

LOCAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT OF THE SZALA NEIGHBOURHOOD 2012-2020 MUNICIPALITY OF EGER

**SURE – Fostering diversification of local economies
by using innovative Socio-economic methods of
Urban REhabilitation in deprived urban areas**



Connecting cities
Building successes



The project is co-financed by the EU in the frame of the URBACT II Programme



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE SURE PROJECT REPORT



Foreword by the Lead Partner László Habis, Mayor of Eger

Two thirds of the European population now live in urban areas. A recent report by the European Commission estimates that 56% of Europe's urban population lives in towns and cities of between 5,000 – 100, 000 inhabitants. This makes smaller cities like Eger and many others significant actors in the achievement of European policy goals concerned with growth, innovation and inclusion.

All our partners in the SURE network are small and medium sized cities. We are centres for public and private services as well as knowledge production, innovation and commerce. We also fulfil important functions within their regional economy and support the rural areas that surround us.

While the human scale of our cities, together with their geographical and historical roots, makes them great places for sustainable urban living, we also create problems and often face challenges that are not of our own making. Lack of economic growth affects all of us and in most cities we encounter an increase in unemployment, poverty and ill health. Poor housing and a deteriorating physical environment remain key challenges for many small and medium sized cities. Typically, the municipalities of smaller cities tend to have less capacity and expertise to tackle these challenges in an integrated and sustainable way than their larger counterparts. This is the reason why we established the SURE project.

Our emphasis in the SURE project on an integrated approach towards sustainable socio-economic regeneration meant that all partners gave considerable thought to the possible social and economic impacts of the proposed regeneration interventions. This required all SURE partners to invest significant time and resources in consultations and collaborations with our local communities.

We learned much from our partner cities over the past three years and also experienced the benefits of being part of the URBACT programme which brings together 300 cities from 29 countries. The SURE project enabled eight small and medium sized cities to create integrated and sustainable regeneration strategies which will improve the social and economic conditions for their citizens. The Municipality of Eger is proud and feels privileged to have been the lead partner of such a worthy project

Focus and Structure of the SURE Project

The purpose of the SURE project was to support municipalities of small and medium sized cities in the development of integrated strategies for the social and economic regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods. While the principles of partnership led, multi-sectorial interventions are widely recognised, small and medium sized cities often lack the expertise to initiate and then deliver such integrated regeneration initiatives. Hence the primary aim of the SURE project was to build the capacity of its members to develop cross-cutting interventions which respond to local needs and opportunities.

In designing the exchange and learning process an emphasis was put on peer learning which was facilitated through a number of carefully prepared study visits. Each visit focused on a particular topic that was explored from theoretical and practical perspectives. These topics were purposefully chosen at the outset of the SURE project because they responded to the learning needs of network participants and reflected the main problems associated with the SURE target areas. The topics studied included:

- Strategy development
- Social enterprise
- Placemaking
- Social inclusion
- Community development, and
- Tourism

Key Learning Points

As the SURE project was intended to be a capacity building process which would leave participating cities better placed to develop integrated approaches towards the socio-economic regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods, it was essential to capture the key learning outcomes as the project unfolded. This was done through six case studies which synthesised the information generated during a study visit in relation to the core topics of the SURE network referred to above. The full case studies with supporting material are contained in the SURE Learning Log¹ which can be found at <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/disadvantaged-neighbourhoods/sure/homepage>

If one thing can be said about the learning experience among SURE participants, it is that every project or process that was explored during a visit would almost certainly play out differently in their home towns. Regeneration interventions should be tailor made to address local issues in ways that reflect resources and perspectives of local stakeholders - there is no 'one size fits all' solution to reduce social exclusion or achieve community development. However, being able to see,

¹ The SURE Learning Log: Case studies on core topics of integrated regeneration in small and medium sized cities, Hans Schlappa (2012), URBACT Secretariat, Paris

explore and discuss interventions in their local context was much valued. Some of the most inspiring project ideas SURE delegates encountered during their study visits are presented below in alphabetical order.

Community Centre Managed by Community Groups

Shanganagh Park House is the property of the municipality in Dún Laoghaire but it is run by a voluntary board of management. Funding is generated from service charges to users which cover the running costs of the building and also create a number of paid jobs. Services provided by local voluntary organisations and are heavily used by the local community and Shanganagh Park House is the 'hub' around which much of the community development in the neighbourhood revolves. For further information contact Pauline Davy who is a member of the Shanganagh Park House Management Board sphmanagement@eircom.net

Community Garden Managed by Users

The community garden in Dún Laoghaire also caught the imagination of many SURE delegates. While the creation of communal gardens on surplus land is well established practice among regeneration practitioners across Europe, seeing a large project that is immensely popular and entirely managed by its users gave SURE delegates something to aim for. Further details on this project can be found in the 2011 edition of the URBACT Tribune which explains in more detail how the community garden came about. The article also points to wider benefits, such as encouraging physical exercise, overcoming isolation particularly among older men, encouraging healthy eating habits and reducing food bills among low income families: http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general_library/URBACT_16_08_11_pre_BAT-3.pdf

Erasmus Exchange for Young Entrepreneurs

Young entrepreneurs often find themselves with very limited resources to explore projects, services or programmes that would assist them in developing their business ideas. A joint grant application by Albacete and Dún Laoghaire led to an exchange programme between the two SURE partners. More information on this initiative can be obtained from Javier Rosell of the Centro Europeo de Empresas e Innovación in Albacete: jrosell@ceeialbacete.com and Michael Hayden of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Enterprise Board: Michael.hayden@dltceb.ie. The website of the European Business Exchange provides details on how to obtain funding for exchanges of young entrepreneurs: <http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu>

Future City Game

The Future City Game was played twice during the SURE project, first during the kick-off meeting in Gheorgheni and then some twelve months later in Albacete. In both cases the Future City Game technique generated a coherent and detailed vision about ways in which the target area and the wider city could be improved. This provided the framework for the development of Local Action Plans in both partner cities. There are a number of variations of the original methodology which

was developed by the British Council in the 1990s because the principles are quite simple and methods are easily adapted to local circumstances. For further details on the philosophy and principles underpinning the methodology visit: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/futurecitygame-what-is-it.htm>

Examples of how the Future City Game played out for the SURE partners and other related case studies are contained in the SURE Toolkit on Participatory Planning Techniques which can be downloaded at <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/disadvantaged-neighbourhoods/sure/homepage>. The SURE Learning Log also contains a detailed case study on the Future City Game that was played in Gheorgheni: <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/disadvantaged-neighbourhoods/sure/our-outputs>

Internet Access Free of Charge

There is an assumption that most people have access to the internet and little appears to be done to ensure that members of marginalised communities can access web-based resources. In thinking about ways of informing young residents about job and training opportunities, the LSG in Eger developed the idea of providing free wireless internet access for a Roma settlement. Young people tend to have web-enabled cell phones and are more likely to pick up information about jobs or education via social media than the material produced by the municipality. Hence a relatively small investment in wireless internet coverage is expected to yield high returns in terms of reaching groups of people that tend not to engage easily with public agencies. For more information on this project contact Sándor File, Chairman of the LSG in Eger and economic development director at Heves County Chamber of Trade and Industry: sandor.file@hkik.hu

Newsletter by the Community for the Community

As simple as it may sound, having a regular newsletter which updates residents on current developments can be an effective way of engaging the population in the regeneration process. The trick is to ensure that the newsletter comes from the community, this is the reason why it gets read. The community groups in Dún Laoghaire had to be given some financial and technical support initially to get their first newsletter off the ground, but now they produce their newsletter three times a year entirely independently from the municipality. For more information on how to go about producing a newsletter that comes from the community and is for the community contact Pauline Davy, LSG member and board member of the Shanganagh Community Centre: sphmanagement@eircom.net

Placemaking for Social Inclusion

Public squares and other open spaces play a crucial role in facilitating social interaction among the people who live, work and socialise in our cities. The improvement of such spaces should be a priority for every LSG as it offers excellent opportunities to engage a wide range of stakeholders. The main source of information about the philosophy of placemaking together with inspirational project examples is the Project for Public Spaces: <http://www.pps.org>. The SURE Toolkit on Participatory

Planning Techniques contains worked examples of the placemaking process based on the experience of SURE partners. The toolkit can be downloaded from <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/disadvantaged-neighbourhoods/sure/> homepage

A time-lapse technique was applied on two occasions by the SURE partner in Louvain la Neuve who filmed how people use the Place des Wallons. This created fascinating insights which now inform the placemaking process. Further information can be obtained from Jean-Christophe Echement, Manager of Gestion du Centre Ville Ottignies Louvain la Neuve: gcvolln@skynet.be

Police Force as Partners in Regeneration

Most SURE partners do not consider inviting a member of the local police force to their Local Support Group. This is because having the police at the partnership table might imply that law enforcement is a key priority for the local area, which is often not the case. In Ireland and the United Kingdom it is now well established practice to engage the police force in problem analysis and strategy development. This helps crime reduction, particularly through preventative actions, which are preferable to enforcement. Working with the police also helps partnerships identify the root causes of crime and social disorder, such as poverty and exclusion, which should be starting point for regeneration strategies in many cases. A growing body of effective practice is being produced and visiting the UK Government's website is a good starting point for those who need to find out more about engaging police forces in regeneration partnerships:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/partnerships/effective-practice1>

Pop-up Shops

The pop-up shop utilises vacant high street premises on a temporary basis, thus avoiding lengthy and costly planning applications and other lead-in costs. Rents also tend to be well below the market rate because the premises have little commercial value at that particular point in time. Where the municipality owns all or part of the premises half the battle to establish a pop-up shop is won. One of the remaining challenges then is to win over regular businesses owners who are paying market rents and who tend to be resentful about 'subsidised competition' on their door step. To find out more about the potential pitfalls in supporting pop-up shops and how to avoid them, contact Wessel Badenhorst at Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council: badenhorst@dlrcoco.ie

Umbrella Organisations for Community Groups

Many municipalities and regeneration partnerships have taken the decision to fund umbrella organisations or consortia of NGOs and let them decide among themselves who is best placed to deliver a particular project. If done well, this process brings communities together, enables them to deal with conflicts of interest and supports the effective co-ordination and prioritisation of interventions. The RAPID Programme in Ireland represents an example where national and local government have come together with NGOs to form a range of umbrella organisations at local levels. More

information on the benefits and pitfalls of working through umbrella organisations is available from David Lawless, RAPID Co-ordinator in Dún Laoghaire: dlawless@dlrcoco.ie

Volunteering in deprived neighbourhoods

The socio-economic regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods cannot be done without the voluntary participation of local residents. Properly supported, volunteers can make a world of difference to people who live in poverty or suffer from social exclusion. Often it is these voluntary efforts that need to be nurtured in order to reach people most in need or to solve deeply complex social problems. While there is a strong and well documented Anglo-Saxon tradition of voluntary work in the community, all European nations have developed ways of supporting voluntary efforts for the benefit of the wider community. The website of Volunteering England provides a wealth of guidance on recruiting, training, funding, supporting volunteers: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk>

The SURE Model

The SURE project was designed specifically to facilitate exchange and learning in ways which would support partner cities in the development of their Local Action Plans. Significant effort went into the peer learning process which was facilitated through case studies, peer review, plenary and bilateral discussions. As a result of this process the content and focus of local action plans changed significantly between the initial assessment during the Baseline Study in 2010 and the completion of the SURE project in December 2012. The full final report contains outlines of the SURE Local Action Plans together with vignettes which highlight the impact of the SURE project. The final report can be downloaded at <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/disadvantaged-neighbourhoods/sure/homepage>

While all Local Action Plans of the SURE network contain interventions which address social as well as economic problems, not all of them put forward initiatives to deal with social enterprise, social inclusion, placemaking, community development or tourism. Each of the action plans puts a different emphasis on these issues and contains a range of additional measures which are locally significant. This is as it should be and demonstrates that the learning process facilitated by the SURE project has enabled municipalities to identify potentially useful interventions in other countries and then translate these into locally workable proposals through their action plans.

What the action plans have in common, however, is that each plan went through three stages of development. These stages were concerned with strategic analysis, strategy development and action planning. These key stages of the strategy process can be summarised in a matrix which represents the SURE experience of developing integrated socio-economic regeneration strategies.

Key Elements of Integrated Strategy Development

Stage	Purpose	Principles	Key Questions	Information Sources
Strategic Analysis	Identify the 'big' issues	Establish relationships between vision for the whole city and deprived parts of the city	What are the big issues for our deprived areas? Why should we do something about them? What are our priorities?	Mostly available locally in data sets held by public agencies Regional and national agencies also hold relevant data
Strategy Development	Create options and strategic choice	Explore big issues collaboratively with all stakeholders Analysis must cut across agencies and departments, Support community in contributing to problem analysis	What are the root causes of the problems in the area? What has worked in other cities? What are our options? Have we got the capacity to deliver preferred options?	Local data on problems and past projects Reports from other cities and countries Visits to other cities Regeneration conferences
Action Planning	Design a robust instrument for change	Listen carefully to local residents and traders, Pool resources and expertise across departmental and organisational boundaries, Work across public, voluntary and private sectors	Which projects have priority? How do they affect each other? Who leads which project? What are the costs, time frames, outputs and delivery processes?	Information gathered during previous stage Participatory planning techniques
Implementation	Produce sustainable improvements	Delivery agencies must be accountable to the partnership Give local communities responsibility and resources to deliver Monitor progress carefully	How can we support the community in leading projects? Are projects creating the desired outcomes? Do we need to change the Action Plan?	Capacity building techniques Community development techniques Project monitoring data

In working through these stages SURE partners were dealing with ‘building blocks’ which make up their own, bespoke local socio-economic regeneration strategy. The SURE model of integrated strategy development below attempts to capture the dynamic nature of the this process. In addition to the three key stages of strategy making referred to in the matrix above, we can identify key tasks associated with the strategic development process. The first is concerned with research and idea generation, a task in which LSG members were supported through the study visits. The second task focuses on the local context and requires LSG members to compare an initiative which they studied in a different city to their own needs and capabilities. For example, it would be unrealistic to attempt to achieve levels of community engagement that are evident in cities with strong traditions of volunteering if a city has a poor track record of working with communities. The benchmark needs to be set in a way which makes the vision, objectives and actions of community engagement realistic and achievable. The third strategy making task is concerned with weighing up and prioritising the options that are available.

The different strategy stages and tasks are represented in the SURE model as ‘building blocks’ of the strategy process. The building blocks are not equal in terms of time and effort required from the LSG, but high level inputs on some A blocks, for example, might support decision making processes in blocks B or C. The principle which underpins this model is that all building blocks should be in place before any project is released for implementation. Further details on the application of this model are contained in the full final report which can be downloaded at <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/disadvantaged-neighbourhoods/sure/homepage>

The SURE Model of Integrated Strategy Development²

	VISION	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	
STRATEGY MAKING TASKS	Prioritising + Decision-making	A3	B3	C3
	Consultation + Benchmarking	A2	B2	C2
	Research + idea generation	A1	B1	C1
	Strategic analysis	Strategy development	Action planning	
	STRATEGY MAKING STAGES			

² Based on the ideas put forward by Wessel Badenhorst, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council

This SURE model of integrated strategy development emphasises the non-linear nature of strategic planning in the urban regeneration process. Viewing regeneration strategy development through the lens of the SURE model provides a number of useful strategy making aids, including:

- A check list for the sequencing and assignment of strategy development tasks,
- A tool for monitoring and evaluating progress, and
- A framework for exploring the complex processes of interactions between officials, citizens and institutions.

A further advantage of the SURE model is that it offers a valuable alternative to project level case studies. As each city has to adapt project ideas in ways which reflect local circumstances the typical case study content of facts and figures for specific interventions is certainly helpful. What tends to be missing in exchanges of practice between cities is a higher level conceptual framework that allows citizens and officials to make sense of the different stages and tasks of strategy making they are engaged in at any point in time. The SURE model might fill this gap and support cities to learn more effectively from each other in future.

Implications for policy and practice

Key implication for policy and practice arising from the SURE project can be summarised as follows:

- Smaller cities often lack the capacity to deliver cross-cutting interventions and should be given more and focused support to develop this capacity.
- Individualised exchanges between practitioners or citizens are an effective way to gather information and generate ideas. Hence an exchange programme for smaller towns and cities that builds on the principles of the Erasmus for Entrepreneurs initiative should be considered.
- The lack of capabilities among residents to engage in complex strategy development and implementation is openly talked about, but the lack of capacity within municipalities to work with their communities is rarely mentioned. Local politicians and municipality officers must learn to accept that there is no short cut to achieving community engagement and develop *their own* capacity to support this process.
- We need more research and less evaluation about the processes that lead to desired outcomes. A follow up study of the SURE project designed to explore the challenges that SURE partners encountered in implementing their action plans should be considered.

Conclusion

This short summary attempts to outline how the learning and exchange process of the SURE project effectively supported small and medium sized cities in a critical reflection of their own practice and encouraged a creative problem solving process which resulted in robust regeneration strategies for their target areas. Every Local

Action Plan of the SURE partner cities now contains elements that have not been tried by them before. In addition the SURE project has improved the capacity municipalities and residents to develop small scale regeneration strategies that are inclusive and integrated across different sectors and functions. The SURE model which emerged during this process offers scope for application by different networks and cities. While there is much to be recommended about the approach taken by the SURE network, the creation of a secure and constructive learning environment during the exchange visits would appear to be of central importance. Here too the SURE project contributes a rich source of information which could support the design of future exchange and learning initiatives.

“The difference to another URBACT project we did is that in SURE we are learning and developing the project together; there is nobody who tells us ‘this is it, that’s how it’s done’. It’s a very good learning environment for us.” (LSG Member)

“This was a very successful project because we created an effective learning environment. There was some emotional bonding and people were comfortable with each other. I wouldn’t want to change any of that.” (Municipality Officer)

Dr. Hans Schlappa
Lead Expert of SURE Project

2. INTRODUCING THE SURE PROJECT, THE PREPARATION OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

2.1. Brief introduction to the SURE Project

The SURE (*Fostering diversification of local economies by using innovative Socio-economic methods of Urban REhabilitation in deprived urban areas*) is a thematic network of 8 European small- and medium-sized cities. The project is co-financed by the ERDF in the URBACT II Programme (<http://urbact.eu/sure>). As the Lead Partner, the Municipality of Eger coordinates the work of the eight European cities, with the leadership of Chief Architect and Project Manager, Mr Attila Rátkai.

Project Partners:

Pori (FIN) - Pori is the regional centre of Satakunta county, located north-west from Helsinki, the sister city of Eger (population: 82,000 people). The target area is the western part of the city centre, it has strategic importance regarding to the urban development. The challenge is the coordination of different interests due to the wide range of land use (from the high status residential areas and brown field territories to railway premises).

Dun Laoghaire (IRL) - Dun Laoghaire is an independent city of the conurbations of Dublin (population: 185,000 people). The housing stock of the target areas is mostly owned by the local authority, and inhabited by low social status groups. They are depending strongly on social benefits and the unemployment rate among them is high.

Larnaca (CY) – The city is located in the Southern Cyprus Riviera (population: 82,000 people). Its business centre is facing the implementation of important investment plans. The target area, the previous city centre has high potential in the field of tourism. However, the country-specific ethnic division is the main obstacle of the development.

Ottignies-Louvain-La-Neuve (B) – The city is located in the Walloon region of Belgium. The municipality includes the town of Ottignies and the university city Louvain-La-Neuve, which was built in the 1970s (population: 30,000). The target area can be found in the university city area, its square and the nearby. Its physical condition deteriorates due to it will not be able to remain an integral part of city's rich anyway.

Komotini (GR) – The city is the administrative and commercial centre of Northern East Greece, close to the Turkish-Bulgarian border (population: 110,000 people). The target area of the project is located in the city, a bad conditioned residential area, where the Roma population and the majority of immigrants live.



Gheorgheni (RO) – The city is the centre of Giurgeului Basin, located in Harghita County. Gheorgheni (population: 20,000 people) is the sister city of Eger. The target area is the main square due to its bad physical condition and the Red Lake area, which – belongs to the city administration- not sufficiently exploited by the tourists.

Albacete (E) - the administrative capital of the Province Albacete, and the part of the Castilla-La Mancha region of Central Spain (population: 169,000 people). The target area is a dilapidated, high-density residential zone, close to the city centre, wherein the proportion of low social status groups is increasing, contributing to the devaluation of the area.

The SURE partnership

Source: SURE brochure, 2011.

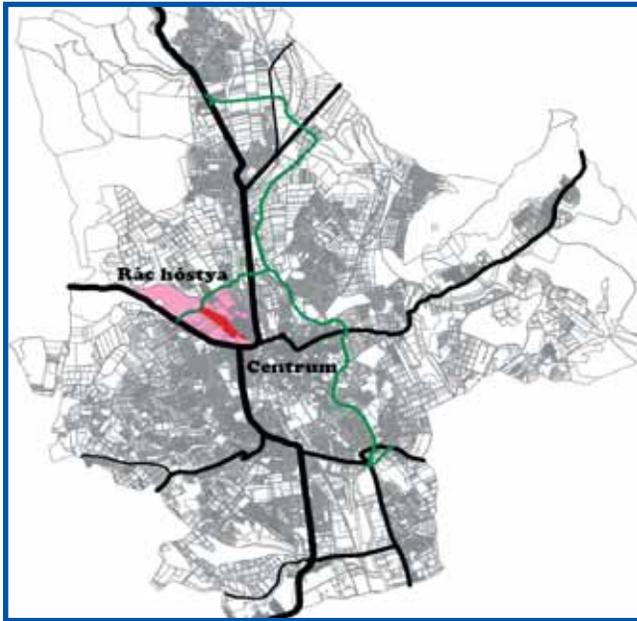
All the partners are challenged by the rehabilitation of deprived districts close to the city centres. Though these districts do not represent an attractive option for large-scale investments, every municipality is pursuing to integrate these districts socially and economically in order to play an active role in the life of the city.

The development requires wide range of expertise and substantial financial resources, therefore settlements are exploring opportunities in order to involve local resident- and business- communities into the more effective development of the integrated and local sustainable solutions. The aim of the SURE network is the development and support of social-economic renewal strategies based on local strengths and opportunities, helping the implementation process.

The partners of the SURE project are supporting each other in the matter of developing integrated approaches, taking into consideration social aspects. The specific results of the network are the Local Action Plans prepared by the Local Support Groups (LSG), which have to be prepared by every partner concentrating on their own problems, applying the good practices revealed in SURE project. In the learning process, guaranteed by the SURE project, a European expert, Hans Schlappa and other external experts are to help the partners. Beside international study visits, the project provides opportunity to study national good practices, transfer knowledge and to prepare local adaptation.

2.2. The key characteristics of the target area, Szala

According to the data of the National Statistics Office (national census, 2001) the so-called **segregation index of the target area is the worst in Eger: 75,5%**. Thus the target area of the SURE (the Szala neighbourhood) or the wider area (Rác hóstya) is indicated as primary area of intervention in the Anti-segregation Plan of the Integrated Urban Development Strategy (IVS) (2008). (See: Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Eger / IVS / Page 238-244. Page)



The location of the Szala Neighbourhood in Rác hóstya, and its distance from the downtown of Eger

Source: Pro Terra Ltd.

In Hungary the 15th national census took place in October 2011, the summarized results on urban level are to be released on the end of 2012, while the results on district levels become available in the first half of 2013. There are no representative data available from the area yet, just the data of the IVS.

Szala is a district which has already embedded into the city's context since the expansion of the town in the 1970s, but remained a segregated area despite of the infrastructural development of the northern residential district in the socialist regime; that is why it is recognised by the IVS as a urban-rural environment.

Szala consists of two streets, the Street Árnýékszala and the Street Verószala. The segregation index of the areas around the settlement (Rudivár utca) is near 50% that is why it should be handled as a whole.

The Family Care Service provided the following data regarding the **population of the segregated area** during the preparation of IVS:

- Street Rudivár: 50 people in 10 flats,
- Street Verószala, from Number 228: 150 people in 40 families,
- Street Árnýékszala: 40 people in 8-10 families.

The **proportion of Roma population** in the Szala Neighbourhood is an estimated 100%, however accurate data is not available. 75% of the housing estates of the target area are with low level of convenience, **inconvenient or emergency accommodations**. To identify the exact number of life-threatening or to be demolished houses, **medical- and technical analysis** would be necessary. The majority of the estates on the settlement are **privately owned**, only one is in municipal property.

The connection to public services (electricity-, gas-, water- and sewage-system) is available in the area. The waste disposal is to be solved by the municipality, but the target area and the surroundings of the Szala are **disordered**. The streets are paved; however reaching area from the bus stops is not easy, due to the distance and the lack of pedestrian surfaces. The Szala neighbourhood is located close to the currently privately owned site of Egervin Winery, and historical wine-cellars with famous wineries.

The results of the survey elaborated in the frame of the SURE project in the target area

Local residents from the Szala consider the following things as **serious problems** in their residence:

- their residence is in ruins, and full of rubbish: the streets, houses, creek bank
- the lack of pavements
- the bad conditions of roads
- the lack of public transport
- the high proportion of those who moved into the area
- the lack of public safety: insufficient street lighting, growing crime
- due to the negative public opinion the properties can not be sold, new ones are not built
- in the past few years the ghettoization process was intensified, especially in the Streets of Árnýékszala and Verőszala.



Creek bank in Szala
Photo: Pro Terra Ltd.

In addition to these, many people demanded: the dismantle of Roma settlements, to **demolish ruined houses** and shanties, job opportunities for local residents; gateway bridge (at the house number 230 Verőszala Street) on the creek in order to **connect Verőszala Street and Árnýékszala Street** to each other, **public transportation** to the area, increasing the presence of the walking **police officers**, restrict the use of public space by the wineries, drug prevention programs and other youth recreation programs. According to the local people, the followings are/could be **valuable in the area**:

- the historical wine-cellars,
- tidy, nice houses,
- the stone cross,
- the cleaned creek



The wine-cellars at the entrance of the Szala and the nearby of Egervin

Photo: Pro Terra Ltd.

2.3. Why the Szala Neighbourhood is the target area?

Eger chose the development of the Szala in the SURE project of URBACT II Programme as a target area, because the **segregation of this area has a significant impact on the whole city**. Therefore solving the daily problems of the residents is not the main goal of the project, but the implementation of interventions which would be beneficial for the whole city.



Photo: Hans Schlappa

2.4. The main target groups of the Local Action Plan

The main direct target group is the local citizens of the Szala, especially the working-age adults, kids and the young adults. Since the segregation can be understood at city level, thus the **indirect target group is the whole population of Eger**, with a special focus on local NGOs.

2.5. Establishment and operation of the URBACT Local Support Group in Eger

In association with the principles of the URBACT II Programme, all the partners have to prepare their Local Action Plan (LAP). The Local Support Group (LSG) plays a key role in the implementation of the LAP. The LSG helps/assists the local stakeholders in their learning process, which is based on the international exchange of experiences and good practices. Moreover the **LSG guarantees the adoption of lesson learnt at the local level**.

The LSG was set up in 2010, in the framework of the URBACT II, and consists of the relevant stakeholders (see: the members of the Local Support Group in the first annex.)

The LSG received support from different experts. Moreover appointed members from the municipality as well as the LSG had the opportunity to become familiar with problems of other partner cities and their responses during study visits. Furthermore during workshops and actions for the public, organized by the ULSG, national good practices and examples had been presented.

The ULSG of Eger pursued a **wide-spread planning activity**: after several meetings and debates the members identified the most urgent local problems during a half-day workshop. Following these discussions the members of the ULSG accepted the joint work plan and methodology that resulted the preparation of the Local Action Plan. The progress of the action plan preparation was coordinated by an external expert.

In consideration of the identified problems, **two thematic professional work-groups were formed** – infrastructural and social (so called „soft”) -, that were in action for more months through workshops that were moderated by an external expert according to the jointly accepted methodology.

The ULSG was divided to properly understand the problems of both the social and infrastructural parts. In the Local Action Plan the parts that **complete and strengthen each other** have to be in the centre of attention.



Local Support Group meeting, November, 2011.

Photo: Municipality of Eger



Planned Place of the Community House

Photo: Pro Terra Ltd.

2.6. The currently identified problems of the Szala Neighbourhood according to the Local Support Group (2012)

1. The negative public image of the Szala in Eger

The crime rate in the Szala Neighbourhood is rather high, therefore the residents are often being identified as the criminals of Eger. This preconception makes their life much more difficult. They cannot find a job in the labour market and their children cannot integrate into the school and to local community life. (At the moment the children of Szala are studying at János Arany Elementary School, the Elementary School Number 6, and the Ferenc Móra Elementary School.)

2. Poor conditioned neighbourhood, serious lack of infrastructure

The residential area and the creek is **full of garbage**, many real estates are mortgaged. There are many **ruined buildings** which should be demolished. Those **properties** which are in better condition **cannot be sold**, due to the neglected residential area, **poor** public safety and the anti-social behaviour of some local people. The **local society is divided**: the Hungarian population is sharply separated from the Roma population. The condition of the houses confirms this separation. The area **does not have any social or community institution**, therefore the target area is separated from the city.

3. The population is less educated

The predominantly **low-skilled parents** do not consider studying as a valuable thing. They do not understand their children's curriculum, even checking the homework of their primary school age child means a problem. **The absence from school is chronic**: in János Arany Elementary School, 50 children out of 80 have unproved absence in 2012. Common cause of the **grade retention** is the exceeding the limit of absence.

The **regular tutoring** of the children would be very important. At the moment volunteers teach them outdoor, in colder weather in particular houses, because the parents are not allow them to leave Szala.

4. The lack of the public area and public space

The children of Szala spend most of their time on the street. There are no pavements in Szala, not even playgrounds for the children or any public area. Similarly, there are no venues for adult trainings and recreational activities.

The summary of the main identified problems in 2012

Overall problem: The population of the Szala is isolated and segregated from other parts of Eger in social, infrastructural perspective and communication. The main social and integrational problems:

- poor public safety, the high rate of crime;
- the vast majority of the population is less educated (finished maximum eight years of elementary school);
- among the active population the employment rate is low and the proportion of long-term unemployed is high
- The proportion of those families which have daily living problems is high, moreover they accumulated various arrears;
- the health condition of adult local people is worse than the city average
- the proportion of those young people who are taking part in higher education is low
- The local society is not homogeneous, they are divided (there are conflicts between the Hungarians and the Romas, and the Romas of Szala and the settled Romas from Sajóbáony)
- Local people do not have any positive vision about their future



The main gaps in the infrastructure

- The territory of Szala is rather poor:
 - chaos over the ownership,
 - the built area is poor, ruined and neglected
 - the environment and public spaces are full with rubbish, especially the creek bank
 - the current regulation plan does not allow the development of the whole area;
 - the companies which operating on the target area utilize the public space regularly without any permission and this contributes to the disorder on the territory
- The lack of infrastructure:
 - there is no adequate public space (either indoor or outdoor);
 - The sanitation is still unresolved in some part of Szala;
 - poor or missing street lighting;
 - The only shop in the area is too expensive for the residents, however it is in monopoly;
- The border embankment is crumbling;
- due to the lack of the pavements, the security of the pedestrians is not provided
- reaching area with public transport is problematic, due to distance from the bus stop
- residents cannot sell their properties, therefore the local people do not have any chance to move forward

Communication isolation

- For the local population it is difficult to access the news and other information about the whole city.

SUMMARY: The proposed interventions of the recent Local Action Plan are responding to the identified problems mentioned above.

2.7. Important achievements occurred during the implementation of the SURE project

- The regulation plan of the city has been modified which allows the implementation of the listed actions
- The establishment of the Environment Protection and Youth Association of Szala (SZAKI)
 -

The establishment of this NGO by local stakeholders and young people is a milestone in the matter of implementing the planned interventions. The **Environment Protection and Youth Association of Szala (SZAKI) was formed in May 2012**. The **main purpose** of this NGO is to support conscious Roma young people who can join to community actions aiming to protect the local environment, build the local society and especially the kids and youngsters, organise free-time activities and preserve their health. The association may offer a **vision** for the youngsters as they can play an active role in the several community and development activities. This is very important from the target area's point of view, since this may be the first step towards **sustainability**



Self-organisation of the young people: Creating community space, May, 2012.
Photo: SZAKI

2.8. Short list of identified good practices from abroad that were taken into consideration in the Local Action Plan

In the framework of the SURE Project Partners and certain members of the Local Support Groups could study different Good Practices from each other, which are aiming at the complex development of deprived urban areas. They were focusing on tourism, business development, infrastructure development, strategy building, and community development. Community planning was the horizontal focus of the project.

The following **acquired Good Practices** are **particularly important** in terms of the elaboration of the Local Action Plan of Szala.

“Future City Game” as an easy-to-use tool of community planning (Gheorgheni, Transylvania, Romania, 13th-15th, October 2010.)

An all-day workshop was dealing with local issues, goals to be achieved and the possible activities through visualization and in a playful way. Participants could study a certain and low cost **community planning method**, where at the end the directions of development were visible. **Based on this experience Eger applied twice** community planning methods:

- 28th May, 2011. – **Day of Szala**: open day organized by the Local Support Group;
- 22nd-23rd June, 2012. – Community action of making recycled plastic **outdoor furniture** took place involving the residents, local children and NGOs.

The methodology of “place making” (Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, 20th-21st June, 2011.)

A bottom-up method was acquired at the Belgian Study Visit, which is for public space planning, design and management. It can include local festivals, communication campaigns, community planning, and periodic art actions (for instance wall-painting). The main point is that **the local community manages the process**, with the support of the local authority, businesses and residents. It can be prevail in the framework of SURE Project, through a comprehensive, active social dialogue.

Social enterprise, as a business form which ensures long-term employment opportunity for the most disadvantaged people (Albacete, Spain, 22nd-23rd September, 2011.)

The Spanish Study Visit dealt with the question how to help the deprived urban areas through business development. Due to this, the issue of social enterprise has emerged, in particular the current opportunity to create social cooperatives in Hungary, and as a form of business in which Spain can provide a good example. Thus the ULSG in Eger invited an expert from the National Employment Foundation to talk about concrete examples and opportunities from Hungary. Unfortunately there is no open call now regarding this theme.

“Free Wi-Fi” as a possible tool of the emerge of the lagging parts

During the Study Visit in Spain it turned out that a free Wi-Fi access to the residents can be a rather effective tool in the development of the deprived urban areas. This is true for Szala also, because most of the young people have their own mobile or notebook. Moreover the SZAKI (Szala Environment Protection and Youth Association) created its own Facebook profile, therefore advanced communication solutions could be very crucial in segregated areas as well.

Tourism as a key tool in the development of an deprived urban area (Dun Laoghaire, Ireland, 14-16, March 2012.)

The Irish Study Visit, which dealt with the development of the tourism was important for Eger for several points of view (e.g. city branding). In the case of Szala, since the main goal is to stop the segregation of the target area, the development of tourism is not relevant right now.

Community Gardens (Dun Laoghaire, Dublin, 14-16, March 2012.)

The issue of „community garden”, which we acquired from the Irish Study Visit just became well-known in Hungary at the same time. Due to its importance in community building it became an integral part of Eger’s Local Action Plan. With the foundation of SZAKI the number of voluntary actions is increasing. Therefore (in the context of community gardening) it would be worth to divert the local population to become self-supporting in the future.

Importance of community building (Komotini, Greece, 14-16 November 2011. and Pori, Finland, 13-15 June 2012.)

Community building is relevant in every society, but it has particular importance in deprived urban areas. The main goal is to **strengthen the local community, involve them into the common issues and creating positive vision and common objectives for them.** The Greek and the Finnish Study Visits provided good examples for these. A community owned house is a good basis for community building activities (remedial education for disadvantaged children, retirement home, etc.) These Good Practices became an integral part of the Local Action Plan of Eger and the claim for a community center emerged.

2.9. Short list of identified good practices from Hungary that were taken into consideration in the Local Action Plan

In the frame of ULSG meetings the ULSG had the chance to get to know good practices from Hungary. The following projects, initiatives had a direct impact on the Local Action Plan.

Report on the work of Roma People for Egerszalók Association on the development of the Community House

01/02/2011. - Speaker: Péter Farkas, President of Roma People for Egerszalók Association. A **claim for a community house** was also defined by the residents of Szala. Thus the newly formed NGO (SZAKI) and its leader can be the **driving force of the self-organization** of local people.

Information about the public security situation of the target area

01/02/2011. - Speaker: dr. András Petrovics, Police Colonel, City Police. The Chief of Police emphasized that the **Police is ready to strengthen the cooperation with Szala**, due to the high rate of crime in the target area. Even the residents identified the increasing number of crime and the poor public safety as one of the main

problems. The local Police Office is ready to elaborate a complex crime prevention program with the local authority and representatives of the residents. In addition to this, they would increase the number of patrols and appoint a person who would be **responsible for the district**. Moreover they support the idea to organize an **additional Civil Guard from volunteers** involving the residents.



The visit of the SURE Local Support Group in the Szala
Photo: Pro Terra Ltd.

Report on the current ownership status of Egervin

01/02/2011 - Speaker: Botond Rázi, Deputy-Mayor. The Egervin, which was formerly under liquidation, is privately owned at the moment. It has been suggested that the local government would buy the company in the future. The development of Egervin could mean a break-through in the development of the whole Szala and the employment to local residents in the future. However the **conditions now are not adequate for a closer cooperation**, due to the structure of the current ownership.

Options for training, employment, job creation and public works programmes

01/12/2011 - Speaker: Ferenc Szabó, the Head of the Employment Center, Heves County Government Office. Due to Eger micro region is not one of the most deprived areas, it cannot take part in the Start Work Programme. The National Public Employment Program, the municipal public works programmes, certain adult education programs with specific conditions are available to residents of Szala. As a first step, employment of 22 residents in local government public works program was elaborated from 1st June, 2012 for a period of 3 months.

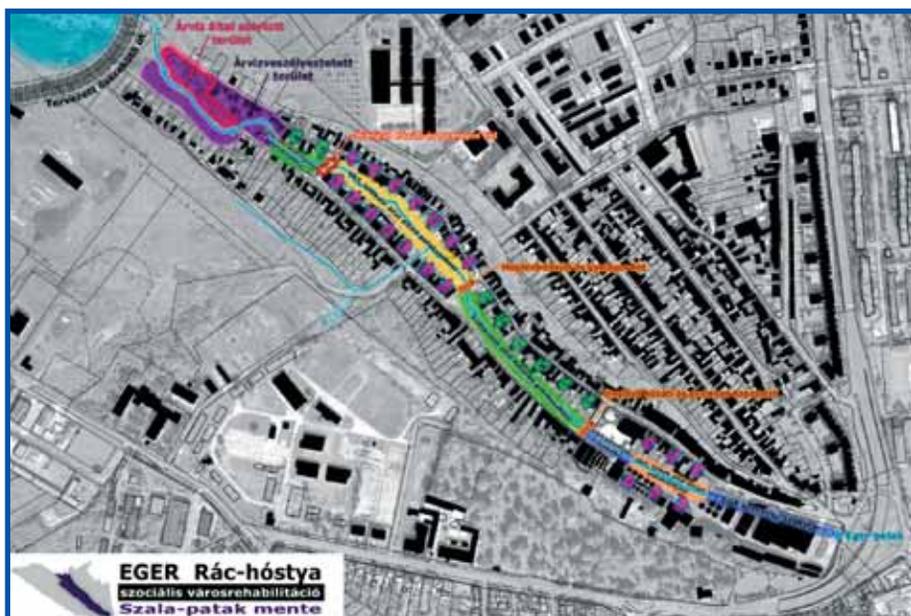
Community development in Roma communities – Tarnabod, the inclusive village

01/12/2011. - Speaker: Szilárd Lantos, Program Manager, Hungarian Maltese Charity Service. The possible transferable elements of the example of Tarnabod concerns the **community development, building self-confidence and strengthening the future visions of local people**. Effective **conflict management** between the Roma and the non-Roma population is also crucial. **Creating new jobs:** implementation of social programme and public works programme together, based

on the skills of the local people. **Creating a community centre**, in parallel with the implementation of **complex, social programmes**.

Presentation of Peer Mentoring Training: the example of Bag

01/12/2011. - Speaker: Dr. Emőke Both, probation officer and lecturer at ELTE Faculty of Law, Peer Counselling Training. The Szala Neighbourhood has similar problems as the city of Bag: crime, drug addiction, lack of vision and role models for young people. The LSG found the **peer-mentoring training** convincing, therefore it became an integral part of the Local Action Plan.



The place of the Szala creek

Source: Pro Terra Ltd.

2.10. Summary

The complex development of Szala can be successful only in that case if the **local people could take part actively** in the planned programmes and developments will be advantageous for the entire population of the city. Highly important element is the **public safety** and the **cleaning** of the territory, which is the base of the regeneration of the area. Fostering the businesses could be the connection between the target area and the other parts of the city. In medium term the possible settlement of new businesses would help the development.

In the case of Szala, the more effective utilization of Egervin and the wine-cellars could mean a breakthrough in the future. These plans were originally parts of the Local Action Plan. However the primary objective is to eliminate the high-level

of segregation according to the unanimous opinion of the LSG members. Thus the short-term intervention of the Local Action Plan is about the elimination of segregation.

The establishment of community spaces is one the main priorities (community centre, playground etc.) in order to develop the community and maintain the already achieved results. This should be the basis for many “soft” initiatives, for instance, different programmes for children (cultural, recreational, prevention), trainings for adults, self-study groups, etc.

However **in short-term** the main objective is the **break out** of the residents’ **social and infrastructural isolation**. In long-term the objective of the LAP is the total elimination of this segregation. But it can be realized only in a complex way, involving the different sources. The Local Action Plan provides support for this. The LAP will enter into force when the General Assembly of Eger will discuss and approve it.

As it was planned, the LAP could be a society-supported basis for the socio-economic urban rehabilitation project in the area that the Municipality can apply for in the frame of the Integrated Urban Development Strategy. The maximum grant of this application is cca. 400 million HUF, the final date for submission is February, 2013.

Regarding that difficult application process, as the first step the designation of the action area by the board of representatives of the local municipality would be important. Then they should make a decision on the submission of the project (according to the eligibility criteria).

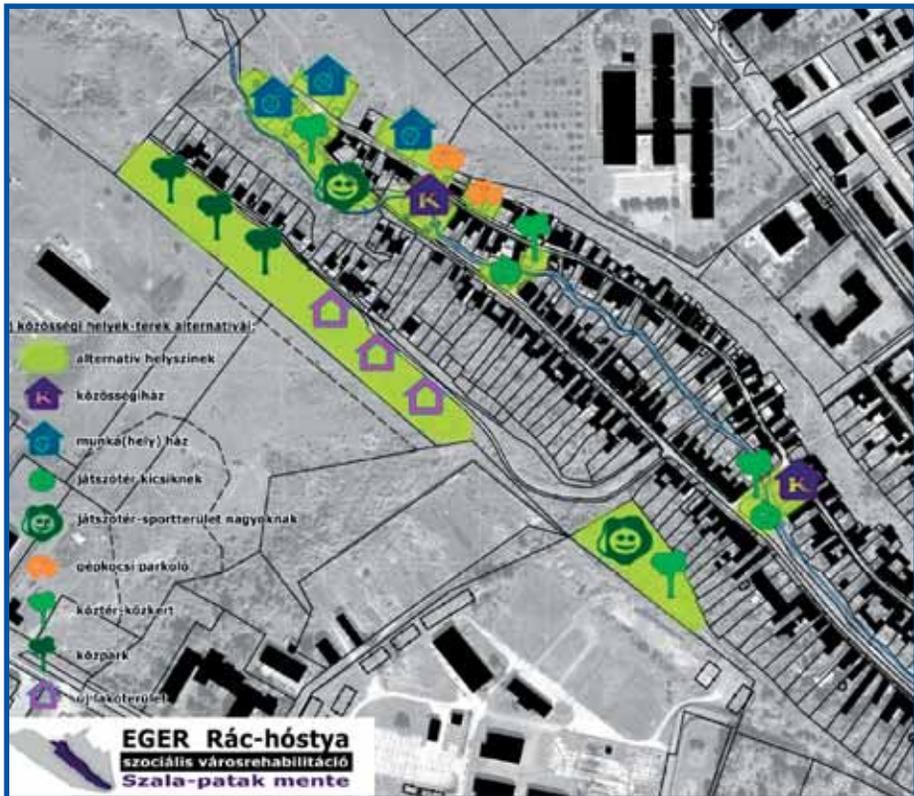
It is important to notice that the published tender yet does not include the exact criteria of the social rehabilitation (identified by the IVS). Probably these will be published by the National Development Agency later.



Different – planned - functions of the target area

Source: Pro Terra Ltd.

3. THE COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT OF THE SZALA NEIGHBOURHOOD – LOCAL ACTION PLAN 2012–2020



The possible locations of the planned infrastructural development at the target area

Source: Pro Terra Ltd.

The methods used during the preparation of the Local Action Plan

The main steps of the action-plan preparation were the following:

1. **Identifying problems** - brainstorming (*participants: the members of the LSG*);
2. **Defining specific objectives** based on identified problems (*members of the LSG*);
3. Identifying the **necessary interventions** – these formed the essence of the action plan, **the planned activities**, which are marked with numbers in the action plan (*LSG members worked in two separate working groups: infrastructural and soft*);

4. Ranking the necessary interventions in **time and logical order or by importance** (*participants: LSG members in two separate working groups infrastructural and soft*),

Based on **3 main categories**:

- **Short-term** interventions: 2013- 2014
 - within this: urgent interventions between 01/01 2012 and 31/12/2012
- **Medium-term** interventions: 2015 – 2020
- **Long-term** intervention: after 2020.

5. Urgent interventions have priority in time (due to their nature – for instance they prevent dangerous situations, or prepare other important activities, they are seasonal or connected to other, on-going projects.)

LSG incorporated the experiences from national and international Study Visits, as well as the adaptable Good Practices into the planned activities.

6. The two working groups introduce the planned activities to each: discussions, reflections and **feedbacks** (*participants: members of LSG*);
7. Identifying **target groups** (*participants: LSG members in two separate working groups infrastructural and soft*),
8. Defining the **timeframe** and **frequency** of different activities (*LSG members in two separate working groups infrastructural and soft*);
9. **Defining the responsible persons**: separating from the coordinating organization (usually certain units of the Municipality of Eger) from the potential **implementing organization**.

At the appointment of the responsible people, no names were mentioned, only positions are included into the Local Action Plan. The leaders (except some special cases) are in charge of the different units. In the case of the medium-term interventions only the department units and at infrastructural interventions the type of the task have been noted (*participants: members of LSG*).

10. Finally, the **type of resources required for implementation** have been **identified**, they are:

- municipal budget;
- governmental budget (public investment, EU co-financing proposals, normative fund etc..)
- private (investor, contractor, foundation, etc.);
- from tenders: national or EU (if calling for tender);
- other: from chambers, delegates or churches, etc.

Unfortunately, very rare situation if the implementation of the intervention, does not require any additional cost or it can be financed from a winning tender. There were estimation for the costs of infrastructural developments (members of the LSG).

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