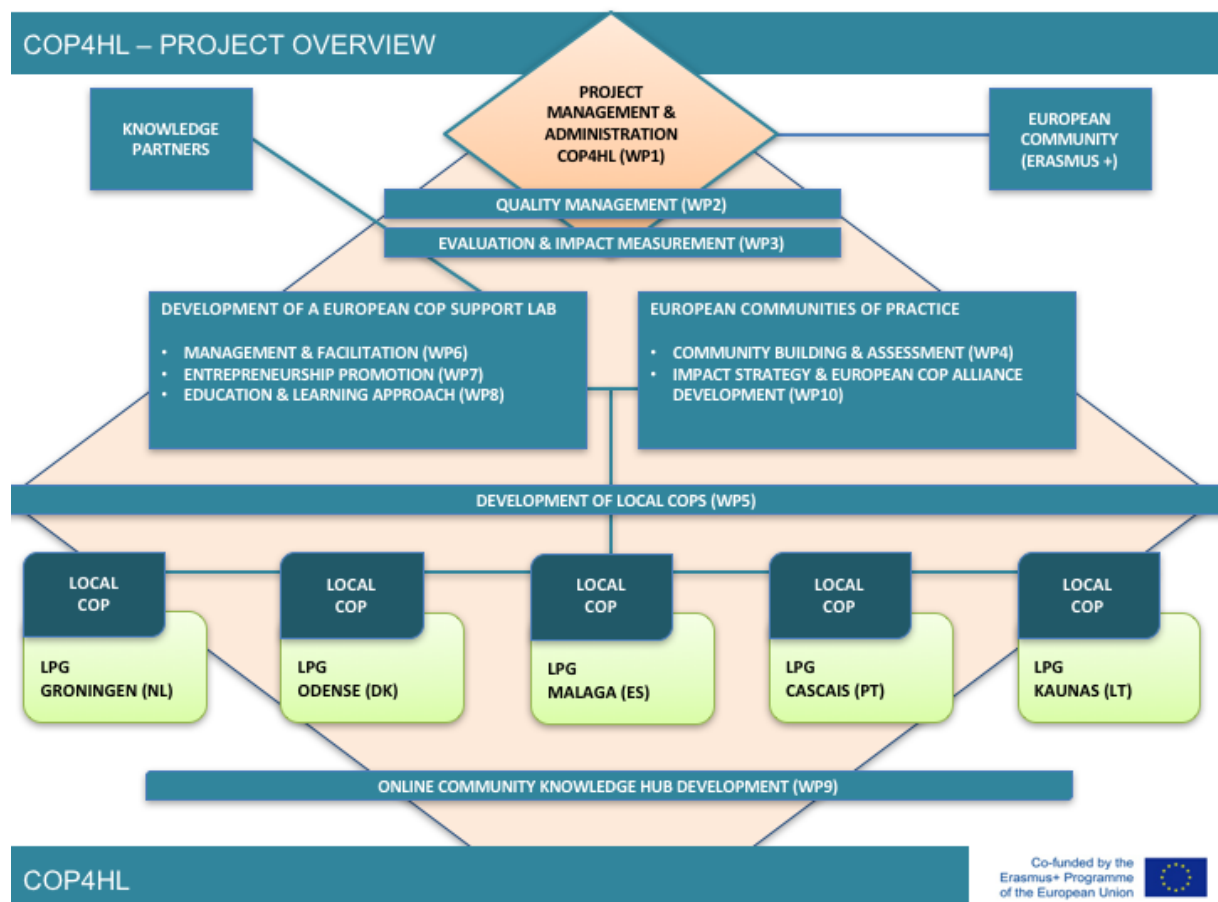


Figure 1 The COP4HL model

are accepting the need of co-creating knowledge to stimulate innovation for an Active & Healthy Lifestyle. Together they develop COP that are organized as learning partnerships providing a creative model for connecting in the spirit of learning and improving key competences and skills in the field.

Main objectives of the COP4HL project were to: (1) Educate professionals towards the concept of Healthy Ageing through stimulating an Active & Healthy Lifestyle from young to old ages; (2) Implement community based interventions (CBI) towards Healthy Ageing through Active & Healthy Lifestyle at the micro, meso and macro level that go beyond traditional health care approaches; (3) Respond to the current lack in effective and sustainable promotion of Active & Healthy Lifestyles in a local context; (4) Allow for impact-driven and sustainable structures with better educated professionals to guide the process of Healthy Ageing through community-based interventions (CBI); (5) Apply an innovative, multi-stakeholder approach to learning in the field of Healthy Ageing, and maximize the learning capacity of CBI for Healthy Ageing; (6) Improve the dislocation between those who generate knowledge in Healthy Ageing (HEIs) and those who translate that knowledge into practical interventions at the local levels (businesses); (7) Allow developing a strategic and coordinated approach towards effective and sustainable CBI for Healthy Ageing at the European level.

The partnership is composed of HEI and businesses, all seeking for sustainable socio-economic development in the area of Healthy Ageing. They do this by jointly accepting the need of new ways of learning and to promote innovation towards a Healthy Lifestyle. With it, participants become also able to implement specific organizational aims.

The consortium comes from 7 EU Member States of which in 5 countries local communities of practice (COP) are developed. A European COP Support Lab and a European COP Alliance are developed that facilitate the set-up of COP and a sustainable flow of knowledge. An open access Community Knowledge Hub provides pilot-tested formal and informal blended learning material for managing COP and implementing interventions; whilst an entrepreneurship competition leads into an intensive program to develop entrepreneurial skills and stimulate innovation.

The Knowledge Alliance (KA) undertakes joint comprehensive activities of HEI and businesses aimed at modernizing the approach to stimulating Healthy Ageing through an innovative, multi-stakeholder approach to learning. With Healthy Ageing, the KA addresses a highly

important topic on the European agenda and fits into a broad range of EU policies in education and training, but also provides a unique opportunity for integrated development related to education, health, sport, and wellbeing by expanding activities beyond traditional boundaries.

Objectives of Healthy Ageing & Healthy Lifestyle

Nowadays and in the near future, promoting Healthy Ageing, and specifically a Healthy Lifestyle¹, is one of the biggest societal and economical challenges the EU is facing. A paradigm shift from health care and cure to prevention, Healthy Lifestyle, is essential since the traditional ways have proven to be insufficient to solve this complex problem. An impact-driven multi-sector approach is necessary to develop innovative products and services to change this for the better.

By linking a strategic European point of view, with practice-based problem-solving through local COP approach, the KA applies a unique holistic approach. This allows shifting behaviors to a Healthy Lifestyle, and leads to a more integrated set-up of the sectors behind. The KA marks a milestone for joint implementation of learning and modernizing the concept of Healthy Ageing.

Objectives Community of Practice (COP)

Our Knowledge Alliance consists of the development of intensive learning partnerships between *higher education institutes, municipalities and businesses* in the field of Healthy Ageing more specifically Healthy Lifestyle from young to old. These learning communities, that strive for learning and social innovation, are based on the principles of so called **Communities of Practice**. Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. However not every group of individuals is a community of practice. Three characteristics are crucial for a community of practice: 1) **The domain**: A community of practice is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain

¹ Behavior that leads to enhancing of health (social, mental, etc.) such as physical activity/sport, non-sitting behavior, eating, relaxing, prevention of alcohol consumption and smoking.

of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people; 2) **The community:** In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other; 3) **The practice:** A community of practice is not merely a community of interest but members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction. The development of a shared practice may be more or less self-conscious. It is the combination of these three elements that constitutes a community of practice. And it is by developing these three elements in parallel that one cultivates such a community.

In our COP4HL approach, the shared domain was already predetermined at generic level, namely promotion of a Healthy Lifestyle. To further specify the shared domain, every COP conducted a needs analysis.

Objectives local COPs

Based on the results from this analysis, the COP makes a shared decision on what their “shared goal” will be given the local assets and needs. The needs analysis resulted in the following objectives/shared goals per COP.

In COP Groningen, the shared objective/goal will be: *“stimulating a Healthy environment (physical & social) with focus on physical activity”*.

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old) activities focused on healthy lifestyle (e.g., healthy cooking workshops, parent-child physical activities etc.) embedded in approach GERAÇÃO S+ “.

Remark we have to make is that the step from needs analysis → shared objective → action planning seems a linear process. However, in all COPs small to bigger adjustments were made when new information or insights were provided to the COP. This means that the overall process is much more iterative and going back and forth from one phase to another is common in working in a complex/wicked practice with so many stakeholders etc. Once the shared objectives for the local COP are set, a next step towards action planning needs to be conducted.

IDENTIFYING STEPS

Since working in a COP is different from working in a regular, linear project management structure, the following steps will be described. As stated earlier, the whole process of steps has a highly iterative character. Indicating that feedback loops are usual and frequently made steps. Below the 6 steps are described which are advised to take after the need analysis.

Category	PURPOSE	MEMBER	UNIFIER	HOW LONG
Communities of Practice	Create, expand and exchange knowledge and develop individual capabilities	Self-Selection based on expertise or passion for a topic/ area	Passion, commitment and identification with the group and its expertise	As long as relevance to the topic and value and interest in learning together
Project Teams	Accomplish a specified task	Have a direct role in accomplishing the task	Project's goals and milestones	Predetermined – when project has been completed

Figure 2 COP versus project teams

Be aware that some steps are parallel, some sequential and the overall process is iterative. From the local COP “unknown or unforeseen” steps how to set up and manage a local COP are collected and support material will be developed (work package 6: development of European COP support lab: management & facilitation) and shared through the “Online Community Knowledge Hub Development” as set up in work package 9. Finally, the local COPs also receive support on demand or planned by staff of Hanze and/or SPIN Sport Innovation.

Step A: Identifying new stakeholders

After having determined the shared objective/goal of the local COP, the network of COP participants can be extended. Since the goal is clear, new stakeholders can be contacted in a proactive and planned way. For instance, think about businesses that might be interested in the objective of the COP but also have something to bring as input for the local COP. Also, unforeseen, emergent but interesting stakeholders can knock on the local COP door in



reaction to what they heard, read etc. Try to be open for these new stakeholders but also ask for openness from their side. In this phase, diversity in background and expertise of new stakeholders can bring a lot of new energy, thoughts and visions. Important prerequisites for joining the local COP is willingness to align with the “shared objective/goal” and being open in the sense that you only can take something out the COP, if you also invest in the COP.

Step B: Realignment of stakeholders

Since new stakeholders might have joined the local COP, realignment and introduction between new and initial stakeholders needs to take place. Be aware and accept and embrace that new stakeholders can also provide new input and come up with new questions and ideas. Sometimes these new questions or problems need an update of the needs analysis. For the COP change agent², it can be important to do a (in)formal stakeholders analysis in order to know whom to invest in considering the limited amount time. In Medelow’s matrix (figure 3), the position that a change agent allocates to a stakeholder on the grid shows you the actions you need to take with them: high power, highly interested people (key player): aim to fully engage these people, making the greatest efforts to satisfy them. High power, less interested people (keep Satisfied): put enough work in with these people to keep them satisfied, but not so much that they become bored with your message. Low power, highly interested people (keep Informed): adequately inform these people, and talk to them to ensure that no major issues are arising. These audiences can also help point out any areas that could be improved or have been overlooked. Low power, less interested people (minimal effort): don’t bore these stakeholder groups with excessive communication, keep an eye to check if their levels of interest or power change.

² The local person who coordinates, motivates and facilitates the local COP processes



Figure 3 Mendelow's Matrix

Step C: Reconnecting to COP objective

The dynamics of the stakeholders in the local COP can blur the overall goal and objective of the COP. Therefore, it is crucial to have the stakeholders reconnect to the overall objective of the COP. This reconnection can also cause new insights, discussions and sometimes new questions that also require (small) update of the needs analysis.

Step D: Orientation subgroups and –goals

When the number of is increasing at a high pace, it becomes more and more a challenge to keep all stakeholders motivated by one overarching shared objective. Furthermore, stakeholders can get disconnected since having intensive communication, exchange and learning in bigger groups is very difficult and sometimes nearly impossible. A very helpful strategy can be to identify subgroups with sub goals who have the ambition to work on this sub-objective. These satellite projects, however, always need to be connected to the overall COP objective. The subgroup members also need to present and disseminate their results and learning experiences to the rest of local COP. In bigger COPs regarding number of stakeholder, this “satellite” approach is very effective and motivating.

Step E: Continuous process of reflection

Create moments of reflection to facilitate learning processes. Ask each other questions about the successes or moments of energy they experience. Try to disentangle what the factors behind these successes were. For this process of reflection several approaches such as “appreciative inquiry can be used”. The appreciative inquiry is an important instrument to stimulate learning processes and is based on the premises that: Positive questions lead to positive images which subsequently lead to positive changes. Also, the timeline method (part of the COP change agent training) can be helpful. In this method, a timeline is drawn related to the COP and several items like for instance: accelerators, frustrating factors etc. can be placed on the timeline.

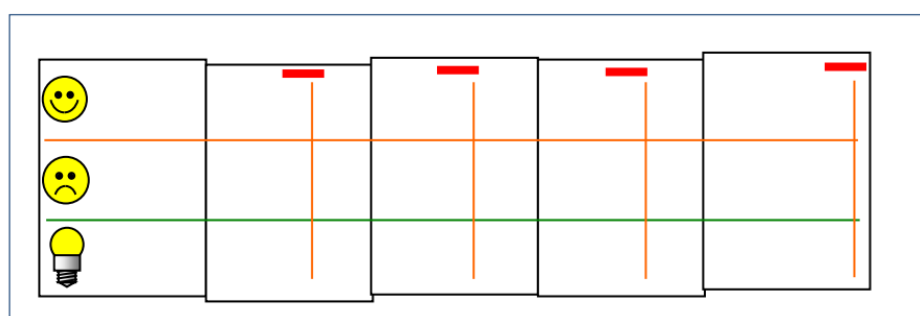


Figure 4 Timeline method

Once every COP stakeholder puts his/her remarks on the timeline, a guided feedback process can be started. In this way, COP development will be increased and lessons learned.

Step F: Monitoring of process & results

Parallel with all the 7 steps, a monitoring of process and results is promoted to see how the process develops and how this relates to output. The development of this new evaluation model which is hybrid and dynamic and dynamic is part of work package 3 (evaluation and impact measurement). This model exists of three layers and is shown in figure 5.

Developmental layer: At the start, COPs are in a developmental phase, which is depicted in the middle layer of the hybrid evaluation model. In this layer, the focus is on the learning processes, i.e. to gain insight in the dynamic process of knowledge generation in co-creative manner.

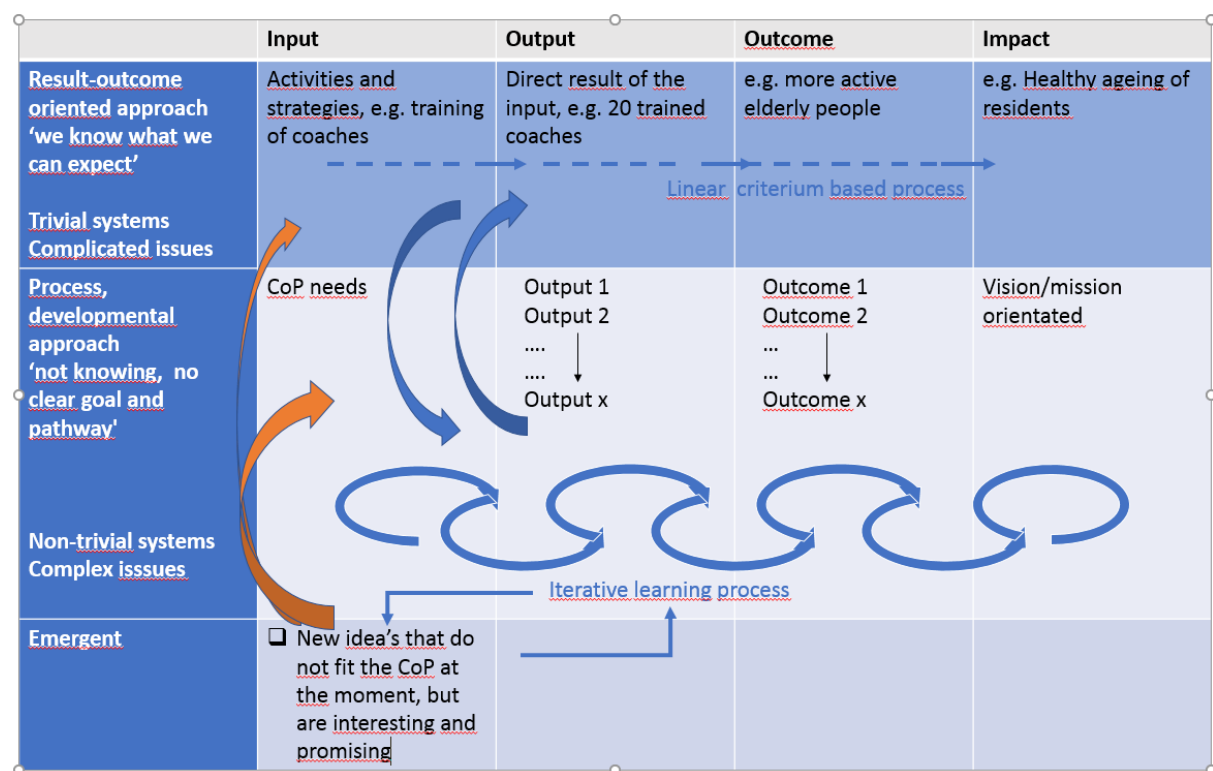


Figure 5 Current version of the local COP impact measurement model

Outcome-focused layer: At some point, the learning process may result in enough knowledge to identify a (linear) pattern that lends itself to assumptions regarding how to achieve an outcome-based goal may need to be addressed in order to improve an outcome. At this point, the evaluation activities can move to the upper part of the hybrid evaluation model. It may happen that the expected relation between output and outcome was not so straightforward and that another process of doing-reflecting-adapting (in the middle layer) is needed. In



addition, following the finalization of these outcome-based steps, evaluation in the developmental layer may be needed to ensure the activities are still in line with the shared ambitions. Therefore, evaluation activities constantly move between the layers.

Layer with emergent outcomes: finally, it may be the case that during the development and implementation processes of the COP, new ideas emerge that seem promising, but are at the moment not relevant for achieving the main aims. In order to prevent that the ideas will be forgotten and stay unused, they will be transferred to the COP agenda. The change agents receive training sessions and support to implement this new way of monitoring.

Step G: Dissemination of success

Parallel with all the identified steps, it is important to present, write, offer interviews etc. to shared “your” news. This exposure attracts new stakeholders, creates commitment through recognizability in the community and their members.

CONTINGENCY PLAN

Ambitions versus resources

A potential risk in the process of setting up a local COP is that the ambition is too big for the resource the COP and their stakeholders have like for instance time, finances etc. In the beginning of developing a local COPs it is better to start small and increase with tiny steps. In this way things stay manageable and this approach increases the odds of still having time for learning. Once a COP is running and is facing too high work pressure of new initiatives, it is good to go back to the shared objective and strategy to evaluate whether these new activities substantially contribute to the goal. If the answer to this question is no, skip this activity or postpone it in order to invest time in the essential activities of your COP.

Shared decision making

A local COP contains stakeholders with (very) different backgrounds and therefore also different wishes, needs and expertise. This can complicate the decision-making process that is sometimes necessary in a COP process. These types of discussions can turn into debates which is not a favorable thing to do in a COP. Try to use creative workshops to solve this like for instance “put the money where your interest is”. Use real coins and ask every stakeholder to make their choice visible (without words) by putting their money on one option or distributed over two or more. By adding rules, better contrast can be created which makes differences between choices more clear.

Subprojects

When the network of a COP has successfully been extended, this can also turn into a risk. If the group of stakeholders is big, some of them can also hold back while others become more

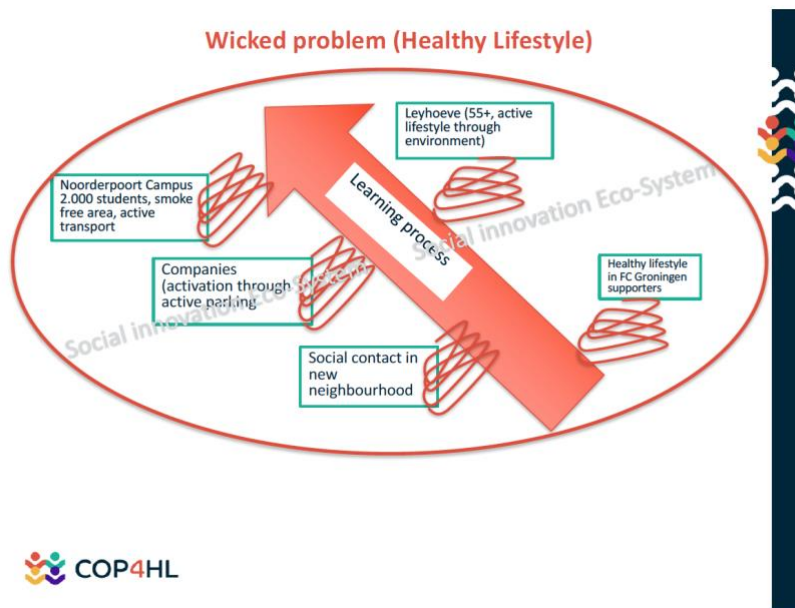


Figure 6 Subprojects within a COP (example from COP Groningen)

prominent. To prevent this situation, which can lead into passiveness or frustration of stakeholders, ask for initiatives they are enthusiastic about. Invite this subgroup of stakeholders to come up with their action plan. In this process, it is important to keep the connection with the overall COP objective.