

A woman wearing a red jacket and a black headscarf is smiling as she works on a wooden fence made of sticks. She is holding a long, thin stick vertically. The background shows green trees and a clear sky.

A M A Z E M E L E A D E R 2 0 1 8

THE PATH TO UNKNOWN RURALITIES

T O O L K I T F O R
O R G A N I S I N G C H A N G E
M A K I N G E V E N T S

XAMK INSPIRE 9

**SOUTH-EASTERN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED
SCIENCES**

MIKKELI 2018

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Amaze Me Leader 2018

THE PATH TO UNKNOWN RURALITIES

Tool kit for organizing
change making events

Leena Purhonen & Marita Mattila

SOUTH-EASTERN UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES
MIKKELI 2018

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INTRODUCTION

"You are all the places you have been, the sights you have seen, the marvels you have achieved and every soul you have touched. Each passing moment is another brushstroke on the canvas. So rise, live always with passion and heart and someday you will look back on your life and see a work of art."
-Beau Taplin

In Scotland 2018 up to 60 young people from four different EU-countries were painting new memories in their canvases of life. For many participants it was the best week of their lives, but also the first time there was someone who cared about their thoughts and appreciated them. In rural areas listening to the youth is the keypoint of developing the areas as without them rural areas will have no future. This tool kit is to help organising events like Think Tank and show how you can involve young people to make an effect in a fun and interesting way.



Writers of this toolkit has been involved in Amaze Me Leader in very various ways. As a senior project manager at South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences, Marita has followed the development of Amaze Me Leader since 2011 when it was first established in Finland. With the enthusiasm of developing the rural areas but also involving the youth, she had an honor to organize Amaze Me Leader again in Finland in 2017 with 5 Leader associations in Eastern Finland. Because the adventure seminar was a huge success for the youth, in 2018 Amaze Me Leader was executed in Scotland by Leader association Dumfries&Galloway.

This toolkit is written from the perspective of one community educator student, Leena, who got a great opportunity to participate in Amaze Me Leader in Scotland 2018.

"The studies give a great base for knowledge about adventuring and participation, but with the experiences I received in Scotland, I can easily understand why this activity could be something life changing and inspiring for the youth. It combines adventuring, participation, learning and doing something meaningful together. Memories that we will never forget. With ideas of young people it's possible to create new innovative solutions, which can have great impact on developing the rural areas in the future."

This toolkit is a guide for developers, youth workers, participants and everyone who shares the same interests of creating better future for rural areas. We hope that you are also inspired to organize change making events for young people! Thank you and enjoy the toolkit.

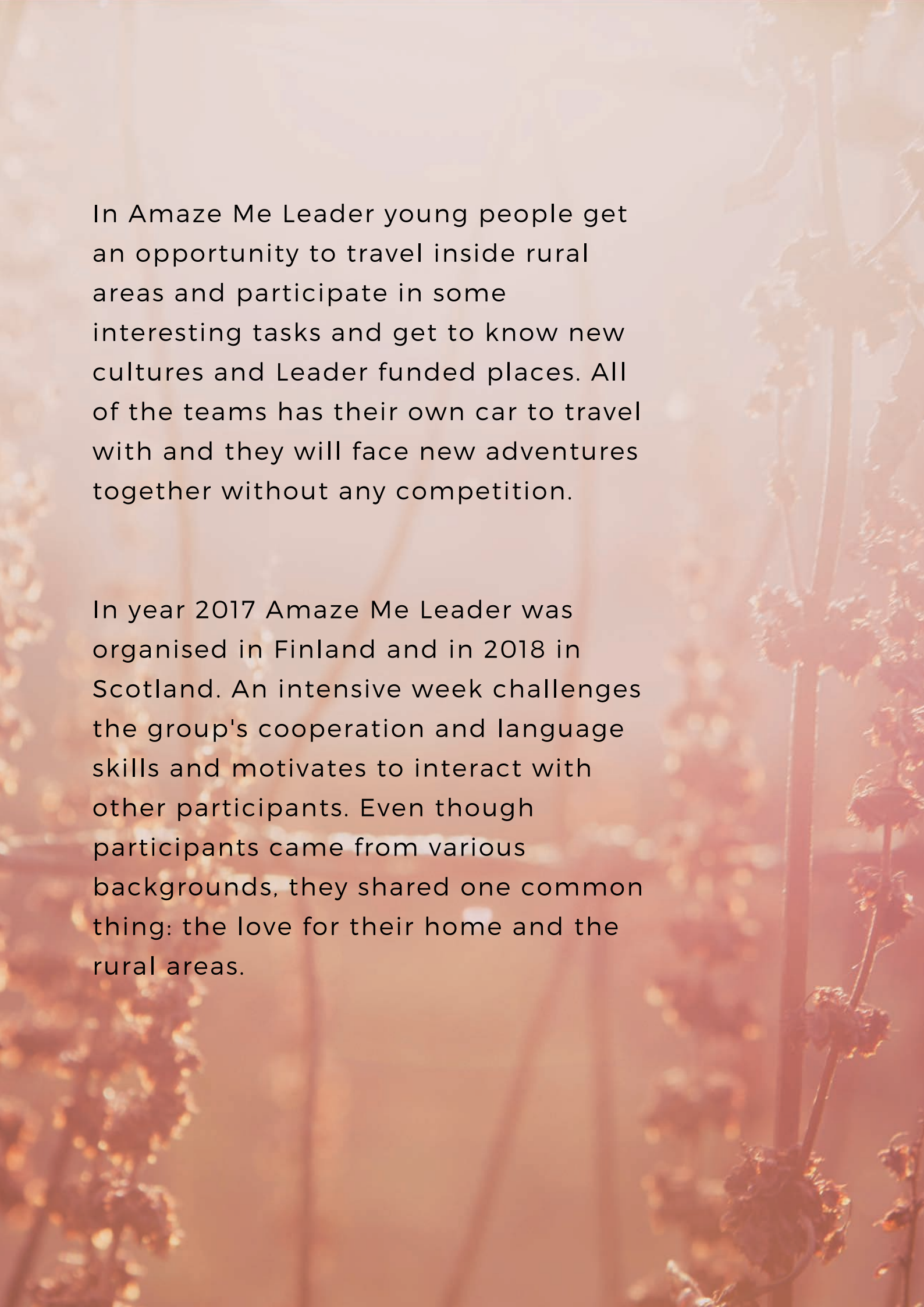
Sincerely Leena and Marita



What is Amaze Me Leader?

Amaze Me Leader is an international adventure project for young people aged from 18 to 29. Its purpose is to raise awareness of Leader, European union Agricultural development program and encourage young people to improve their own living areas. It's also a way to learn about cultures and gain new knowledge by interacting with local entrepreneurs and other participants from different countries.

With Amaze Me Leader young people can get experiences about in developing rural areas and gain confidence in starting their own businesses. It is also made to encourage the youth to participate in to community development by generating ideas and making the gap smaller with decision makers.



In Amaze Me Leader young people get an opportunity to travel inside rural areas and participate in some interesting tasks and get to know new cultures and Leader funded places. All of the teams has their own car to travel with and they will face new adventures together without any competition.

In year 2017 Amaze Me Leader was organised in Finland and in 2018 in Scotland. An intensive week challenges the group's cooperation and language skills and motivates to interact with other participants. Even though participants came from various backgrounds, they shared one common thing: the love for their home and the rural areas.

Why should we try to make a difference?

Why is participating the youth important? By participating it is possible to create long lasting memories and connections based on emotions, which is very important if we want to wake the hidden powers of affection. Earlier young people have felt that only few decision makers appreciate the youth enough even though youth have lots of good ideas for developing their home region and living conditions and maybe solve some really big issues too.

The truth is that rural areas are dying without the help of these young people. If we can encourage the youth to feel empowered by adventuring, and through these events, it will be worth it. The other part is to put these ideas into practice so, they are not just empty promises. If young people feel like they have been listened to, they will more likely have good memories about their home region. This will help them to move back to their roots after studies.

With the given possibilities young people will also more likely feel that they have made the impact and they have been appreciated, which will lead to good self-confidence about themselves and influencing. This can be the key to grow positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship and help young people also to develop their living areas.



"Because young people of today are closer to the future generations, they know the best, what kind of world the future generations want to live in. They know what the situation is in the rural areas for young people right now, what values they appreciate and that is something the decision makers should be interested about. When young people have a chance to have an effect, they will create the future of rural areas in a way that tempts the youth."

- Meeri, Amaze Me Leader participant

5 easy steps how to participate the youth

The participation of young people doesn't have to be huge events, politics or it doesn't have to take much effort. With these 5 steps anyone can give a feeling of appreciation and influencing for a local youth.

1. Ask for opinions and ideas. With this easy step it is possible to create open atmosphere, where it's easier to influence in the future too. Young people want their voices to be heard but might be too afraid to say their ideas in a fear of undervaluation. So asking might help!

2. Put these ideas and changes into practice. Listening to ideas and opinions is great but if they don't have any consequences it might kill the enthusiasm for influencing.

3. Remember to give positive feedback and thank the participants. It's always nice to hear positive feedback. It also shows that you have noticed their effort and it makes them feel that they are appreciated. This usually takes only few minutes, so it's time to give those compliments!

4. Take young people to be a part of the tasks. With asking if they want to be a part of something and take them along you are giving them tools to learn something new and actually see that their help has an actual impact. This could lead to initiative and better self-confidence. Remember not to push and force, the youth can participate if they want to.

5. And the final step is to listen. Young people really have amazing ideas and points of views. They think about the world differently and see things in other perspectives which can be very inspiring.



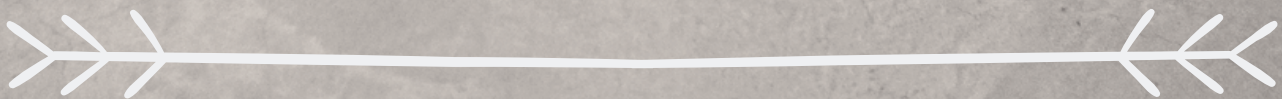
Before the journey- preparation camp in Finland

It's always good to know what is ahead of you and be prepared for the upcoming adventures. Before heading to Scotland, a few local Leader associations organised a preparation camp in Finland, at which young people were lead to the theme of Leader activity. During the camp young people got a chance to get to know each other in the lead of one eager trainee, who organised some group building activities. After these "ice breaker" -activities the local Leader associations had prepared a Leader info session which gave an idea what young people could do in Leader and how it effects in the rural areas. The info gave really good picture about how significant Leader is and what has been already done to help the locals.

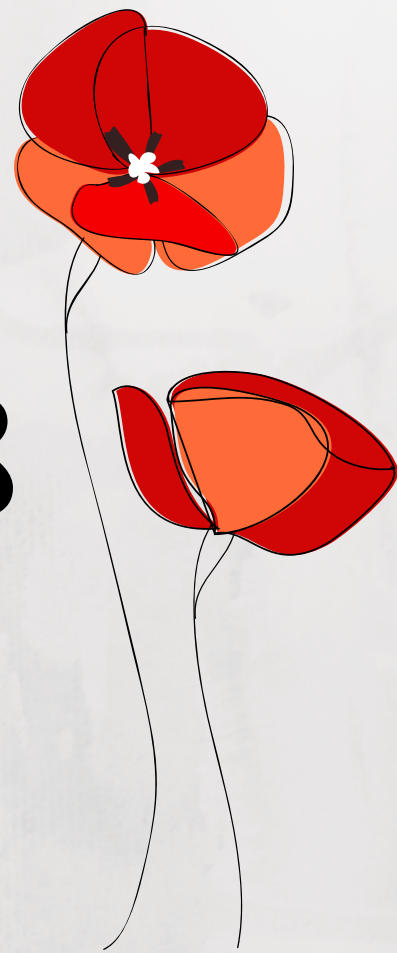


The other part of the preparation camp was visiting two small companies. The idea of the visitations was to see how you can get help from Leader to start a business and to see it as a very viable option for those who want to stay in their living area. Running a business doesn't always have to be a battle between free time and work but it can be a chance to do something you love.

The preparation camp also gave a feeling of safety to the participants and good vibes before the upcoming adventures in Scotland. Participants were given a chance to ask about things that were unclear and by getting to know to each other there was one less thing to worry about - especially for the Finnish people who are afraid of social situations. Preparation camps are good idea when there are a lot of insecurities about what to expect and when you want to have time for proper internationalisation.



Amaze Me Leader in Scotland 2018



Amaze Me Leader Scotland was executed by an international associate Dumfries and Galloway Leader group. The week in Scotland was amazing! Young people got the opportunity to get to know Scotland and its heritage and a chance to make an impact in developing these areas.

The youth learned a lot about team work and the possibilities, which are achievable with the help of Leader. The week was full of action inspired to generate ideas and encouraged towards entrepreneurship. For many participants it was the best week of their lives and it's not a surprise. Combining adventuring, good planning, great locations, friendly people and a mutual enthusiasm, things will happen.

” IN SCOTLAND I LEARNED A LOT OF NEW THINGS. I GOT TO KNOW WONDERFUL PEOPLE AND I GAINED GREAT AMOUNTS OF GOOD MEMORIES. I’M GRATEFUL THAT I HAD CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE AND I HOPE THAT PROJECTS LIKE THIS WILL CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE TOO.”

-Anssi, Amaze Me Leader participant



Activities in Scotland

What would be a week without any activities? definitely not Amaze Me Leader – it was full of them! An active week made the participants very pleased. But besides the youth, Leader has a great impact in the rural areas among the entrepreneurs. In Scotland the participants visited castles, learned about creating comics, got to experience dragon boat racing, danced Celtic dances, played granny bowling, listened to ghost stories, stargazed on a Scottish field and many more. All of these activities were supported by Leader association, so it gave a concrete picture of what kind of significance Leader has in the area.

Feedback stated that young people liked most of the activities in which they got to do something by themselves, which made the experience more real to them. Activities is the way to make influencing enjoyable for young people. Activities are also a great way to learn about heritage and get to know about new cultures.



What to remember when planning activities for young people

- Always think safety first, make risk analysis of the things that can happen in activities and be prepared with an emergency kit.
- The more involving the better.
- Good group dynamics is the key to success. Make sure group building is done properly and change members in the groups every once in a while.
- Reserve time for resting. Take care of sleep, food, drinks, hygiene and sometime being alone for the participants. This is good for the atmosphere.
- Remember to enjoy the planning and execution yourself. Good vibes will pass on!



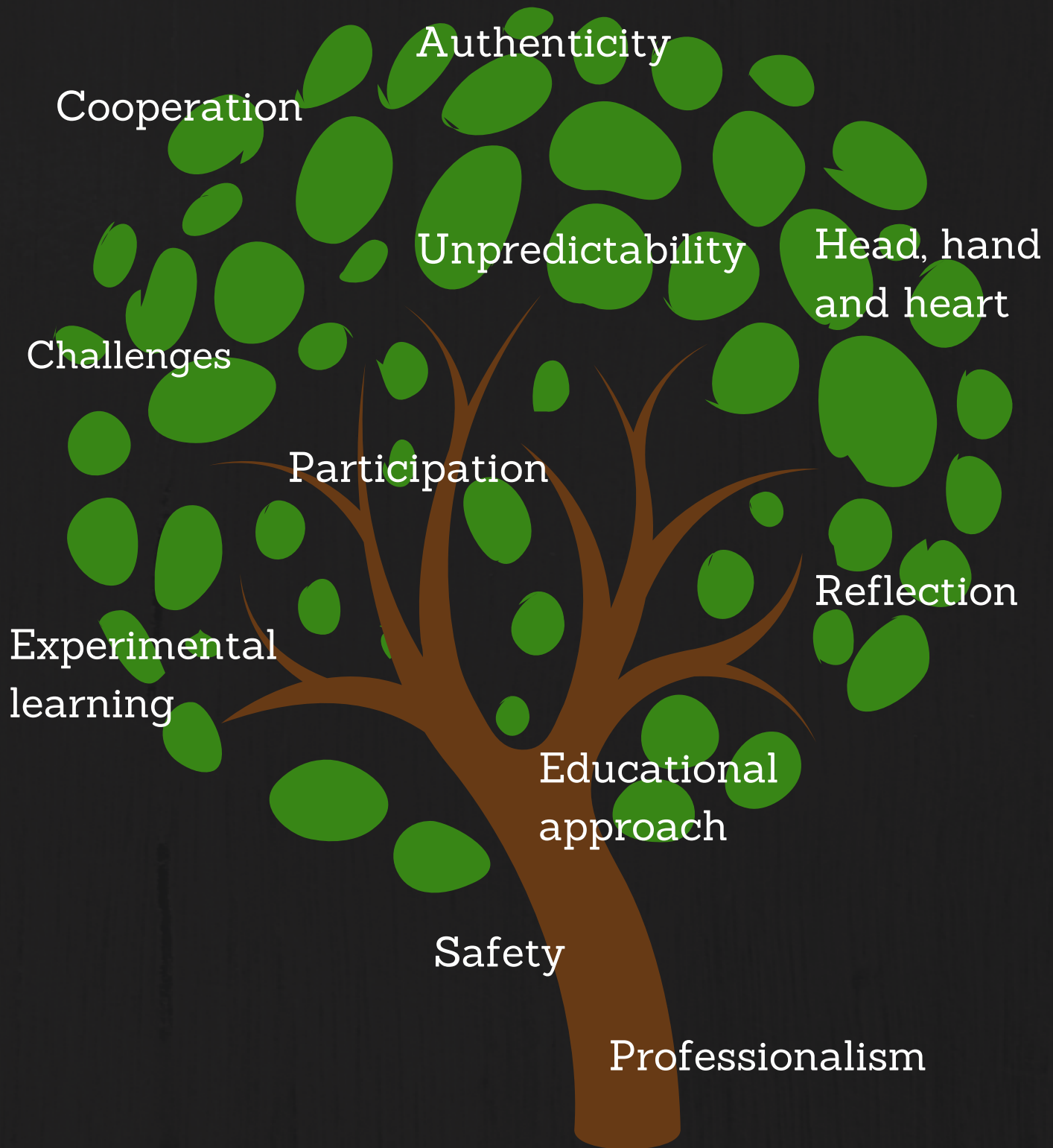




Why is adventure and outdoor education useful?

- Adventure and outdoor education can have a great influence in an individual's personal growth and learning. It also helps to develop the skills we need every day, but in various authentic environments.
- For people who have special needs in normal education, it's a great way to feel equal and learn something by doing. This has a growing meaning in a world of today.
- It gives a possibility to find new roles and hidden features of yourself, which might lead to a feeling of empowerment. Empowerment leads to better self-confidence and it also helps the individual to be active in the future too.
- It opens new perspectives to see things in some different light and maybe lead to something life changing.
- In outdoor education individuals focus on one thing at a time and that can be very revitalising for the brains.
- It can help to get back on track in the normal daily rhythm and prioritises the things that are really valuable in life.





The tree of adventures. It describes values and characteristics of adventure and outdoor education. This tree is based on brochure from Suomen nuorisokeskukset. Link to the page: http://www.snk.fi/media/pdf/seikkailukasvatus-esite-final_eng_www.pdf

Group building

Behind happy life and great understanding between each other are good co-operation skills and open and safe atmosphere. There are lots of group building methods that can help a group to become more spontaneous and also individuals to get to know each other.

Amaze Me Leader adventure seminar in Scotland was a good example what happens, when you put a lot of effort in group building. Most likely this assisted cooperation between European participants and created a good team work spirit, -and a mutual idea of being in this together. Participants felt that they want to support and help each other to develop their own living areas. In a large group it's good to do something in smaller groups, but also with everyone together as it helps to avoid cliques. It still gives the participants a chance to get to know each other better and the silent ones also have a chance to familiarise themselves in the group.

Group building exercises

Talisman

In the talisman exercise the group has to use their imagination and creativity to create a talisman from recycled materials. This exercise can be executed as a competition but it's not necessary. A time limit pushes the group to work together and it helps different kinds of people to participate as it takes various skills to finish the task. For example planning, crafting, story building, cheering, helping others and performing. In the end the group presents their talisman and the story behind it.



Clapping challenge

In the clapping challenge the group's mission is to pass a clap on with the whole group as fast as they can. The person who gives the clap forward should look at the person next to him/her, and they need to clap together at the same time. This challenge can be made more challenging by adding more claps that are going to different directions, or having double claps, which will also change the direction. This requires focusing on the team members and it improves contacting skills. Remember to give positive feedback and encourage the team!



Get to know each other BINGO

The BINGO coupon, which is usually 9x9 squares, is filled with different kind of sentences. The participants' task is to fill up the coupon first or a line by collecting a name in every frame. These names can't be same, so it challenges the participants to meet new people. As an example, these sentences could be "who has traveled to USA" or " has the same coloured eyes as you have." Usually it is wise to plan the BINGO so that it's easy to fill out, and also gets the different nationalities mix together. This is easy to prepare and it's a good way to break the ice and get to know the other participants.

Fireplace outdoors

Sometimes the group wants to do something on their own, and that's when it's good to be open minded like in this case. This is not the typical group building exercise as it was not planned, but ended up being a great experience for the participants and a good example about, how the youth can influence in the programme too. Everyone was sitting by the fire, telling their stories why they participated and what their dreams are. It was a bonding moment that no one saw coming, so it's good to leave some time for young people's ideas as well.



**THE EVENT
WHERE
DEVELOPMENT
IS BORN**

THINK TANK

Think Tank was an event that made it possible for young people and decision makers to come together and discuss about the situation of rural areas. Think tank was organised because many of the regions do not have many young people in the area. Decision makers as well as citizens are worried about this, because without young people the situation is getting worse. In practice this means that services are moving further away, areas will slowly turn uninhabited and people are losing their jobs. Now that United Kingdom, including Scotland, is leaving the EU, this theme is more prevalent than ever before. If we want to make young people to move to rural areas, it is wise to listen what they have to say and what they would want to do in order to make the environment more attractive for them.

The Think Tank in Scotland gathered a lot of decision makers and young people together to solve issues that rural areas have and make it more suitable for the youth and tourists.

The event went fluently forward with the help of the staff and the key speakers who opened the event. The Think Tank worked in workshops and panel discussions which were lead by the young people. The decision makers were told to just listen, what young people had to say. The panel discussions were separated in smaller sections by the themes of Amaze Me Leader, which we will open up in the next chapters. The young people had made the choice, which theme they want to participate, in earlier during the week. In the workshops the youth and the decision makers from all over the Scotland tried to solve the problems rural areas have. In total the event was successful and especially the young participants felt like their ideas and their efforts were appreciated. In many cases it is easier to just say no to new innovative ideas than put them into practice. Young people appreciated the way decision makers discussed the problems and tried to solve them together with young people.

"An active member in one village community was admirably open to our ideas, for example about improving internet connections in the area. Most of the time young people's ideas are asked, but just for the sake of appearances and the ideas are not put into action. For the first time in a long time, I felt that young people's ideas and thoughts really mattered."

- Henna, Amaze Me Leader participant

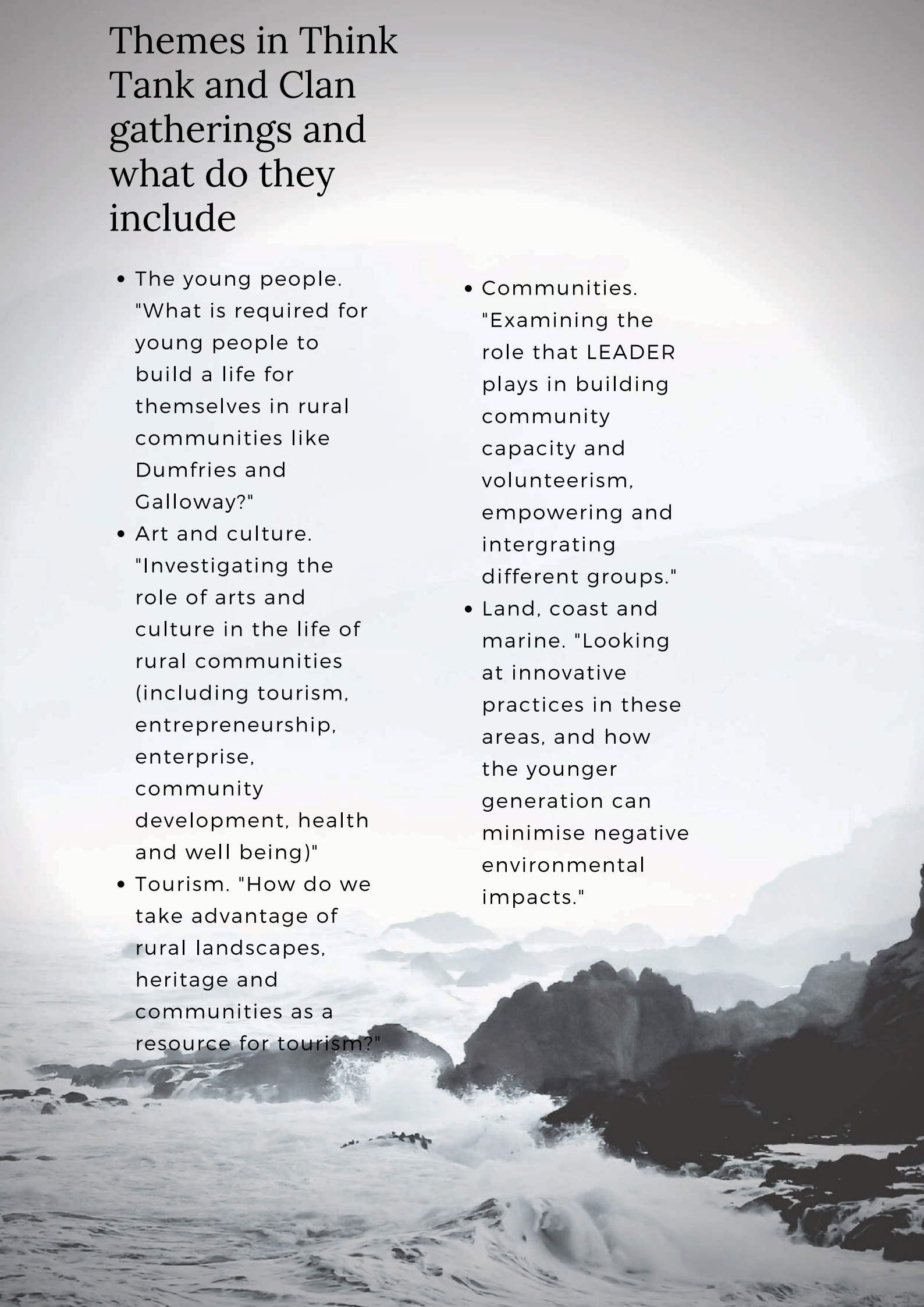
Clan gatherings

In Scotland each of the participants belonged in a clan. Its purpose was to reflect the day and think about how to develop the services or the areas young people had visited. The clan gathering also prepared young people for the Think Tank as they had thought about the themes earlier during the clan gatherings. In this way it was easier to convey those thoughts to the decision makers afterwards. For each clan there was a different theme every day. The leader of the clan got a rather good picture about general situation in Scotland. Each of the gatherings lasted about 1,5 hours. Clans are a good way to create a feeling of shared identity between the group members and enhance cooperation and leading skills.



Themes in Think Tank and Clan gatherings and what do they include

- The young people. "What is required for young people to build a life for themselves in rural communities like Dumfries and Galloway?"
- Art and culture. "Investigating the role of arts and culture in the life of rural communities (including tourism, entrepreneurship, enterprise, community development, health and well being)"
- Tourism. "How do we take advantage of rural landscapes, heritage and communities as a resource for tourism?"
- Communities. "Examining the role that LEADER plays in building community capacity and volunteerism, empowering and intergrating different groups."
- Land, coast and marine. "Looking at innovative practices in these areas, and how the younger generation can minimise negative environmental impacts."



Tiny guide how to organize events like Think Tank

Before the event

- Invite decision makers
- Give guidance to decision makers about the event and what is good to remember when listening to young people.
- Plan properly and decide who is in charge and in which point. In planning it is good to remember that the more young people get to be involved the better but also that the situation wouldn't be too anxious for the youth. To make this easier you can choose a location to be relaxing and informal.
- Make sure there will not be a situation called "youth versus decision makers" for example in seating positions or attitudes, but more like being equal and with mutual respect. This can also be done with icebreakers with all of the group or in smaller groups.
- Ask for local people who know the subject to give a speech at the event, and give them a good information on what the event is about.
- Reserve locations, catering etc.
- Choose a date that would suit the decision makers the best so majority of them could participate.
- Inform the staff about the event so everyone is on the same page. Share preliminary schedule and inform about changes when they come.

During the event

- Stick to the schedule and make sure every participant and decision maker are on time and in the right place. Encourage them to work together.
- Have volunteers to help in arrangements
- Have time for coffee and snacks, coffee makes people talk more easily. This is also a great timing for one on one conversations between youth and decision makers. the best timing for coffee break is after the decision makers and young people have already talked in a larger groups.
- Visualise what has been done earlier with the young people so the decision makers could understand the journey better
- Document the event, it will be handy afterwards
- Make pledges you can keep and follow that promise
- Enjoy, you are doing something meaningful for the sake of the youth

After the event

- Collect feedback from the event to improve for the new events ahead.
- Thank decision makers for participation on the event and thank the other partners as well
- Report of the results and send them to participants. Tell them how their effort has made a difference



Change makers in Finnish Think Tank

Finnish Think Tank was a final seminar for the young Finnish people who were participating in Amaze Me Leader Scotland 2018. Because Think Tank in Scotland worked great, some of the Leader associations who had sent participants to Scotland wanted to try how it would work in some other countries. The outcome was worth trying for!

In the final seminar the youth had a chance to share their ideas of developing the rural areas and their thoughts about the situation nowadays. This time it was pretty amazing to notice that the decision makers actually cared about what young people think. This also worked the other way around, too, and young people were glad that they had their voices heard. It was inspiring for them to finally feel appreciated and being equal to the eyes of decision makers. The Think Tank was executed with workshops where every workshop had their own theme.

All participants and decision makers promised something in the end of the seminar, to continue the good progress in the future too. These pledges were also used in Think Tank in Scotland.



NUORTEN AJAJUSTEN HAUDONTA

Lopetaan nälkä ja köyhyys maailmassa



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hupaa jatkossakin ajattam vauhtia menestykselle



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KASVU
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NUORTEN AJAJUSTEN HAUDONTA

Lopetaan nälkä ja köyhyys maailmassa



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How did the workshops work?

The Think Tank was executed in a way that it wasn't too scary for the young people. Organizers tried to keep the atmosphere open and create enthusiasm for participants - both youth and decision makers.

After plenary presentations participants were separated in smaller groups, which had same themes as in Scotland. Young people could again choose the group that interests them the most.




In these workshops young people lead the conversations. A typical group had about 3-4 young people and 2-3 decision makers. The themes in these workshops were roughly the same as in Scotland, which were: young people, tourism, art and culture, nature and environment. In workshops young people and decision makers came up with plenty of solutions, which was great to see. Here are the phases of the workshops you can use and implement them as you like.

1. First phase: Young people discuss with each other about the themes and what the problems are in rural areas, for example in tourism. In this part of the progress the decision makers just listen and don't comment. Three most important problems are named.

2. Second phase: Decision makers and young people try to solve these problems from the point of the view of a young person, but also with help of decision makers.

3. Third phase: Young people and decision makers decide together what the key solutions for the problems are, and collect them on post-it notes, which can be put on display.

4. Fourth phase: Conclusions, young people explain to other groups what solutions they have come up with, so that everyone can take advantage of the ideas and put them into practice. Every participant writes a pledge, promising what kind of activities he/she will make to promote the activities that are needed to solve the main problems.



Ideas for the better future

The another part of the seminar in Finland was to dream about new solutions for the problems in rural areas. The ideas that the young participants invented could be something that can be developed into projects funded by Leader. As an example one joke tells something about the situation in rural areas too. A travelling beer truck in the area would not be possible, but it shows that young people want to belong and experience adolescence in ruralities also. These kind of problems are still fixable, but we need to find a way - and the best path to that is to listen the youth.

Here is some of the ideas young people invented in a few minutes:



Learning cafe method for developing project ideas

The group chose a few from the previous ideas for further developing. This process happened with the learning café/world café method. This method is used to create consensus in the group but it also considers individual knowledge and experience.

In the learning café there's a few tables in which all have the original idea and the inventor of it. The group is separated into smaller groups and each of the groups go to some area to develop the idea. After some time the group will travel to next area, so that everyone visits all of the areas and themes and add something new to the plan. Every phase has its own theme or task like for example "think about who could be the cooperation partners for this project" or "what could we do to make this project suitable for young people." The young participants used this method with the ideas they invented, for example guided tours in Repovesi national park. When everyone has participated in every area the idea is ready for its further use.

You can find us on...



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**...and follow more of our rural
adventures!**





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