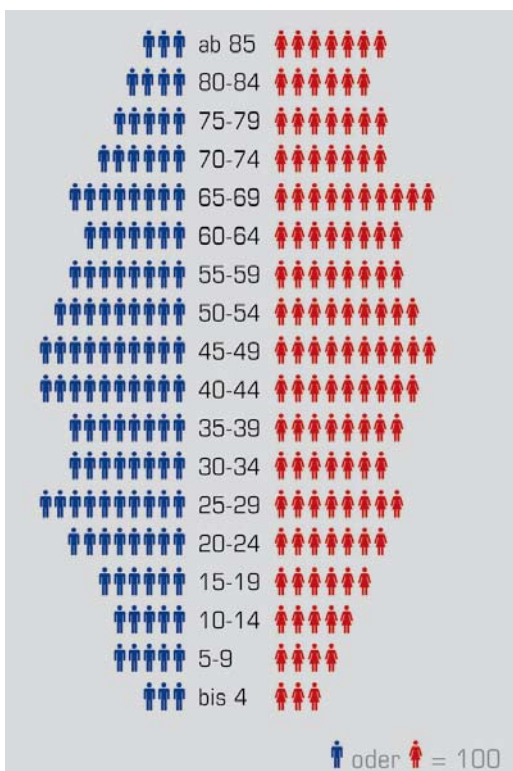


NEWSLETTER OP-ACT ISSUE I/2010

Project News



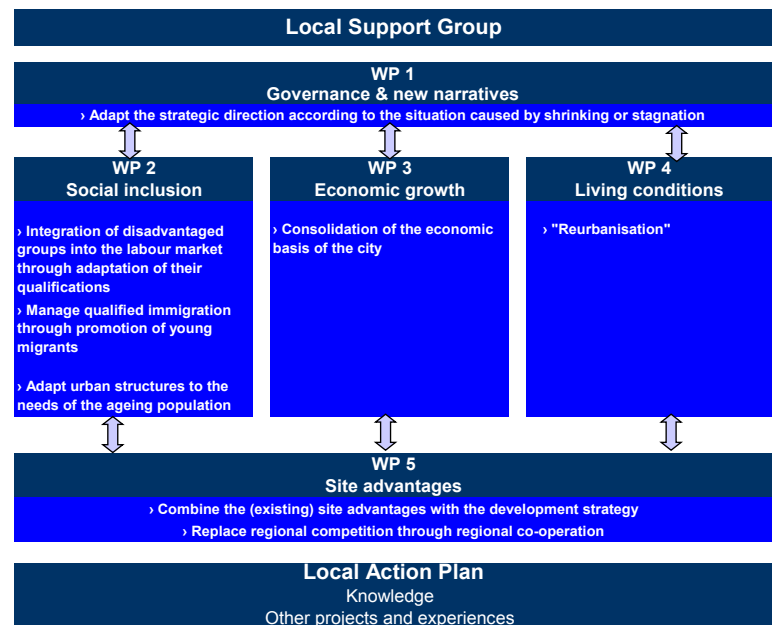
Provide better qualification and education framework (WP2)



Age pyramid in Leoben

OP-ACT Work Package Structure

The OP-ACT work package structure considers five topics in relation to the main focus of challenges in regards to demographic change in smaller and medium sized cities.



Work package interaction

Work Package 1 and 5 are comprehensive work packages. This means they have a direct or indirect influence on all other work packages as well. WP1 deals with governance and new narratives. Declining inhabitant figures and the global economic crisis are leading to declining revenues. Young people tend to move to nearby metropolitan areas and the number of retired people is growing steadily. Consequently municipalities have to stabilise their financial situation and also have to find new branding and marketing ideas to promote the city image to keep young people in town. Within WP5 cities are scheduled to find niches and existing site advantages that they are probably not aware of. Regional competition is to be replaced by regional cooperation. Smaller and medium sized cities that face similar problems such as population decline tend to compete in order to keep their inhabitant figures. Methods should be found to replace this competition by synergies within the region.

Focus on hard and soft facts

Work packages 2, 3 and 4 focus on concrete challenges concerning social inclusion, economic growth and on living conditions within the municipalities. Most of the OP-ACT member cities have higher education facilities or a university locally. The idea is to develop cooperation structures between these education facilities, responsible stakeholders in the labour market and entrepreneurs in the private economy sector to analyse what qualifications are needed and how to establish training and education systems to satisfy these needs. A well-qualified workforce should be the result. In this sense a special focus is placed on young people and migrants to provide better qualifications and education framework and more promising prospects (work package 2). Due to the economic crisis many companies have had to close down. By improving basic local conditions for existing companies and promoting entrepreneurship, municipalities can boost the local economy, hence providing more jobs and

keeping people in town. Tourist concepts should also help to foster sustainable economic growth (work package 3).

It is important to create attractive living and working conditions for our inhabitants. Re-urbanisation of the social and technical infrastructure should help to create new city images (work package 4).

There is strong interdependency between the work packages because solutions considered in a specific work package can probably not be implemented successfully without considering those from other work packages. Project workshops always cover all work packages but in each workshop a special focus will be placed on a particular work package as well.

For more information we recommend you to visit our OP-ACT Website and to download our project flyer:

www.urbact.eu/op-act



City Hall of Dabrowa Górnicza



OP-ACT workshop in Dabrowa Górnicza



Municipality of Legazpi

In order to detail the local action plan themes and concrete projects the local support group members decided to invite the rest of social and economic entities of the municipality to provide inputs and insights on possible projects and themes that they think would be interesting to work on. That will be developed through a questionnaire that will be posted and e-mailed to the whole network of social and economic associations of the city of Legazpi. Once the group receives feedback from these entities this particular issue will be discussed in the next local support group meeting that will take place on the 10th of January 2011.

Daniel Kampus, thematic expert of the OP-ACT project underlines the importance of the local support group by saying, "Co-operations have an increased significance when dealing with demographic change. The involvement of important local actors, stakeholders, social and citizens' associations should become an integrated and cross-departmental principle of operation. Co-operations and partnerships can only be strengthened and firmly established if all the different actors develop a common strategy. This is then the verifiable guideline and ensures coordination between the single interests of all involved parties. The creation of Local Support Groups within this project is one step in the right direction."

OP-ACT Workshop in Dabrowa Górnicza

After the last workshop in Ancona project partners had a chance to visit Dabrowa Górnicza during the first workshop of the implementation phase at the end of October.

As the 9th biggest city in Poland, Dabrowa Górnicza is part of the 'industrial agglomeration' centred around the city of Katowice. It is a highly industrialised city with a moderate level of population and job decline compared to other OP-ACT partner cities. However, due to dependency on the steel industry ArcelorMittal Poland, there is a potential danger of industrial and thus population decline due to globalisation processes. Therefore economic diversification is urgently needed. By making use of site advantages as defined in work package 5 this diversification should be achieved. Due to remediation and renaturation of former mines (opencast pits) there is high potential for recreational functions for the whole Katowice agglomeration and the development of tourism concepts. At the moment the water front shores of Pogoria IV and III - 2 of the 4 lakes – are being developed. However, sustainable tourist infrastructure is still absent and needs to be created.

Being situated at the crossing of two major transport corridors (East-West with Ukraine in the East; North -South with Warsaw in the North) there is high potential for transport logistic facilities. But there are also many obstacles to overcome. Right now, knowledge in the workforce is basically linked to the steel industry. For an approach based on economic diversification, knowledge has to be adapted towards new industries, services and entrepreneurship, especially among young people. New perspectives have to be given to the young, and dependency on the steel industry has to be reduced. Dabrowa Górnicza will be work package leader in WP 5 and will focus mainly on the development of its site advantages.

Local Support Group Meeting in the Municipality of Legazpi

The municipality of Legazpi hosted the first local support group meeting after the approval of OP-ACT project by URBACT II Monitoring Committee on the 9th of December 2010. So far, it has been the objective of this first local support group meeting to inform their members about the actions and decisions made in Dabrowa Górnicza and work on those tasks and actions that guarantee an effective development of OP-ACT project.

For this purpose, local support group members focused on the identification of those work packages in which Legazpi will like to work on. To this point, Legazpi decided to work on WP1, WP2 and WP3, and to be WP1 co-leader in collaboration with the city of Leoben.



Promotion of cross-generational collaboration

METHODOLOGY

OP-ACT uses the Peer Review method for more learning experience

What is a Peer Review?

Peer reviews provide a forum for intensive exchange between individual practitioners who examine and research one another's practice, and at the same time are prompted to reflect on the situation in their own municipalities.

The peer review is therefore an instrument used to further mutual learning in a certain field. Projects and practices of the host city are evaluated by comparable colleagues from other municipalities - the 'peers', as they are known. Peers come from cities of similar size, are being confronted by similar problems, work in a similar environment and with similar means. Every peer is thus familiar with the project topics and can contribute his or her point of view and experience.

How does a peer review work?

„As a first step a hosting city will write an initial report regarding a project on which they want to gain additional know-how. The initial report contains detailed information and assessments of the challenges and describes the problem fields as well as the already achieved and expected outcomes“, says Hanns-Uve Schwedler, lead expert of the OP-ACT project.

The second step will be the peers' desk review focusing on developing hypotheses and questions on the basis of the initial report. The peers will decide what additional information is needed and analyse who they need to talk to during the field visit in

the hosting city. They propose measures that they think could be taken for further development of the project. During the project workshop a peer review workshop is held to present the findings. Peers discuss with appropriate municipal employees, political figures, stakeholder and local community representatives, thus enabling them to test their original hypotheses and elaborate their assessment. At the end of the review workshop the peers will introduce their recommendations and considerations. The results should thereafter be implemented in work with the local support group.

What is the benefit of the peer review?

The big advantage we see in the use of the peer review method is that it offers an additional platform of learning and exchange in opening up opportunities to delve deeply into a particular subject and to amass practice-related experience in dealing with relevant problems in one's day-to-day project work.

Furthermore, people whose project is being reviewed are able

to react more freely to questioning and recommendations given by their peers than would be the case with directions from a consultant or from a government representative who is more remote from reality in the project. The fact that peers as external players can take a neutral point of view of practice increases the credibility of the evaluation process.

Additional tools

Besides the peer review method for project assessment, tools such as the stakeholder analysis and the SWOT analysis have been introduced. The stakeholder analysis allows evaluation on which person(s) or group(s) could lose or gain from the project and whose actions could potentially affect the project in a positive or negative manner. Once all important stakeholders have been considered, the need for appropriate action can be determined. For example stakeholders whose influence on the project results is high and could gain significantly from the project should be heavily involved in the project. This means their

interest should be thoroughly considered and a good relationship should be developed.

The SWOT analysis is probably the most common analysis tool. Finding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for each project is the main focus of this tool. Many projects start with a SWOT analysis before they enter the implementation phase.

With all these tools and measures we are confident of achieving important findings for our project results.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES



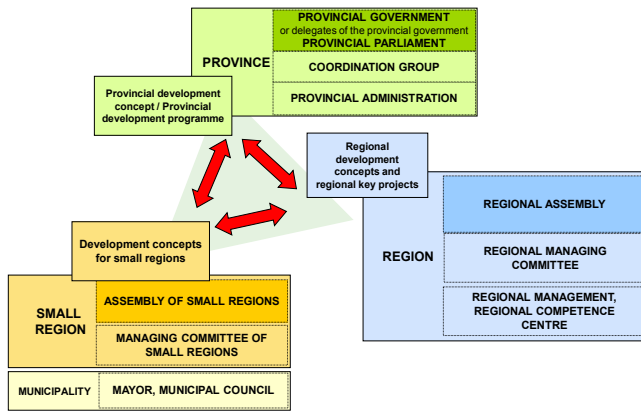
Ground-breaking ceremony of a day nursery in Leoben

Replacing regional competition by regional cooperation

The provincial government of Styria in Austria has implemented a programme called RegioNext which regulates new forms for municipal cooperation. The regions (in Styria) are divided into 'great regions' and 'small regions'. The intention of the programme is

- to promote cooperation between neighbouring municipalities
- to increase the efficiency of public administration
- to relieve municipal budgets
- to give them more responsibilities
- to ensure attractive living spaces for inhabitants

Requirements for municipalities are increasing continuously. Especially small and medium sized cities do not have sufficient capacities and can hardly cope with this burden. Thus municipalities are encouraged to work together and build a cooperation that shares costs and work load.



were dependent on their own budgets they would not be able to support their citizens in this manner. Hence, this is a great tested example how to replace regional competition by regional cooperation. The OP-ACT project focuses on this subject in work package 5.



Intergenerational programme in Legazpi

The Municipality of Legazpi granted to develop a Living Lab

The Municipality of Legazpi has been granted under “Gipuzkoa an Entrepreneur Society 2010” program promoted by Gipuzkoa Province Government to develop the project named “Legazpi BAI! Living Lab”, that aims to define and develop a new territorial and local space based on Living Lab model.

A Living Lab is a user-centered, open-innovation ecosystem, often operating in a territorial context (e.g. city, agglomeration, and region), integrating concurrent research and innovation processes within a public-private-people partnership. It is based on a systematic user co-creation approach integrating research and innovation processes.

It is the aim of the Legazpi BAI! Living Lab project to develop a collaborative environment in which different actors and citizens of Legazpi work on collaborative projects that will shape the future local development model of the city of Legazpi.

The Municipality of Legazpi receives Udalsarea 21 Award

The Municipality of Legazpi has received Udalsarea 21 Award within the “Climate Change” category due to the development of the project called “Citizens co-responsibility: Legazpi without cars and no wastes, taking care of the environment”.

Udalsarea 21 - Basque Network of Municipalities for Sustainability- started in 2002 and it gathers those municipalities whose Local Agendas 21's processes are more developed. All of them are implementing the actions defined in the Local Action Plans of their Local Agendas 21. It is the mission of Udalsarea 21 to promote the effective establishment of Local Agenda 21's Action Plans and integrate sustainability criteria in all the municipal management areas related to the compromises included in the Aalborg Charter. So far it promotes the role of the municipalities in the Basque sustainable development policies and in the participation of the Basque society.

The Municipality of Legazpi in close collaboration with ILIN-TI (trading association) has launched two projects to increase citizen's awareness about climate change. One campaign developed during 2009 and named “Reasons of weight: Legazpi

without cars and no wastes, taking care of environment” and “Legazpi's green market” to make people more sensitive, aware and able to identify ecological products in the local market. These two campaigns have pursued the following objectives:

- Decrease waste
- Decrease the use of cars for shopping
- Decrease the use of plastic bags, and
- Promote the local market

Results account for:

- 150 carriers bags distributed among citizens
- Collect 830 plastic bags
- Training sessions for 13 local traders about existing ecological products in their trading sector and the definition of an information campaign to consumers.

Promoting the local market, moving by foot, generating less waste, using ecological products, etc. are very simple actions that affect positively the environment, our health and welfare.



“Challenges of a successful tourism concept in Altona”

Interview with Ms. Corina Turner, Manager of the city Marketing in Altona

Ms. Gundula Schulze: What is the particular problem in Altona with regard to marketing the town as a tourist destination?

Ms. Corina Turner: The problem lies in the fact that Altona, with its castle and fantastic hiking trails, offers a few out of the ordinary experiences, however around the town, there is currently not much in the way of tourist infrastructure: service, contact people out of office hours, quality management, a friendly attitude in the town centre towards visitors. We have to start from scratch in order to build up a basic level of service - and this has to be done with limited financial and (in particular) staffing resources.



Municipality of Altena

Ms. Gundula Schulze: *What is the town doing to get things moving in terms of tourist marketing?*

Ms. Corina Turner: A great deal: for one thing, a professional approach to tourism has been created that highlights Altena's step-by-step change in becoming a tourist town. But without money and just a few staff, knowing how it is done does not help much. Therefore, again and again, the town intensively incorporates its citizens in the process of change to become a tourist town and in so doing, also attempts to raise interest in proactive projects. In addition, a program has been launched to support the renewal of facades in the town centre. This should make it easier for landlords to renovate their houses and in so doing, smarten the image of town centre. And last but not least, our town repeatedly tries to receive funding for other tourism-related work in addition to the many urban development projects.

Ms. Gundula Schulze: *Has there already been initial success?*

Ms. Corina Turner: Oh yes. Anyone who comes to the castle and wire town can see this for themselves. The image of the town centre has changed significantly with the construction of the Lennepromenade. The new road layout, modern seating and the opening up of the town towards the river has made the bank of the river Lenne a new 'relaxation zone' for many citizens of the town as well as tourists. Next year, two large terraces will be built in the river which, again, will offer a new quality to those that want to visit it.

Ms. Gundula Schulze: *What else is in the pipeline?*

Ms. Corina Turner: The essential part of the development of the town as a tourist resort is the proposed lift to the Altena castle, which in global terms will be a lift which offers a unique experience. From 2013, this lift will connect the town centre with the castle and the castle museums. Through its globally

unique 'edutainment' concept, it will attract thousands of new tourists each year to Altena. We have the opportunity to tap new target groups and win them over as affluent visitors to the town centre. The background is: our castle - one of the most charming castles in Germany - located on a steep hill just above the town centre. The access road is so narrow that visitors can only reach the castle by foot or by the community bus, which does not run regularly. This means that the castle cannot be visited by older people, people that have problems with their feet and moreover, the entire bus tourism sector. With the 'lift of discovery' as a new means of transport, this situation will change. It will be possible to transport complete bus groups to the top within minutes, directly to the castle's courtyard. The second important aspect is the location of the lift. It is a direct connection from the castle to the town centre. It brings castle visitors - and purchasing power - into the pedestrian zone. Up until now, most museum visitors have turned right, gone past the shopping street, have gone up the castle hill and then straight back down again to their cars. They were gone again, and out of bounds for Altena's retailers. This will change radically with the lift.

Ms. Gundula Schulze: *Who is involved in the brainstorming and implementation?*

Ms. Corina Turner: The special thing about Altena is the fruitful cooperation between the town, its citizens, professionals and volunteer workers. This close cooperation started some years ago with Altena's retailers paving the main shopping street themselves. Today, we work as volunteers alongside municipal staff in various thematic forums on ideas related to urban development. Together, we also organize workshops in order to forge new ideas related to tourism.