Activity 6.2 Social Cooperatives

Learning Goal: Participants build a collective and cooperative action plan to address a need to enhance sustainability
Method: Group work
Materials: Comfortable space
Estimated Time: 6 hours – 4 days (depending on the level of details; it is suggested to be split in sessions and different days)
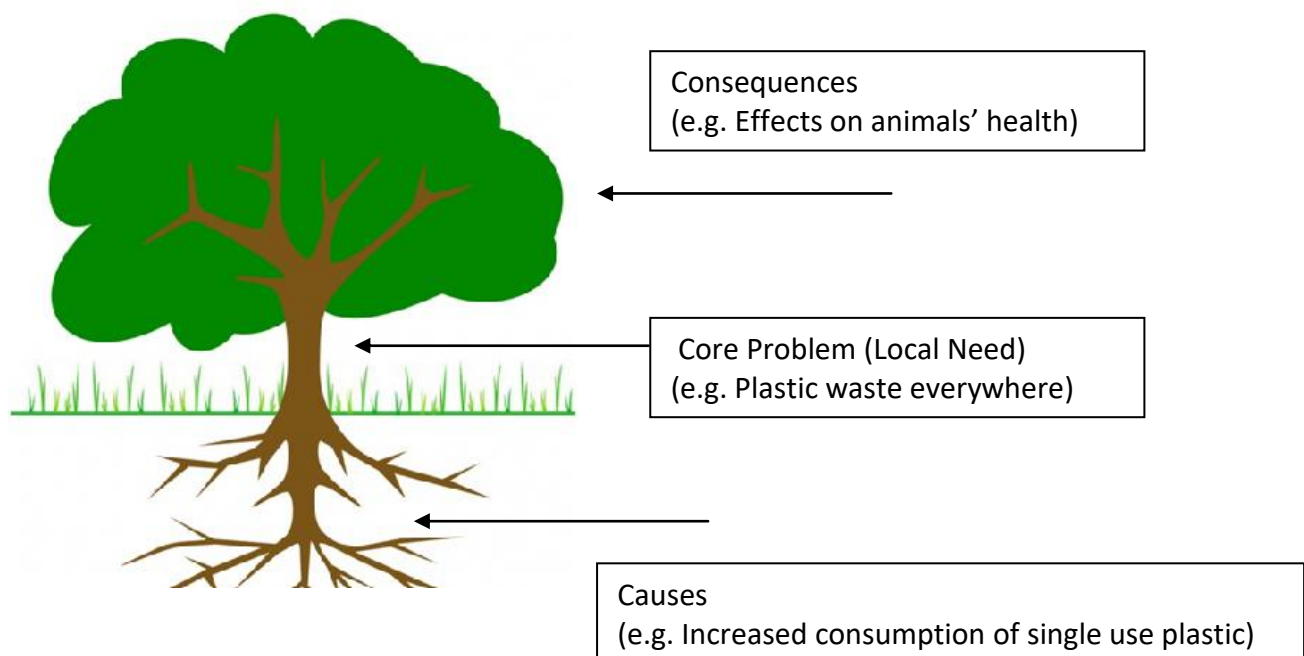**Level**: 3
Description: Participants are divided into groups of 4-5 with the scope to develop their own civic initiatives in the form of a social cooperative (reference to social and solidarity economy). Examples of social initiatives: Social Businesses, non-profit organizations, informal groups in different sectors, other forms of civic action to raise awareness such as stand alone events, workshops, and campaigns.

Framework of analysis STEP by STEP:
1. *Problem/Solution Tree*
The facilitator provides a list of local needs identified by the Job Shadowing activities. Given the applicability of this activity, it is possible to identify new or choose other needs and issues that could be addressed by submitting a proposal for action from the participants. Participants are allocating themselves based on their preferences forming groups of 3-4 persons. Each group will be responsible for analyzing the need/issue using the "Problem Tree" analysis. Using the "Problem Tree" analysis is a useful and simple exercise for critical thinking. It supports the identification of the "roots" of a problem and may help participants understand the complexity of an issue.

Consequences
(e.g. Effects on animals' health)

Core Problem (Local Need)
(e.g. Plastic waste everywhere)

Causes
(e.g. Increased consumption of single use plastic)

After analyzing in depth the causes and effects of the problem, participants can try to develop a solutions tree. According to the change they want to have (e.g. solve the problem of having plastic waste everywhere), they will choose a preferred action (s) to address the most important cause they have identified. In this sense, the core problem is translated into the change we want to achieve (no more plastic waste) and the causes become the goals of our intervention/action plan (e.g. minimize the consumption of single use plastic). Furthermore, consequences should be the outcomes of this plan (e.g. better conditions for securing the animals' health).

The facilitator asks participants after deciding upon the "root" they would like to work on to brainstorm on how they are going to reach this goal by generating different ideas for action.

More details on how to apply the Problem Tree Analysis:
https://www.odi.org/publications/5258-problem-tree-analysis

2. Ideas & Silent Discussion
Each well-formed idea, together with the respected need analysis and problem description is written on big posters spread around the room. All participants are moving around the space commenting on the ideas without speaking. They can make suggestions and alternative proposals. The aim of this process is to provide silent feedback to all the ideas in the most constructive way.

3. Goals, Key Activities & types of intervention
After the silent discussion, the groups are coming together to set their goals and key activities they would like to develop to address the identified need/problem. These activities may include single actions such as public campaigns, seminars, research report etc. and long-term activities such as creating a youth center, a social enterprise, a project proposal that includes multiple actions, etc. The limits may be set by the facilitator according to the scope of this particular activity.

4. Target Group (Beneficiaries, Customers)
After deciding upon the goals and activities, it is important to specify the target groups of these activities (to whom are these addressed to). This step might help the group revise and alter the selected activities accordingly (e.g. beneficiaries with special needs, vulnerable groups, age limits, etc.).

5. Partners & Key Stakeholders (Stakeholder Analysis)
Similarly, it is important to think about the team and relevant partners each group wants to involve in their initiative in order to achieve the goals and develop the activities with.

At the same time, they should identify the institutions and people that will probably affect and be affected by the selected intervention. The method of Stakeholder Analysis can be used for this step:

- Stakeholders with high interest and influence on the intervention should be engaged and monitored closely
- Stakeholders with low interest and influence on the intervention might be considered the least important
- Those with high influence and low interest should be kept satisfied meeting their needs
- Those with high interest and low influence should be kept informed and show consideration

6. Key Resources (Financial, human, natural, technological)
In order to pursue an action, it is also essential to identify and list the required resources that each group will need. Different kinds of resources might be available and others might need additional partners with certain skills. In this step, the financial costs of the intervention could be included, as well as depending on the length of it, the expectations for the future costs and additional resources .

7. User value (Who gets what) – Social Benefit
The respected outputs (short term effects), outcomes (midterm effects) and impacts (long term effects) for each of the target group and partners should be identified. Furthermore, the social benefit for the community and how this intervention solves for the main problem should be mentioned explicitly.

8. Revenue (sources of income), Surplus & possible investments
In case participants are choosing an action that involves the generation of income, foreseen surplus and possible investment options may be included in the analysis.

9. Channels (Communication, Dissemination, Promotion)
The types and methods of communication between the partners, the target groups and stakeholders should be mentioned accordingly depending on the type of action and goals. It is suggested that the groups develop a concrete strategy apart from simply collecting ideas such as, social media, online contacts and other media.

The role of social media plays a central role nowadays. Hence, the facilitator may introduce tools and educational materials in order to help participants understand and make the best use of the social media.

10. Decision Making Processes
Last but not least, if referring to a collaborative and community action, even if it is on voluntary basis or business oriented, it should be clearly stated how decisions are made. Observation shows that many great ideas with social impact have lost their value and character due to the emergence of non-democratic hierarchical structures in decision-making, discriminative power use and corruption. How to overcome these barriers and form a fruitful collaborative structure that supports the healthy implementation of an initiative in line with its underlying values is probably, the most viable part to be self-resilient and sustainable beyond challenges and drawbacks.

At the end of the day, a successful initiative with respect to each goals and envisaged impact should rely on the collaboration of the involved groups and members, as well as the level of consistency between the actions and the values set in the beginning.

At the end of the activity, each group can share their ideas in plenary or even in an open event, allowing space for comments and feedback. Based on the available resources and context the designed activities may be put in practice at local level and beyond.

Notes for the facilitator
For a graphic representation of the elements presented, the facilitator may introduce the Social Business Model Canvas or other structured frameworks for action plan development. A quick search online could be useful to get some inspiration and adjust given educational materials to participants' needs and scope of the activity.

Useful Resources
https://www.tuzzit.com/en/canvas/
https://diytoolkit.org/tools/business-model-canvas/
https://www.mindtools.com/
https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk
https://ctb.ku.edu/en