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RURALPLAN CASE REPORT //

Testing the Rural Planning and Innovation Lab (RUPIL)

Targeted Analysis

Type of Report, Annex, etc. // October, 2024

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The final version of the report will be published as soon as approved.

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Abbreviations

ESPON	European Territorial Observation Network
INN	Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RUPIL	Rural Planning and Innovation Lab
SAB	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für die Berggebiete
SSB	Statistics Norway
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Foreword by Ulla Higdem

This case-report seeking evidence of how strategic planning in rural areas may respond to complex demographic changes, would not have happened without the successful cooperation of three interested and relevant parties. The Albula region in the Graubünden Canton of Switzerland, Malung-Sälen Municipality in Dalarna County in Sweden, and Os Municipality in Innlandet County in Norway have proved to be the best cases we could hope for in a fast-moving project like this. We are thankful for their cooperation, and we thank all participants of the three cases for their willingness to contribute to the testing of the Rural Planning and Innovation Lab, RUPIL.

The three pilot cases have all embraced the framework for planning, strategies, and policymaking, where development is considered possible without (population) growth. As facilitators and researchers, we first and foremost have learned how actors in rural communities facing demographic challenges are eager to participate in co-developing new strategies, innovative solutions and inspiring collaboration with untraditional actors to meet the challenges.

As the reader will discover, the pilots have brought forward empirical data in abundance. On this basis, we have revised and adjusted the RUPIL model for the facilitation and development of democratic and participatory strategic planning processes. It can be utilised in European regions experiencing demographic challenges such as shrinking.

Finally, we thank the stakeholder group and the ESPON EGTC for their support, enthusiasm, participation, feedback, and advice during the testing period and their contributions to this report.



Ulla Higdem,
Professor and Project Leader RURALPLAN

1 Summary

RURALPLAN aims to facilitate and further develop democratic planning processes through broad participation, founded upon a realistic understanding of the prerequisites for planning, including population development. To do so, we have tested the RUPIL model, Rural Planning and Innovation Lab, in the pilot cases of Albula region in Switzerland, Malung-Sälen municipality in Sweden, and Os municipality in Norway. In this report, we describe the aim and content of the model. Further, we offer an account of the pilot testing in each case and the further development of the co-related results by suggesting strategic pathways for each case.

The testing of RUPIL has been successful and substantial results for each case provide innovative, yet realistic input to inform planning activities in each pilot case. Also, the analysis resulted in an updated and revised model. An interactive Toolbox for RUPIL has been developed, which in addition to insight into the process of facilitation, lowers the threshold for adopting the model.

On the basis of our findings, we suggest a number of strategically important domains for rural areas experiencing demographic challenges and as a consequence complex problems. These are:

Young local inhabitants, especially between approximately 15 years old (upper secondary school) and the beginning of their 30s (the establishment phase). Of central importance is to ensure motivation, good information, and matching local job opportunities with young people.

Elderly local inhabitants in retirement. This focus includes those living in adapted and social housing in inclusive housing areas, social meeting places and housing between generations, prevention of health problems, and drawing upon pensioners as resources in local services, and cultural and social life.

Local labor market. Strengthening the local labor market is crucial for enabling businesses and governments to fulfill their tasks and to enhance further development. Such a focus includes information and motivation of youths, meeting places/fairs, and the establishment of regional services to provide a more extensive offering to inhabitants.

Cooperation, new roles, and tasks. Most measures do require and are best resolved through cooperation between several actors. This may require actors taking on new roles and tasks and sharing responsibility in innovative ways. Included are municipalities or regions who share implementation of social services, finance, and plan housing in new ways, and pensioners who take responsibility for services, including social and cultural services.

Break with “frozen” frameworks. Several measures do require solutions that do not fit into existing frameworks and traditions. Includes living arrangements that do not fit into existing planning regulations and rural traditions, the importance of ideas from other places, and new ways of financing services and infrastructure.

2 RURALPLAN – The pilot testing

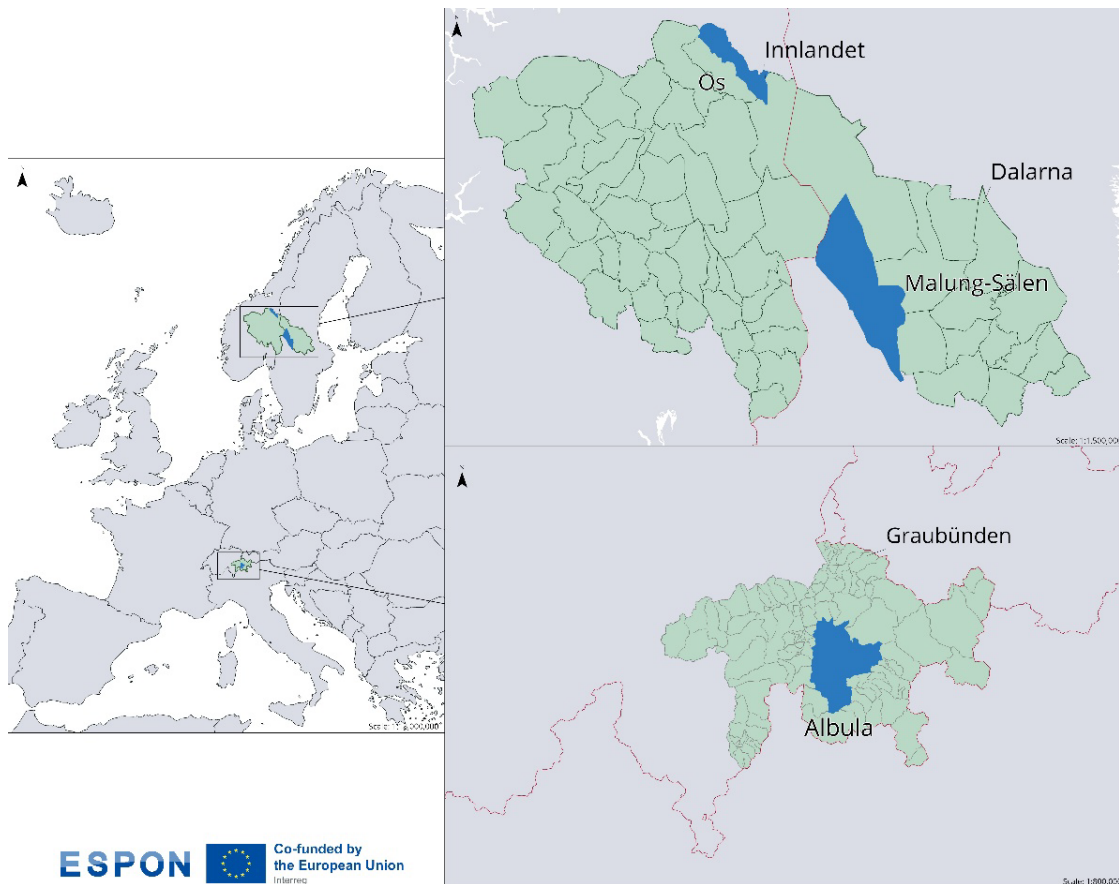
2.1 Introduction

This Targeted Analysis of RURALPLAN produces evidence on how strategic planning about rural areas responds to shrinking (decreasing and/or ageing population) and leads to a model of knowledge-based strategic planning and policymaking. We anticipate that the model, which we have called RUPIL – Rural Planning and Innovation Lab, could be applied to European regions experiencing demographic challenges related to shrinking.

RURALPLAN aims to facilitate and further develop democratic planning processes with broad participation, where a realistic understanding of the prerequisites for planning, including population development constitute the basis. Innovative planning (Hagen and Higdem, 2020) is useful for developing new and innovative goals, strategies, and measures that have not been part of the traditional planning process. Through innovative planning, emphasis is placed on a bottom-up and co-creative process between local residents, businesses, associations, politicians and municipal administrations. The broader the composition of actors, the greater the opportunity to find and realize new strategies and measures to meet challenges created by demographic development. The Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (INN) has developed a participatory model, the RUPIL, for use in strategic planning and policy development in rural areas. The RUPIL offers a further development of “the iterative innovation process”, a model developed for general innovation projects (Eide & Wedum, 2023). Thus, RUPIL is an innovative model adapted to and developed for local and regional strategic planning processes.

RUPIL has been tested in three pilot cases. Those are the Albula region in Graubünden canton, in Switzerland, Malung-Sälen Municipality in Dalarna county, Sweden and Os Municipality in Innlandet county, Norway. See the map 2.1 below. This document reports on the testing of RUPIL. The report is organized as follows: We have introduced the RUPIL concept and the innovation model. Further, in chapter 2 we describe the aim of the model and subsequently the aim and content of each of the model's phases. The interactive RUPIL Toolbox, which accompanies this report, demonstrates how the tools have been used in each phase. In chapter three we discuss the shrinking situation in the pilot cases, in relation to the categories from ESPON ESCAPE. Chapter 4 accounts for the pilot testing in each case, how it was carried out, and the co-created results developed in each pilot case. In chapter 5 we develop these results further by suggesting strategic paths for each case. In chapter 6, we analyse and discuss the experiences derived from each case through the evaluation of the process and the outputs, suggesting a revised RUPIL-model, and finally suggesting strategic choices based on the concerns and outputs of the three cases.

Map 2.1
Map of the three pilot cases



Source: Overvåg, K., Bern, A., Higdem, U., Niederer, P., & Sysner, J. (2024): RURALPLAN Methodological framework and knowledge. Main report, March 2024

2.2 The aim of the model

The model aspires to function as a democratic participatory instrument, providing support to local authorities in their master planning endeavours. Our objective is to facilitate planning based on more realistic assumptions about how regions are shrinking, as well as on the population's own interests, preferences, needs, and wishes for what constitutes a 'good life' in the context of their local community. The result will be ideas on innovative strategies or strategic elements and measures developed into co-created and visualized solutions. In RUPIL, we have expanded on basic methods with a transdisciplinary approach that places a greater emphasis upon:

- (1) engaging societal actors in planning to mobilize more resources for development,
- (2) creating a knowledge-based and realistic approach,
- (3) developing new roles for politicians,
- (4) developing processes to legitimize other social objectives, and
- (5) developing innovative processes in the search for alternative goals, strategies and solutions.

At the Rural Planning and Innovation Lab (RUPIL) we facilitate a creative, yet systematic, innovative process with six phases (see Figure:2.1)

1. Thematic/contextual orientation
2. Exploring the problem
3. Gathering insights
4. Developing and creating ideas
5. Implementing solutions
6. Scaling and dissemination

Figure 2.1
The original RUPIL model



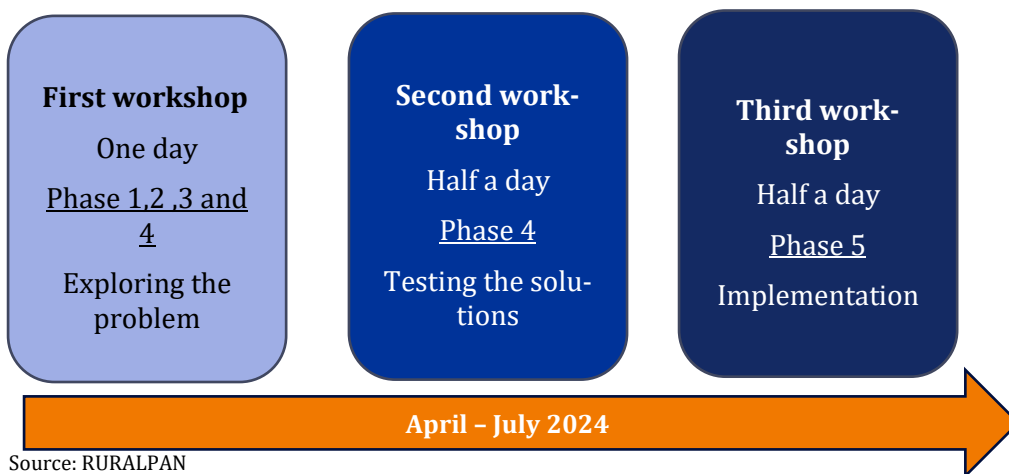
Source: Eide, Wedum, Higdum, Tholstrup, Overvåg og Bern 2023

We facilitate processes with conscious choices about pace and progression and alternation between opening and closing techniques to discover, define, develop, and

deliver solutions to wicked or complex problems concerning demographic change. The process is iterative with room for several rounds of creativity, development, and circling back when necessary. This ensures solutions are tailored and adjusted to the real challenges of the cases in different societies. The overall workshop design is illustrated below in Figure 2.2.

In the Albula region and the Malung-Sälen municipality, a two-day version of the workshops was adopted. In general, it contained the same content as the three-day model. The reduction to two days was mainly due to the availability of workshop participants.

Figure 2.2
The content of the three workshops



2.3 The workshops

The RUPIL model was planned to be implemented in three workshops: the first has a time frame of six hours focussing on phases 1, 2, and 3 and starting on phase 4 in the innovation process (testing solutions). The following two workshops have a time frame of three hours each. Workshop 2 should focus on phase 4, and the third workshop should focus on phase 5 in the innovation process (implementation). Phase 6, scaling and dissemination should be completed after the workshops. The workshops were arranged in the period between April and June/July 2024. A guide was developed for the workshops for the facilitators to use both in the planning and in the carrying out the workshops.

In the following, we present and explain each phase of the original RUPUL-model. (see Figure 2.1) of RUPIL, describing the aim of each phase and provides facilitators with suggestions of relevant methods to reach the planned results of each innovation phase. After the testing in the case areas, we have developed an interactive toolbox based on a revised RUPIL. This toolbox will be available on the ESPON website.

All material from the workshops such as invitations, lists of attendants, PPTs, written material, audio-visual material, and so on was gathered and systematized.

2.3.1 The different phases

We started the contextual/thematical orientation (Phase 1) with the invitation to the workshop by sharing with participants the practical information about the workshop and a brief introduction to the main challenges for the case municipality or region. During the first workshop, we continue to work with phase 1.

Phase 1 is about presenting the case municipality/region, current planning processes, and the framework for the processes that are to follow.

What should be done in phase 1:

The host (the case municipality/region) welcomes the participants and talks about current planning processes and the framework for the processes. The RURALPLAN team introduces the ESPON Targeted analysis RURALPLAN, and the framework of RUPIL. Phase 1 is crucial for localizing the innovation process, as well as for establishing a common understanding of a realistic planning approach based upon facts presented about the case municipality/region. This will be further elaborated in phase 2.

Phase 2 is about exploring the problem: What does it consist of? For whom is this a problem? What do we know about the consequences of this problem? We will explore the problem so that we can in due course arrive at a unified understanding of the challenges with which we are dealing.

What should be done in phase 2:

Our knowledge about the case municipality/region is presented (statistics and other relevant documentation). The workshop facilitator will have identified the most important statistical findings, as well as other relevant documents, and prepare a presentation of the material. The realistic planning approach will be further explained. Our starting point is the status of the case municipality/region and realistic expectations for future development. Growth should not be the premise for development, instead a focus on quality of life. When we have finished phase 1 and 2, we will commence working on how to gain greater insight in phase 3.

Phase 3: Gaining insight is about establishing a thorough understanding of a problem and identifying connections you have not previously seen. Therefore, it is important to engage a broad selection of citizens, business actors, volunteers, politicians etc. who can contribute with different perspectives and insights into the problem(s) and who are able to share how they might participate and contribute towards problem solving.

What should be done in phase 3:

Gain insight from the participants at the workshop, by leading them through a three-step activity where they describe their insights before they define and choose one main finding that they wish to pursue further in the process. After finishing phase 3,

we will move from problem exploration to idea development in phase 4. This phase consists of several elements, the first of which is developing ideas.

Phase 4: Idea development is central to innovation work. Creativity is conceiving, creating and being able to describe a new idea (Lerdahl 2007). In this phase, we open up for the possibility for ideas that can contribute to solving the problem. We are therefore relying on bringing up many ideas. Those involved in the process must be open and build the input of others.

Central in this phase is to make a description of our solution (conceptualization) before we create a prototype of the concept for feedback and validation. The last step is to test whether the concept works as intended. An important part of this phase is the testing of the prototype. It is through testing that we improve and further develop the concept.

What should be done in phase 4:

Many different methods and approaches can be of help in developing ideas. Repeated in the various methods is combining working individually, in groups, and finally in plenary. Creating trust amongst participants, putting together multidisciplinary teams, having a person to facilitate the process, and using a set of different methods that contribute to creativity are useful for producing many ideas.

In addition to developing ideas, phase 4 also consists of conceptualization, prototyping, and testing.

The participants are led from making a concept for the solution to prototyping it and testing it on the other participants. They may discover there is a need to make modifications during the process. Phase 4 clearly shows how iteration works in innovation processes. There may be different types of prototyping, for example physical (mock-ups), role-playing theatre, storyboard, and digital versions.

Phase 5 is about the implementation of co-created solutions and ideas in the local context. The solution and ideas are to be fed into the local and/or regional strategic planning process and the frame of realistic planning.

What should be done in phase 5:

Presentation of the project's goals and the frame of realistic planning (10 min). The participants consider Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT analysis) connected with the implementation of their solution, idea, or strategy for realistic planning. The participants consider roles and responsibilities in the implementation process. The final ideas are presented to the other workshop participants and the planning authorities.

Phase 6 is about scaling and dissemination, and this has a twofold role in this project. Firstly, it concerns scaling and disseminating innovative strategies, policies, or measures developed through the work, the assessment of the RUPIL process, and the democratic anchoring in the local planning system, which is the aim of this report. Secondly, the final report of RUPIL will subsequently discuss how innovative and valued co-created results, ideas, and suggestions from phase 5 may be

disseminated to similar planning authorities and societies in Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and other countries with shrinking peripheral areas.

The discussion and assessments in this report build on the evaluations which are a) summing up sessions with the key staff involved in each case, b) a questionnaire to all participants in the workshops, in addition to the aforementioned c) workshop documentation. Finally, d) the report is discussed in a draft version with the stakeholders of RURALPLAN.

As extra information and feedback for each pilot case, we also designed an information pamphlet for distribution in relevant arenas and with actors, for the ESPON, the stakeholders, the pilot cases, and others. To enhance each pilot case's strategy discussion and democratic anchorage we also made a report for each case to use and distribute to the appropriate forums and bodies. These reports were also added to the total empirical basis of the project.

3 The three pilot cases

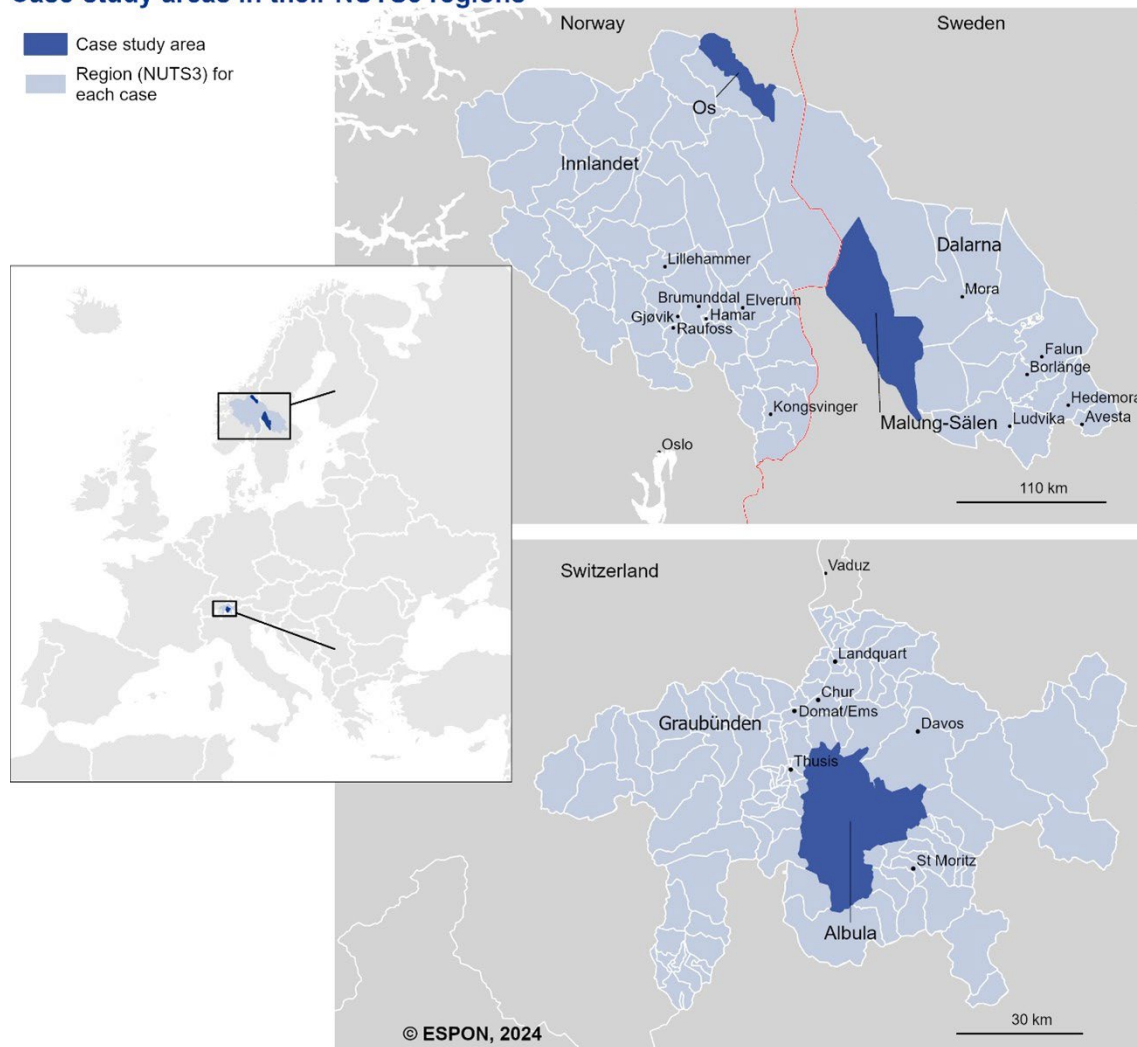
The RURALPLAN project addresses the diverse challenges faced by the three pilot cases: Os municipality in the inland county of Norway, Malung-Sälen Municipality in Dalarna, Sweden, and the Albula region in Graubünden, Switzerland (see map 3.1).

The pilot cases have been selected because they represent different contexts and shrinkage situations, thus increasing the planning model's transferability to other European regions. Further, the selected municipalities/regions showed an interest in co-creating new planning and policy responses to shrinkage, in cooperation with the stakeholders and service providers (research-team) of RURALPLAN.

Map 3.1

Case study areas in Switzerland (Albula), Sweden (Malung-Sälen) and Norway (Os)

Case-study areas in their NUTS3 regions



The demographic development in our cases illustrates the large regional variations within countries, as they demonstrate a shrinking or stabilized population development. This, they have in common with several other regions in Europe (ESPON 2020a), and are therefore good cases for the RUPIL testing.

In the ESPON ESCAPE-project a typology of different shrinking situations in Europe was developed (table 3 .1, ESPON 2020a). Below is a short summary of the shrinking situation of our three pilot cases, as seen in relation to the five categories from ESPON ESCAPE. (a full analysis in the RURALPLAN report on methodological framework and knowledge is presented in ESPON April 2024).

Table 3.1
Typology of complex shrinking and intermediate regions (5 classes)

Category	Label
1	Agricultural, very low-income regions with severe legacy and active shrinking
2	Industrial, mid-income regions with severe legacy and active shrinking
3	Agro-industrial, low-income regions with moderate, mostly legacy shrinking
4	Servitized, mid-low-income regions with moderate legacy shrinking
5	Industrial or servitized, mid-income regions, with moderate, mostly legacy shrinking

Source: ESPON, 2020 a)

Albula's population development has stabilised. The most significant demographic change is the projected decrease in population in working age, and the expected increase in elderly people. Economically the region has a large service sector and relatively low income compared to the average for Graubünden. Accessibility to urban centres and transport is good. According to the typology of shrinking from ESPON ESCAPE Albula does not fit into one specific category but has most common features with category 4 and 5.

Malung-Sälen, Sweden, has a severe legacy of a shrinking population, but the shrinkage has ceased in the last years. The economy is to a high degree within services (public and private). Household income is somewhat higher than in the EU, but quite low compared to the two other pilot-cases. Accessibility to urban centres is quite poor. Just like Albula, Malung-Sälen does not fit directly into one of the categories of shrinking. Due to the severe legacy of shrinking and high income it has similarities with category 2, while its servitized economy suggests several similarities with category 5.

Os, Norway, has a moderate legacy of shrinking, but currently the future trajectory indicates active shrinking. Great changes are expected in the demographic composition. Besides having a large public service sector, which characterise all Norwegian municipalities, the industrial sector holds a dominant position, and agriculture is relatively important. Accessibility to urban centres is poor but is better to train stations. Os can be seen as a combination of category 2 and 3, with its agro-industrial

base it aligned to a moderate legacy shrinking (category 3), with its middle-income it suggests active shrinking (category 2)

The three pilot-cases have, of course, several similarities as they are rural, shrinking, and/or characterised by significant demographic changes. When it comes to legacy of shrinking, economy, and geography there are, however, significant differences. The pilot-cases have similarities with most of the categories of complex shrinking, except category 1 as none of them is an agricultural low-income region. Accordingly, a strength for RURALPLAN as the RUPIL is that it allows the testing of different contexts and shrinkage situations.

4 Pilot testing

In this section, we present the work of each pilot, organized by the workshop's development of the prioritized themes. The working papers from each pilot case, describe in detail how each workshop was organized, and the results from these. However, we have chosen the method of 'Thick description' (Stake, 2010) in this report which allows us to reveal and explore the substance of each case, the themes, the assessments made, and the conclusions. In this way, the data gains added transparency and depth.

The RUPIL method should be adjusted according to the context. In these three pilot cases, the context differed with respect to the institutional setting, the planning context, and levels of authority. Also, there were context-dependent changes in the rigging of the workshops, where the Albula region and Malung-Sälen municipality arranged workshops over two long days, whereas Os municipality invited the participants to three separate days, one long and two evenings.

4.1 The Albula region, Switzerland

4.1.1 Introduction and context

The Albula region on the 31st of December 2023 had 8117 inhabitants. It is composed of the municipalities of Vaz/Obervaz (2742 inhabitants), Lantsch (528 inhabitants), Schmitten (209 inhabitants), Albula (1313 inhabitants), Surses (2424 inhabitants), and Bergün (901 inhabitants). The total surface of the region is 683.51 km².

At the end of 2021, the region elaborated a participatory "Regional spatial concept (regionales Raumkonzept)" that involved political authorities, the population as well as related institutions. The "Regional spatial concept" is set to serve as a compass for the spatial development of the region up to the year 2040. This concept not only deals with spatial planning issues in the narrow sense, but also addresses social, economic, and environmental issues. These are the areas of concern that significantly control and influence the development of the region. The concept reveals strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by the region and formulates objectives to be achieved over the next 20 years. Finally, measures are defined to achieve objectives that mainly focus on services of general interest, where availability and accessibility are often sparsened first when it comes to a decrease in population, triggering a circle of decline. The challenges are multiplied by ongoing demographic changes and the acceleration of shrinking in all scenarios. In the high scenario, the cantonal population outlook predicts a population decline in all sub-regions of Albula region by 2045 (Surses: -20%, Albula Valley: -12%, Lenzerheide: -6%). This tendency might be too pessimistic and not inclusive of the newest trends, and it may also be influenced by the Corona health crisis during and after which living in rural areas has become more attractive. However, the future tendency suggests a general population decrease.

The most recent project on strategic planning that the region is involved in is the revision of the "Regional location development strategy

(Standortentwicklungsstrategie)”. This was last updated in 2019. This is an initiative that amends the above-mentioned “Regional, spatial concept” with institutional, organizational or financial issues. It contributes, as well to the “Regional spatial concept” and the ongoing revision of the “Regional structure plan” (see table below for details).

The regional authorities want to have our RURALPLAN coupled with the “Regional location development strategy”. This means taking up defined measures and achieved results of preceding strategic activities as a common ground and contributing to its concretisation and implementation.

Figure 4.1

Characteristics of the “regional spatial concept”, the “regional location development strategy” and the “regional structure plan”

Description	Regional spatial concept (Regionales Raumkonzept)	Regional location development strategy (Regionale Standortentwicklungsstrategie)	Regional structure plan (Regionaler Richtplan)
Aim	Provides an integrative Vision and a framework of orientation for a sustainable spatial development for the Albula region.	Provides a tool to identify potentials and priorities for a future development of the Albula region. It undergoes periodic adaptation according to economic and societal trends.	Specifies and supplements the provisions of cantonal structure plans with instructions for action of regional importance in topics such as landscape planning, tourism, transport a.o..
Legal relevance	Not legally binding	Not legally binding	Legally binding for public authorities
Main topics	Spatial development, socio-economic development	Spatial development, socio-economic development	Strong focus on spatial aspects of concrete projects such as camping’s, natural parks, traffic bypasses etc.
Institutional scales	Local: Municipalities of the Albula region Regional: Region Albula. Others: Spatial planners, service providers, tourism organisations.	Local: Municipalities of the Albula region Regional: Region Albula. Others: Spatial planners, service providers, tourism organisations.	Local: Municipalities of the Albula region. Regional: Region Albula
Role of RUPIL	Idea generation for the implementation of measures defined in the «regional spatial concept”.	Idea generation for the implementation of measures defined in the «regional location development strategy”. Input for the strategic evolution the “regional location development strategy”.	RUPIL as a methodology ensuring supra and inter municipal coordination in the elaboration of the «regional structure plan» Input for the strategic evolution of the «regional structure plan».

Source: SAB

4.1.2 The RUPIL process of Albula region (process design) and the participants

The results from the RUPIL process will contribute to the region's "Regional location development strategy". Testing of the RUPIL in the Albula region has been conducted in two participation workshops.

The workshops were dedicated to different innovation phases related to insight work, problem exploration, idea development, testing, and implementation.

- The first participation workshop was held on the 3rd of June with 17 participants
- The second participation workshop was held on the 24th of June with 16 participants

All workshops were carried out at the Hotel Albula/Julier in Tiefencastel. The Albula region provided premises and part of the catering. The region was also responsible for inviting participants to the workshops, and the invitations were designed in a collaboration between the region and the project members. The Swiss Centre for Mountain Regions (SAB) represented by Peter Niederer and Vera Ambühl were responsible for the implementation of the workshops.

The participants in the workshops were mainly representatives from the regional and municipal council of the Albula Region, the municipal administration as well as representatives from the health sector, tourism sector, natural park, secondary home association, agriculture and regional managements (Albula and neighboring regions).

4.1.3 Experiences and results of the workshops

The academic focus of the 1st workshop was to develop insights, problem exploration, and idea development based on a review of development trends and status in the Albula region regarding population development, population composition, service needs, and municipal economy. Below is a selection of the statistics that were presented at the beginning of the workshop.

The categories created by the groups were presented in plenary and the facilitators created categories across all groups. This resulted in the following topics:

- 1) Education
- 2) Touristic offers
- 3) Public health
- 4) Housing policy
- 5) Infrastructures
- 6) Culture and places to meet
- 7) Attractiveness of employers
- 8) Mobility

No group was established for the topic of infrastructure and education. The topic of mobility was merged with the topic of touristic offerings.

In a next step the participants chose a topic that they wished to continue working with and new groups were formed. The group's ideas were then prioritized according to two parameters; a) how easy or difficult the idea is to implement (implementation) and b) what is the value for the local community (effect/value). The groups then chose the three ideas that they considered most appropriate to continue working with.

The following groups were established:

1. Housing policy – promoting cooperative housing associations
2. Attractive employers – Bringing employees and employers together
3. Improved health services – Establishing an interregional health centre
4. Creative meeting places and cultural development – a platform for exchange
5. Create opportunities for the local economy including the supply of daily goods and new forms of regional market days

Two groups chose to make a storyboard, two developed a flow chart, while the remaining one chose to make a physical prototype. The prototypes were tested and adjusted.

At the second workshop it was essential for the facilitators to remind all about the need to have realistic planning ambitions and with this in mind there was a repetition of some central development trends in Albula region. An introductory short repetition of the content from the first and second participation workshops addressed this.

The groups re-established themselves and had the opportunity to repeat the work with the themes grouped together and this led to new group insight into the development of solutions. The SWOT analysis was carried out.

Below each group's work is summarized.

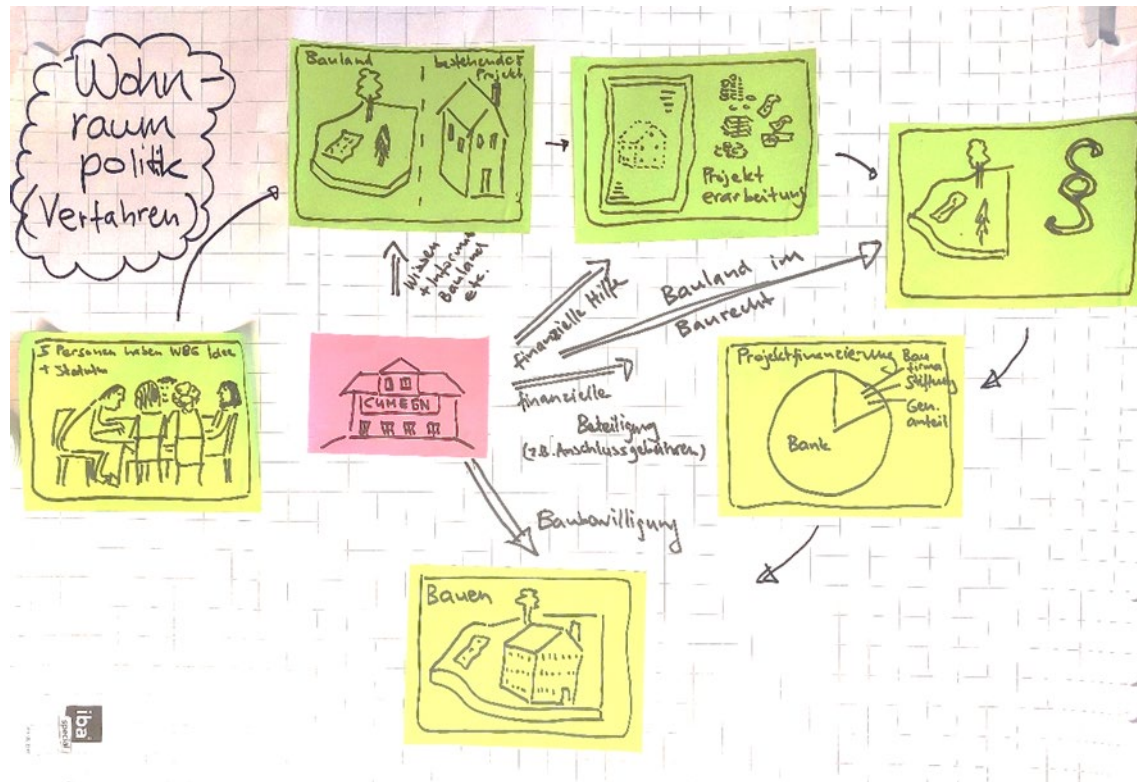
Housing policy

Cooperative housing associations have been considered as a key element to mitigate the current lack of housing opportunities in the Albula region. Therefore, the story in this prototype (Fig 4.2) is to introduce in each municipality a process about how to assist cooperative housing associations from the a) foundation to b) the provision of information on available terrains and buildings to c) the financial assistance in project development and d) the provision of building land (eg. Under building Rights) e) a contribution for project funding (eg. Shares) and f) building permits. All the municipalities in the Albula region would need to agree on a common procedure. The prototype includes also a coordinator who organises the above-mentioned procedure and a set of guidelines and principles in which the whole procedure is described and collated. The coordinator is either located within the

administration of the municipality or externally at the regional level (regional management).

Figure 4.2

Prototype, a story board of a process to assist housing cooperatives on a municipal/regional level



Picture: SAB

In the second workshop a SWOT analyses was conducted:

Chart 4.1

SWOT analyses Housing policy group Albula



The housing group's assessment of roles and responsibilities

Who can contribute to the realization of your idea and how?

- “Verband Wohnbaugenossenschaften Schweiz” for information and advisory services
- Local bank – top financing
- Local entrepreneurs – construction, infrastructure
- The municipality – introduction of a standardised process to assist housing cooperatives
- Landowners – plots
- Federal office for housing for information and advisory services

Who can help you handle and reduce the conditions that threaten the implementation of the idea?

- Reference projects, for example, Ernen municipality

- Verband Wohnbaugenossenschaften Schweiz and the Federal office for housing could convince stakeholders who follow a widespread scepticism against the idea of housing cooperatives.
- Residents who have "tried it" - how does it work?

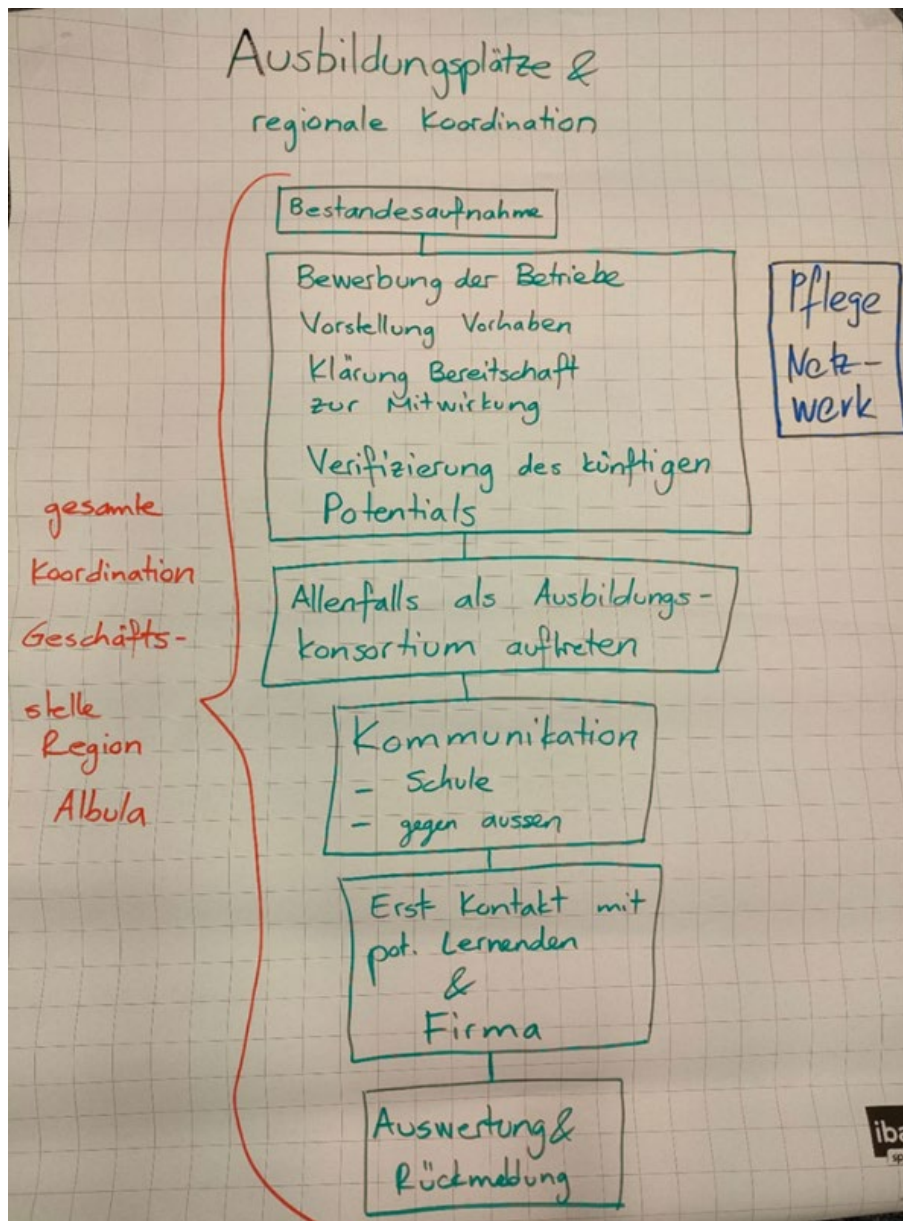
Attractive employers

A major issue in the Albula region is the fact that young people finalise their vocational education outside of the region and do not return. The group elaborated a flowchart (fig. 4.3) with different steps on how to improve the attractiveness of employers, especially for those seeking apprenticeships, to remedy the current trend towards an outmigration of the active population.

A first step is building up an inventory of open opportunities and vacancies. In a second step the companies are promoted and their collaboration in the project is formalised. The potential of the project is then validated. Thirdly the option of an apprenticeship consortium is evaluated; means that an apprentice can gain insight into different companies and functions. In a fourth step the secondary schools are integrated into the project. After that first contacts between potential apprentices and the companies are established. The region organises so called "Kennenlertage" (Fairs to meet and exchange). The procedure is finalised with evaluation and the feedback of each participant. The whole process is being coordinated by the Region Albula.

Figure 4.3

Prototype, a flow chart to improve the attractiveness of employers

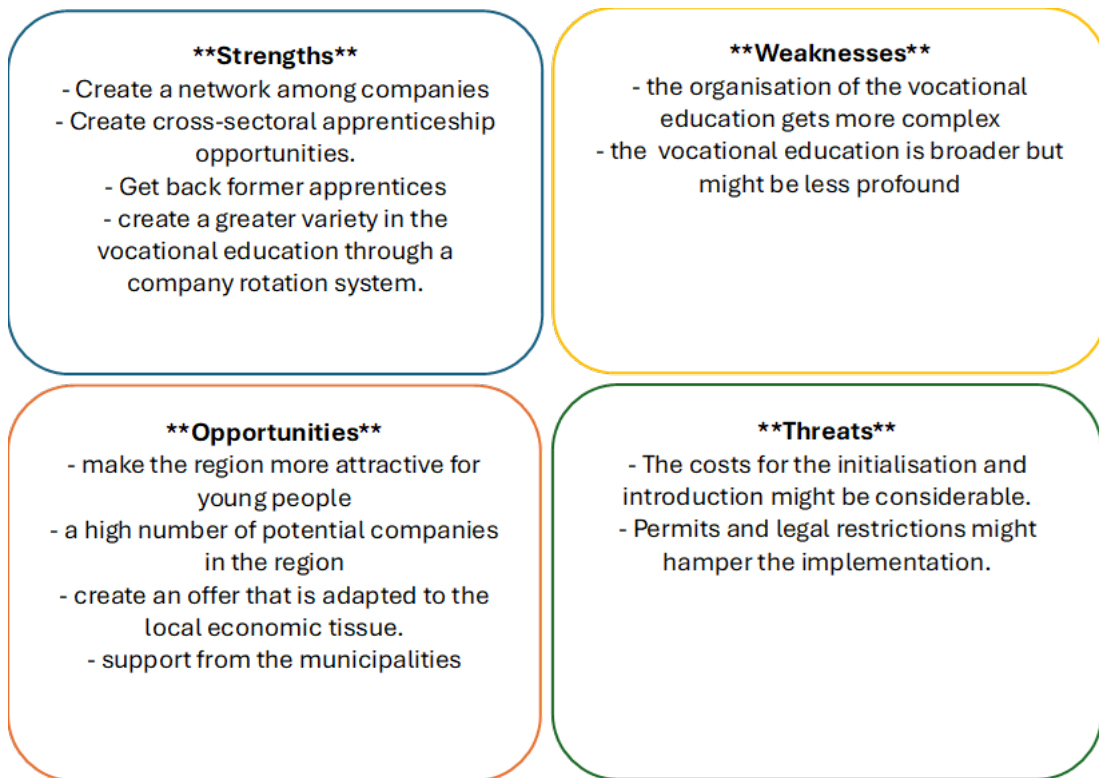


Picture: SAB

In the second workshop a SWOT analyses was conducted:

Chart 4.2

SWOT analysis Attractive employers' group Albula



This group's assessment of roles and responsibilities

Who can contribute to the realization of your idea and how, and who can help you handle and reduce the conditions that threaten the implementation of the idea?

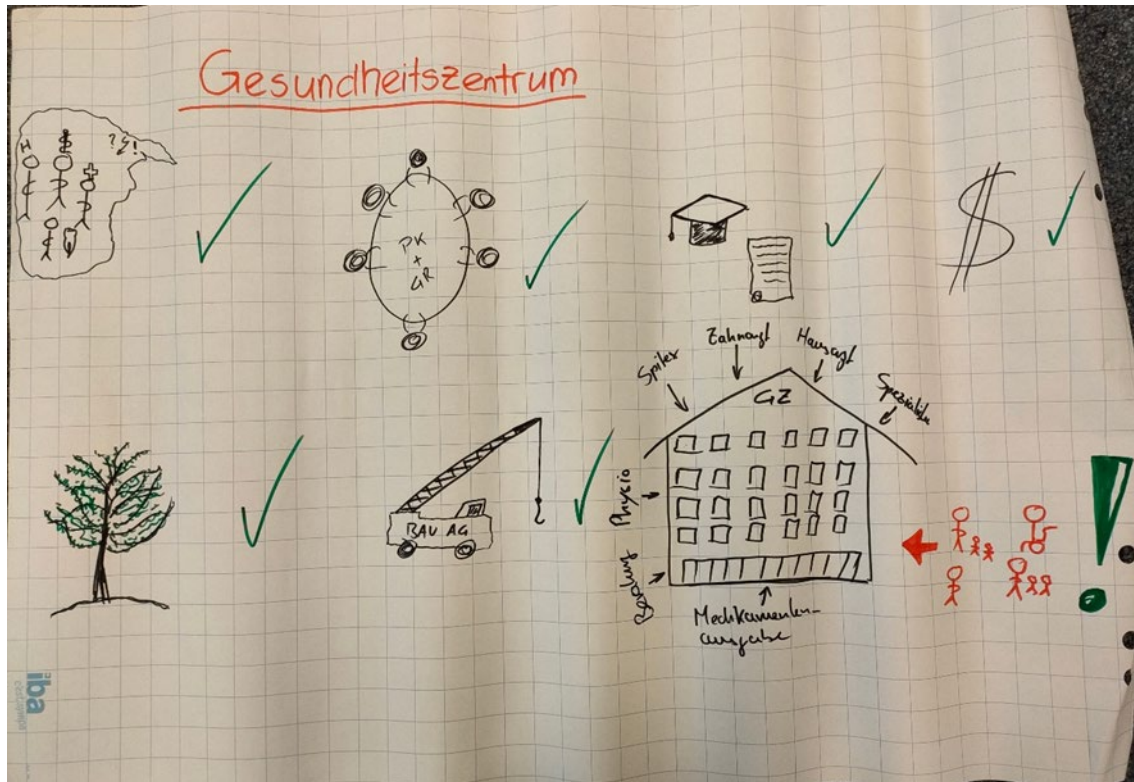
- Entrepreneurs/private developers - take the risk in co-development of the project
- Regional management coordinates the project
- Schools help in mobilisation of pupils
- Municipality – spans the framework

Improved health services

The third group had a closer eye on the public health sector and on how the latter can be improved (Figure 4.3). They saw great potential in creating synergies between different health services within the Albula region and especially with the neighbouring Viamala region. A concrete measure could be a regional health centre that brings together under one roof: elderly care services (Spitex), general practitioners, specialists, dentists, paediatrician and physiotherapists. The centre would have not only benefitted for the patients but also for the incorporated health personnel in being

more flexible in terms of working hours and in increasing the economic viability of such a structure.

Figure 4.3
Prototype, a flow chart to improve health services in Albula region

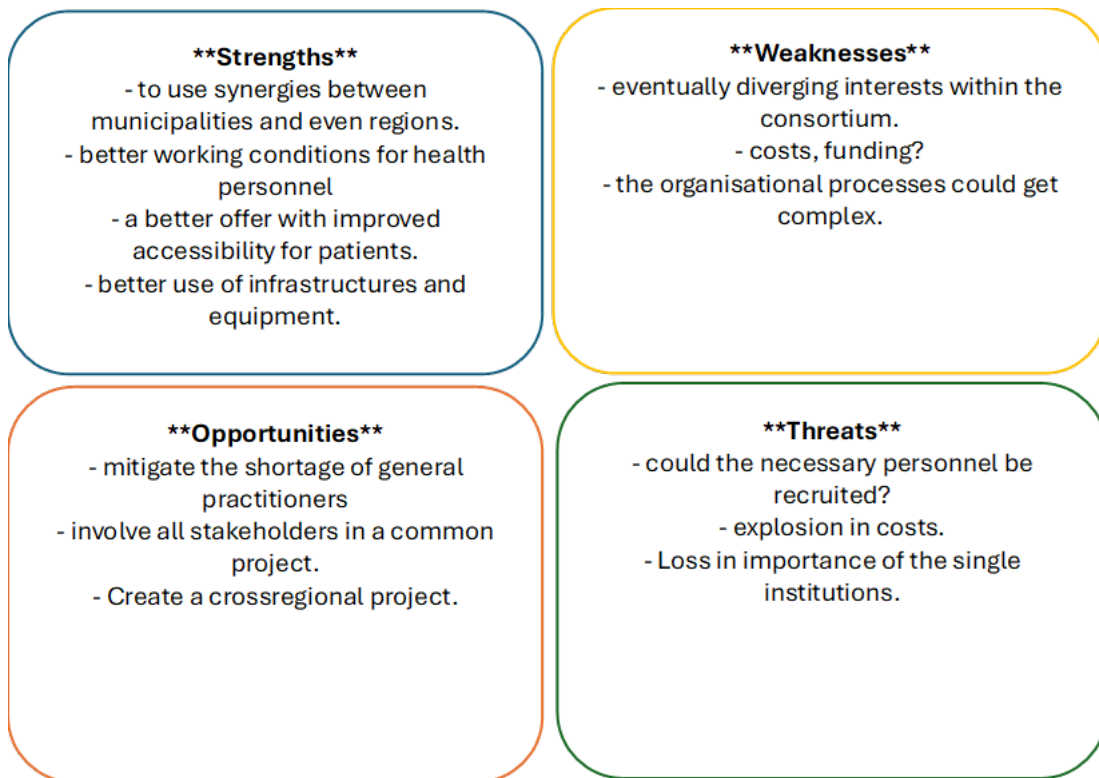


Picture: SAB

In the second workshop a SWOT analyses was conducted:

Chart 4.3

SWOT analysis improved health service group Albula



This group's assessment of roles and responsibilities

Who can contribute to the realization of your idea and how?

- Region Albula and neighbouring regions create synergies and the common ground
- NGO's and associations that are active in the health and caring sector
- Municipalities and the canton Graubünden are important partners.

Who can help you handle and reduce the conditions that threaten the implementation of the idea?

- A coordinator who believes in the concept
- Advisors

Creative meeting places and cultural development

The aim is to bring together the population on a regional level and to inform them on the richness and diversity of events and cultural offerings in the Albula region.

The prototype to achieve this goal is a digital platform that illustrates some measures on the way forward (Figure 4.4):

1-3: Definition of the framework: definition of the owner and manager of the platform, establishment of the website, setting of rules.

4-5: Establish content: information/mobilization of teachers, trainers, associations and the population to put offers on-site.

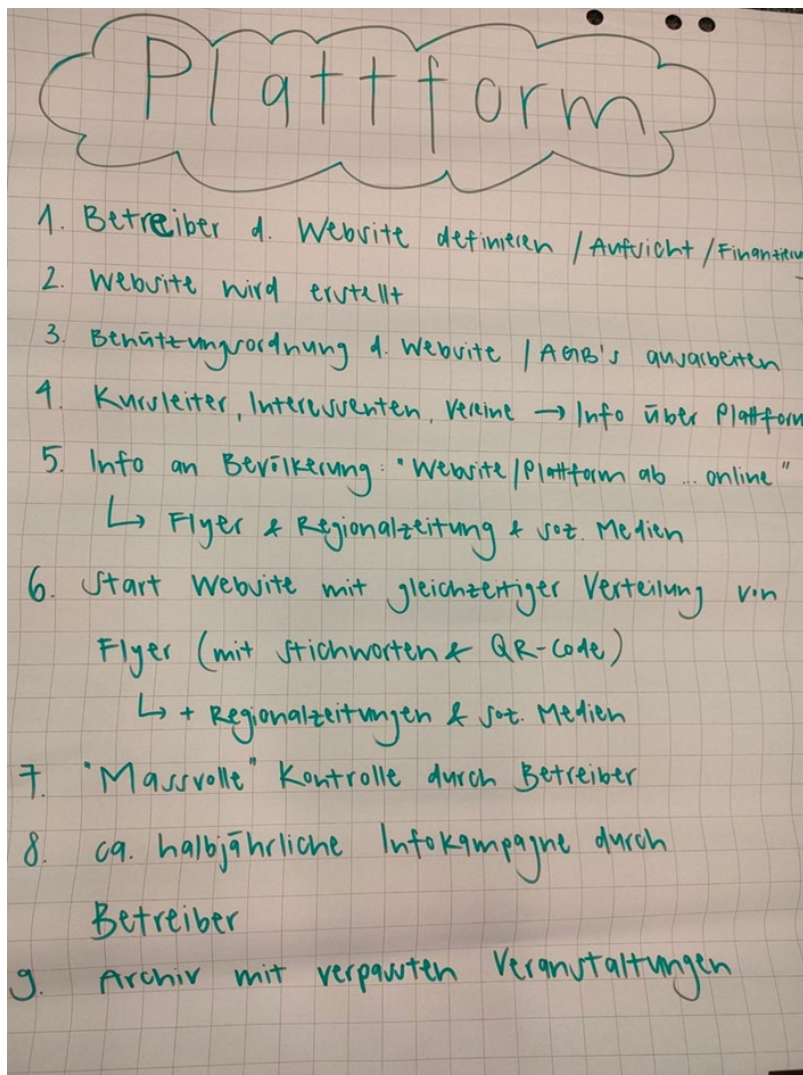
6: Launch of the website: promotion in combination with analogue communication measures such as flyers and regional newspapers.

7-8: Hosting of the website: Moderation and communication through the manager

9: Documentation: Archive with all events.

Figure 4.4

Prototype, a flow chart for creative meeting places and cultural development

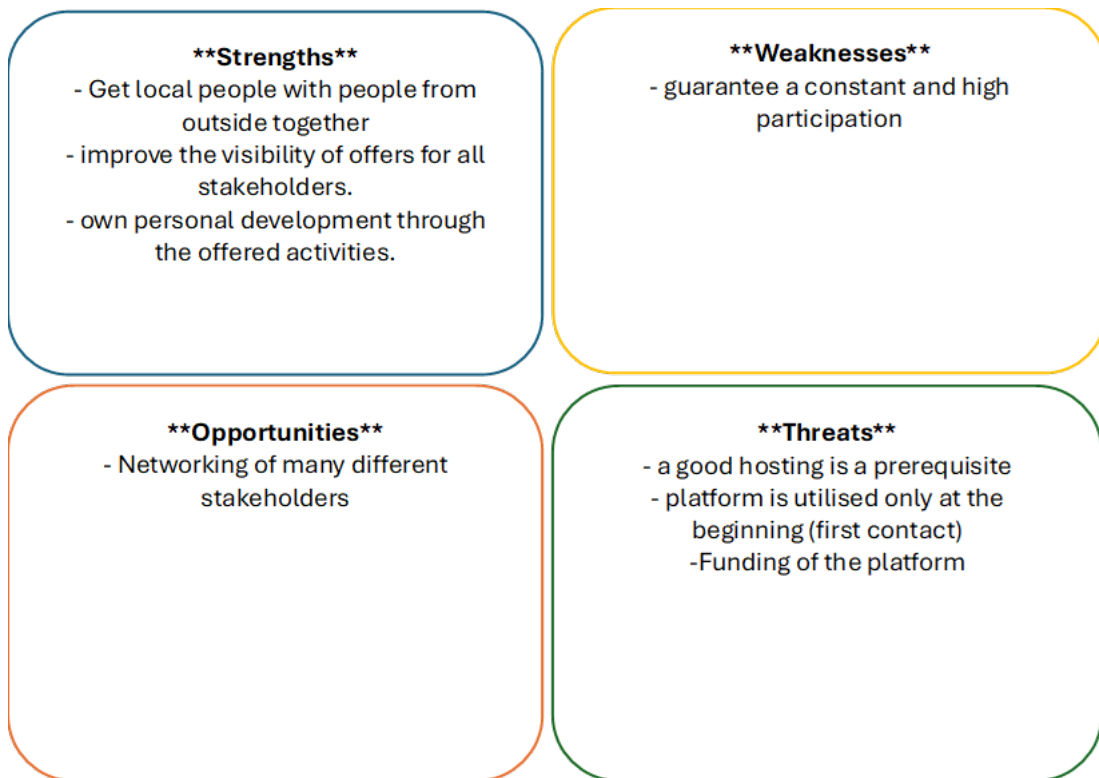


Picture: SAB

In the second workshop, a SWOT- analysis was conducted:

Chart 4.4

SWOT analysis for creative meeting places and cultural development Albula



This group's assessment of roles and responsibilities

Who can contribute to the realization of your idea and how, and who can help you handle and reduce the conditions that threaten the implementation of the idea?

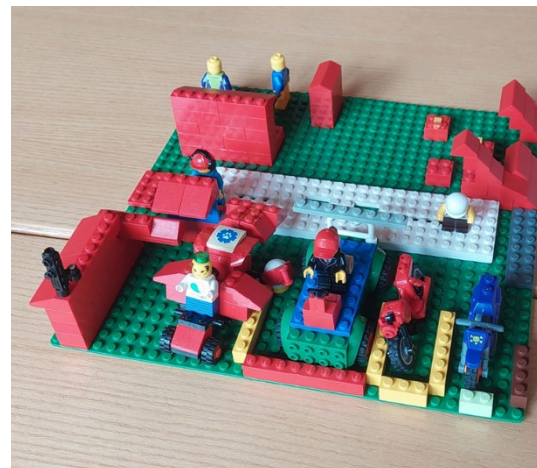
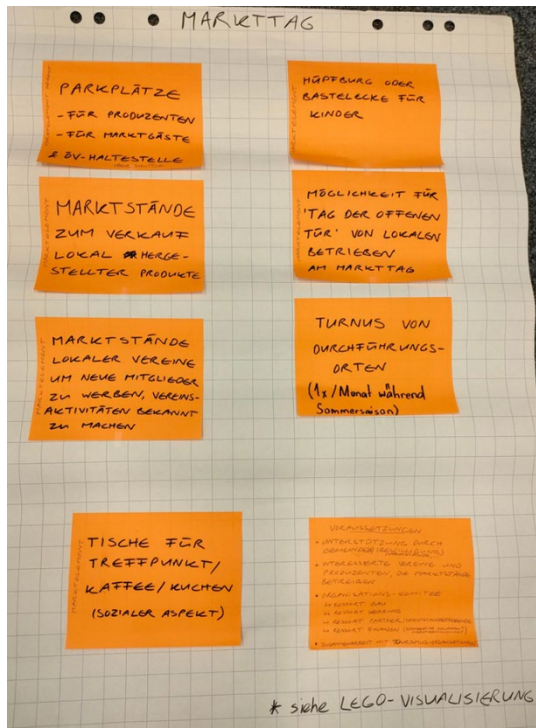
- The cooperation of the different cultural associations is key
- Associations should nominate a coordinator with a key role for the overview and coordination of volunteers, teams, and organizations
- Volunteer network: Where parts of, for example, the volunteer center can participate to gather new ideas and new knowledge as well source funding.
- The municipalities shall assist the platform financially because it is a measure that contributes to a living and lively valley.

Create opportunities for the local economy and in the supply of daily goods

One group elaborated a prototype in order to improve the touristic offerings and create a meeting point for the whole region. They designed a concept of a monthly market day (Figure 4.5) that rotates from one from one place to the next throughout

the year, but all within the Albula region. The main issue is the promotion of regional products. Additionally local and regional associations will have the opportunity to present their activities to a broader public. Special activities are foreseen for children. After a pilot period, it is envisaged that the market events would circulate with greater repetition.

Figure 4.5
Prototypes for improving the touristic offerings, organising regional market day



To left: flow chart of a regional market day. Above: prototype of a regional market day in lego

Pictures: SAB

Chart 4.5

SWOT analysis for creating opportunities for the local economy and the supply of local daily goods



The groups assessment of roles and responsibilities

Who can contribute to the realization of your idea and how?

- the farmers women association (Landfrauenverein) and the farmers' association
- the tourism promotion associations
- the local business association
- the municipalities that help with the preparation of the location and equipment.

4.2 Malung-Sälen municipality, Sweden

4.2.1 Introduction and context

Malung-Sälen has approximately 10.260 inhabitants, and the municipality is 4.106 km². The northern part is especially big on winter tourism, while the southern part of the municipality relies upon employment in for example public services. The

municipality cooperates with tourism areas in the border region, through the Interreg Project site <https://malung-salen.se/naringsliv-foretag-och-jobb/site-3-projektet>. Malung-Sälen has also a Housing – provision Strategy.

In Sweden, municipalities bear the responsibility for delivering essential work-intensive services such as childcare, education, social welfare, and elderly care. Municipalities elect representatives directly through citizen votes, granting residents influence and control over local governance. Central to this decentralised model of governance is the role of municipal planning, serving as the core of community development and securing the fulfilment of municipal duties. Amongst the municipalities within Dalarna, demographic shifts reveal intriguing nuances. Demographic transformations present these municipalities with substantial challenges, emphasizing the critical need to address the implications of demographic change in the region.

4.2.2 The RUPIL-process in Malung-Sälen (process design) and the participants

The pilot case in Dalarna, Malung-Sälen was initially most interested in focusing on recruitment, competence provision for the private and public sector, and labour market issues caused by an ageing population. However, after discussions with the municipality's leadership, it was decided that the RUPIL process should be based on Malung-Sälens vision (goal picture) of the future and suggest actual strategies or measures to achieve these goals. As Malung-Sälen wrote in the invitation: *"Malung-Sälen municipality describes in Målbild 2027 that we want to be a world-leading international destination with a flourishing business sector, a rich cultural and outdoor life, good municipal service and attractive housing. The municipality's ambition is for as many people as possible to participate in the work to achieve these goals. Therefore, we invite you to three workshops where we together discuss how Malung-Sälen will develop in the coming years. This time we focus specifically on how we can manage access to labour and a good municipal service based on the demographic changes we are facing. During three workshops, we develop sharp proposals for what we can specifically do about the labour shortage and develop the basis for a realistic planning for the coming years."*

Figure 4.6
Malung-Sälens vision 2027

Malung-Sälens kommun

KORTVERSION

MÅLBILD 2027

Malung-Sälen - en hållbar tillväxtkommun med goda livsmiljöer
Vi är en världsledande internationell destination med ett näringsliv som bidrar till utveckling och långsiktig konkurrenskraft. Här finns en mångfald av välbesökta evenemang samt ett rikt kultur- och fritidsliv året runt. Vi har en erkänt god kommunal service samt varierade och attraktiva boenden i en trygg miljö. Våra kännetecken är dialog och goda samspel. Vi driver utveckling och uppfattas som handlingskraftiga och effektiva av vår omvärld.

KOMMUNKONCERNENS MÅLOMRÅDEN

OMSORG OCH TRYGGHET
Vi erbjuder omsorg med god kvalitet och stärker samhällskontraktet där människor bidrar och känner delaktighet. Beredskap och förebyggande insatser inom kommunens samliga verksamheter skapar god kvalitet, trygghet och inkludering. Vi är förberedda att möta dagens och framtidens behov.

LÄRANDE OCH LIVSKVALITET
Vi bidrar till innovationskraft och kompetensförsörjning. Vi utbildar med god kvalitet, verkar för höjda utbildningsnivåer och stärker livslångt lärande. Ett varierat kultur- och fritidsliv bidrar till kommunens identitet och attraktionskraft. Genom gott samspel mellan kommunen, näringsliv och föreningsliv verkar vi för förbättrad folkhälsa och jämlikhet.

HÅLLBAR TILLVÄXT
Vi arbetar för ekonomisk, social och miljömässig hållbarhet. Vi främjar entreprenörskap och företagande. Vårt samhällsbygge är stabilt och framtidssäkert med goda inkluderande livsmiljöer och boenden. Tillgänglighet och service med god kvalitet för boende, företag och besökare har hög prioritet. Vi verkar för förbättrad infrastruktur, hållbart resande och hållbara transporter. Vi främjar cirkulär ekonomi och resurseffektivitet.

Som en röd tråd...
...från kommunfullmäktige till alla medarbetare, styr målbilden och anger inriktningen i verk-samheterna.
I fullmäktiges årsplan anges bl.a. de finansiella målen. Nämndar och bolag gör nämnd- och bolagsplaner varje år och anger hur man tänker uppnå målen. Inom förvaltningarna och verksamheterna bestämmer man hur målen ska uppnås.

Source: Malung- Sälen municipality

The dates for the workshops were discussed with Malung-Sälen municipality and we realised there was not enough time to arrange three workshops. We therefore decided to merge the two last workshops into one whole day, instead of two half days.

Accordingly, the testing of RUPIL in Malung-Sälen Municipality was conducted through two participatory workshops, where the first workshop focused on the innovation phase 1, 2, 3 and 4 which means contextual orientation (phase 1), problem exploration (phase 2), gathering insight (phase 3), developing ideas (phase 4). The second workshop focused on further developing and testing of the ideas (phase 4), before implementing the ideas (phase 5).

- The first participatory workshop was held on June 3, 2024, with 23 participants.
- The second participatory workshop was held on June 26, 2024, with 14 participants.

Both workshops took place at Sankt Olof's Hotel in Malung. The municipality provided the venue and catering. They were also responsible for inviting participants to the workshops, with the list of invitees developed in collaboration between the municipality and the project. Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, represented

by Ulla Higdem, Trude Hella Eide, and Line Marie Tholstrup, was responsible for the academic execution of the workshops.

The participants in the workshops were primarily representatives from political committees in Malung-Sälen Municipality, the municipal administration, as well as representatives from the Council for People with Disabilities, the Pensioners' Council, and the Youth Council.

4.2.3 Experiences and results from the workshops

The first participatory workshop was held on June 3 from 08:00 to 14:00 at Sankt Olofs Hotel in Malung. The workshop facilitators were Ulla Higdem and Line Marie Tholstrup.

We presented a review of trends and the current status in Malung-Sälen Municipality, particularly concerning population development, population composition, service needs, and municipal finances.

In addition to a presentation of key figures for the municipality, time was initially used to explain and justify the understanding framework "realistic planning" that underlies the RURALPLAN project. It is essential that the municipality and the participatory actors align with the realistic preconditions for the development of the municipality and develop goals and strategies that are realistically adapted to these premises.

The first process resulted in the following four main challenges:

- Education, expertise and recruitment
- Attractiveness
- Infrastructure services
- Health and care services

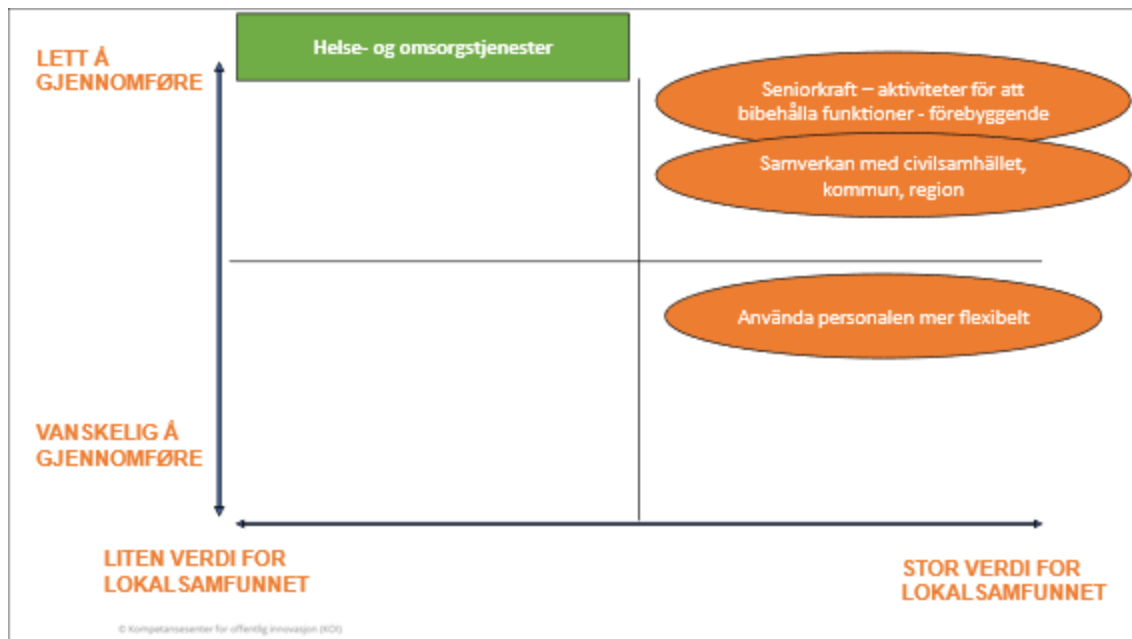
In addition, housing was a topic that was identified as central in Malung-Sälen's municipality, but which had already been thoroughly investigated through the work with the Housing Supply Program 2023-2026. On this basis, the participants did not want to continue working on this topic.

The participants chose a topic that they wanted to continue working with in the idea development phase and with this, new groups were established. The group's ideas were then evaluated based on two parameters; a) how easy or difficult the idea is to implement (implementation) and b) what kind of value it has for the local community (effect/value). The groups prioritized and presented the three ideas that they thought were most appropriate to continue working with.

An example of the way they presented their ideas, due to the tabular, is shown below:

Figure 4.7

The three priority ideas for the category health and care services



Source: INN

The figure above illustrates the assessments of three ideas of solutions to the challenge of health and care services. The oval in the top right corner is the suggestion 'Senior power' - preventive activities to retain functions. This idea is considered to be easy to implement and of great value to the local community. The oval in the middle suggests an idea for co-operation between civil society, the municipality, and the region, which is also an idea that is easy to implement and provides great value. The third oval suggests the idea is to utilize staff more flexibly. This idea is difficult to implement, but of great value to the local community.

These ideas were taken forward for further development and prototyping at the second workshop.

The second participatory workshop was conducted on June 26 from 08:30-16:00. The workshop facilitators were Trude Hella Eide and Line Marie Tholstrup.

The following prototypes were produced:

1. Health and care services – "Senior Power"
2. Infrastructure – "Bed Money"
3. Attractiveness – "Getting young people to remain, contribute and work in Malung-Sälen"
4. Skills and recruitment – "External outreach from employers to school"

The prototypes were tested and then adjusted. Subsequently, the SWOT analysis was conducted followed by an assessment of opportunities and threats and how these could be managed. The groups' work related to each of the four prototypes is presented in the chapter below.

Health and care services – “Senior power”

Senior Power is an initiative for residents of Malung-Sälen municipality in the third age. This means that residents are retirees, are healthy, and have reduced municipal service needs. The group is invited for a health check (check of blood pressure, cholesterol, and weight) and a conversation about goals for retirement life is proposed. Furthermore, residents are offered the opportunity to try a variety of activities (cultural offerings, lectures, training, or otherwise) with others and in teams belonging to associations and clubs in the municipality.

The purpose of the measure is twofold:

1. Support residents in their third age life realize a high quality of life.
2. Postpone the need for municipal health and care services among retirees through professional support to make good choices that promote both physical and mental health.

It is anticipated that participants will build social relationships during these activities, and these in turn will inspire them to continue their participation in these activities on offer.

To manage the initiative, it is advised that a municipal project manager is appointed. Information about the initiative is disseminated via local press (Malungbladet).

About the prototype:

The group described the initiative by using role play as a prototype. A new retiree: Jørgen, feels loneliness after retiring and a former colleague sees an advertisement in Malungbladet about the offering of a health check and activities for new retirees. The colleague calls the social administration and signs Jørgen up for a meeting with the project leader for the initiative. The project leader meets Jørgen and three other new retirees; they talk about the health check, and a motivational conversation about the direction of life takes place. The health check is performed, and Jørgen participates in several activities over a period. When the period ends, Jørgen is offered a new health check-up and follow-up conversation. Jørgen has made new acquaintances and is in much better health than at the start.

Figure 4.8
Prototype for Senior Power: a roleplay



Picture: INN

A SWOT analysis was conducted for the Senior Power initiative and the working group highlighted the following factors as central:

Chart 4.6
SWOT Senior Power



In the comments on the working group's presentation of their initiative, it was pointed out that a new Social Law was expected in 2025, which has an increased focus on preventative measures. The state funds to support the implementation of the law might have been used for the realization of Senior Power.

About roles and responsibilities:

The working group defined the following roles and responsibilities in connection with the realization of the initiative:

The groups assessment of roles and responsibilities

- Ideal associations (important to be ambassadors and contribute to activities)
- Various municipal businesses
- The region
- State authorities
- Local press and media

Infrastructure – “Bed Money”

“Bed Money” is an initiative where an additional fee is attached to each paid overnight stay by visitors in the municipality. In other words, the companies that rent out accommodation in hotels, cabins, or camping sites pay a sum per overnight stay into a common pot. “Bed Money” is an alternative to tourist tax. The money collected in this way is proposed to be used to co-finance infrastructure projects such as increasing passenger traffic on the Västerdalsbanan railway, express buses, and other train routes. Increased use of the Västerdalsbanan could make it easier to move around Malung-Sälen and support a car-free Sälen.

The purpose of the initiative is to:

- Provide residents and visitors in Malung-Sälen with an eco-friendly transport alternative
- Increase mobility among young people and employees in the municipality
- Ensure developmental opportunities in the municipality through a well-functioning infrastructure

About the prototype:

The group described the idea with a physical prototype that visualized how “Bed Money” (ie. investment or start capital) can be part of the financing of a new initiative to grow passenger traffic on the Västerdalsbanan (Västerdals Railway Line). In addition, the focus on the Västerdalsbanan will require other investments, grants from funds, and EU funding. It is important to establish a good financial model that will offer clarity to the project. This could make contributions from the business sector easier to mobilize.

The groups assessment of roles and responsibilities

The working group defined the following roles and responsibilities in connection with the realization of the initiative:

- Use already well-functioning cooperation
- Include those who say no
- Expand the working group with key people
- Development of a “tagline” or a “slogan”
- Include research and innovation
- Conduct impact analysis
- Consider risk management
- Follow up the project with evaluation
- Basic work on convincing and gaining insight into the usefulness of models
- Gaining knowledge about important preconditions
- Build knowledge broadly

Attractiveness - “Getting young people to stay, contribute and work in Malung-Sälen”

The goal of the idea is to get young people in Malung-Sälen to stay, contribute, and work in the municipality. To clarify what are the important factors for young people when it comes to choosing to live in Malung-Sälen. It is crucial to ask the young people themselves about what attracts them.

In supporting young people to communicate what is important, the focus must be upon increasing the circle of new groups of young people who are contacted. One should, therefore, use participation methods that include the involvement of young people in the community wide debate on development. Furthermore, Malung-Sälen municipality should be in the minds of the young people who live in the municipality and highlight local work and career opportunities. In addition, politicians should seek out young people and invite them to take part in relevant political debate on policy in the municipality.

The working group proposes an organization of the initiative with a project leader who can coordinate the participation of the various actors, preferably in an annual cycle. One can imagine that it is an appointed person who can take on that responsibility.

About the prototype:

The working group has developed a prototype that has the character of a storyboard. The group first made a draft on paper and then a digital presentation in PowerPoint. The prototype visualizes two elements:

1. How to invite young people to describe what is important to them in making the decision to choose to stay in Malung-Sälen
2. How to highlight municipal job opportunities

Figure 4.20

Prototype for attractiveness – getting young people to remain, storyboard



Picture: INN

To encourage the youth to describe what they consider important for desiring to remain in Malung-Sälen, they are invited to fill the “Malung-house”, “Lima-house” and “Sälen-house” with content. This can be done by using digital tools such as Minecraft to visualize a dream community in respectively Malung, Lima, and Sälen. Here, the differences and competitive mentality between the places can be utilized to motivate the youth to contribute.

A collaboration is established between the school, the municipality, and the business community, allowing representatives from workplaces in the municipality to visit the youth in schools to talk about the everyday life and employment opportunities. There are 222 job categories in Malung-Sälen municipality. The youth should know this. The municipality also has good experience in making digital media content about working in the municipality e.g. a promotional film about working in home services in connection with the annual announcement of summer jobs.

Figure 4.11

Prototype for attractiveness – getting young people to stay, digital storyboard in power point ¹



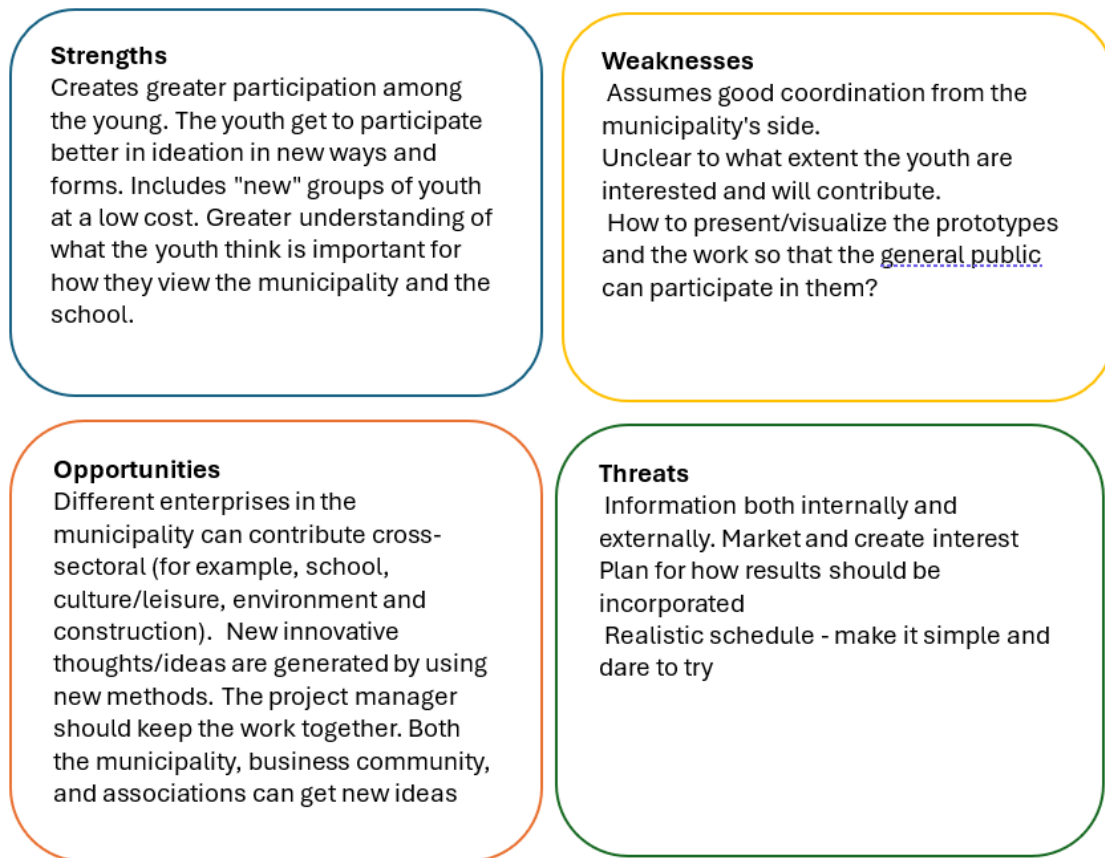
Picutre: INN

A SWOT analysis has been conducted for the initiative and the working group highlighted the following key factors:

¹ Translation of the words in the PPT's: get the youth to not move away, how to create employment - what will youth fill the house with/ writing/leadership - municipality, schools, businesses and work/I work in the municipality

Chart 4.8

SWOT-analysis Attractiveness and working to get young people to stay



The group's assessment of roles and responsibilities

The working group defined the following roles and responsibilities in connection with the realization of the initiative:

Who can contribute:

- The municipality's management group
- The companies/business community in Malung, Lima, and Sälen
- The school study advisors (possibly a project manager role)
- Labour market knowledge

Competence and recruitment - "Employer visibility in schools"

Access to competence is a challenge in Malung-Sälen. In this context, it is pointed out that many young people in the municipality choose to move away already in connection with the start of high school. The working group assumes that this early relocation results in fewer of the young people choosing to return to their home municipality because they connect at a relatively young age with other places in the region/country. In this year's high school admission, 30 students out of a total of 33 students from the municipality's northern school district have chosen to go to high school outside Malung. Only three have chosen high school in Malung. In total, about 48 percent of the young people in Malung-Sälen municipality have chosen high school in Malung. The working group's ambition is to arouse interest in remaining in Malung-Sälen in the coming years. Furthermore, the goal is to inspire young people to choose education and professions that are in demand as future occupations in the region.

The working group's idea is to create a summer camp for middle school children to both strengthen the connection with the municipality and existing professions that can inspire children and young people in their further education choices. In other words, the aim is to facilitate "playing into the chef profession", to quote an example from the idea development phase.

Employers in the municipality should contribute to the camp as an opportunity to share their knowledge. The implementation is carried out together with municipal employees. The Youth Council should also be involved in the planning of the camp.

It is crucial to ensure that the summer camp is financed, and that the business community engages in the initiative, so that more people take ownership of the recruitment challenge in the municipality. It is important that the opportunities open to young people, if they stay or return to Malung-Sälen are well known to them.

About the prototype:

The working group has created a physical prototype that both visualizes how many young people choose to go to high school in places other than Malung and how a) summer camp and, b) breakfast meetings with potential workplaces in the municipality can be initiatives that can make an education and career path in the municipality more visible and attractive for children and young people growing up in Malung-Sälen.

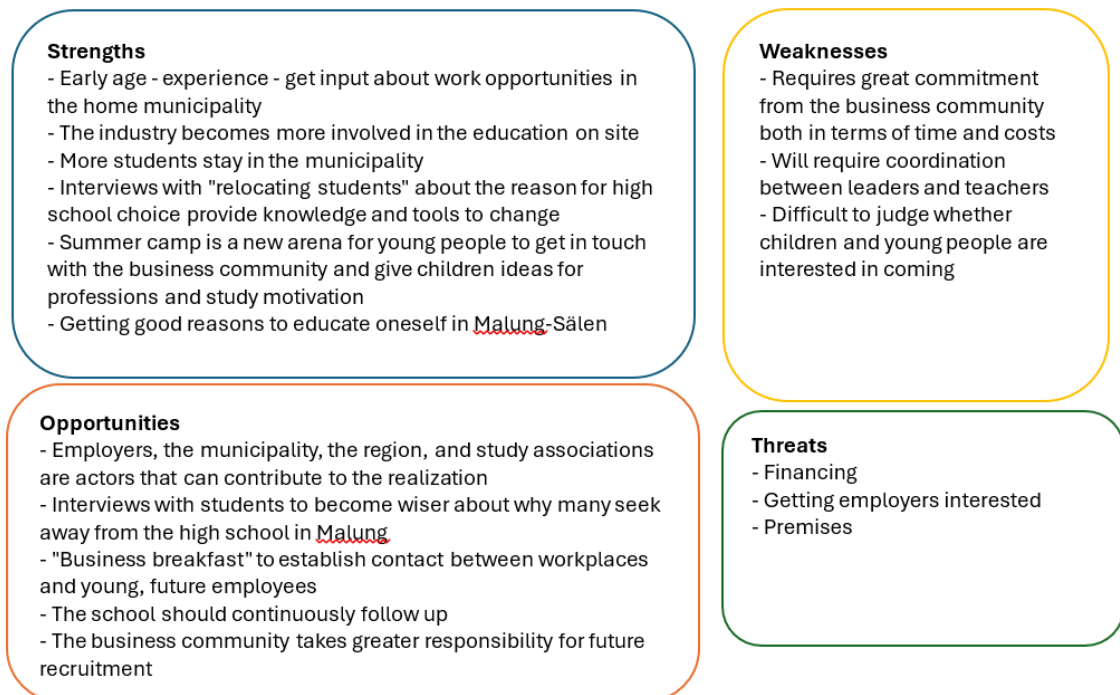
Figure 4.12
Prototype visualisation of employer visibility in schools



Picture: INN

SWOT analysis has been conducted for the initiative and the working group highlighted the following factors as key:

Chart 4.9
SWOT analyses of the prototype of the connection with professionals and schools



The groups assessment of roles and responsibilities

The working group defined the following roles and responsibilities in connection with the realisation of the initiative:

Adults:

- Parents
- Teachers and school staff
- BUN, The Committee for Children and Education

At the camp:

- The companies Malung-Lima-Sälen and the municipality
- Lindvallens restaurants

Other resources:

- Sälen's bus
- The municipality
- Autoforum
- Fiskarheden – company

4.3 Os municipality, Norway

4.3.1 Introduction and context

Os Municipality had 1,903 inhabitants in 2024 and a net migration of 44 persons in 2023, mostly immigrants from Ukraine, Lithuania, and Eritrea (Statistics Norway 2024). The area of Os is 1012 sq.km. Statistics Norway provides the municipalities with excellent statistical services, for example, the “Municipality Facts” for each municipality. Statistics Inland Norway offers additional information and statistics about the Inland County. Therefore, Os municipality was provided with a good base for future Master planning.

The municipalities in Norway have extensive responsibility over their territories, including, but not limited to welfare services, education, infrastructure, and societal development. The 356 municipalities of Norway are all political-administrative entities with equal status as autonomous bodies, grounded on a principle of municipal self-government. The municipalities are required to plan for societal development (comprehensive planning) as well as organization of public services (PBA 2008). The municipal council itself directs the planning process (PBA §3-3). Municipal planning serves as a common arena for addressing different public interests (national and regional laws, strategies, budgets, etc.) in a multi-level system of governance. The purpose of planning is to ‘promote sustainable development in the best interests of individuals, society and future generations’ (§1-1).

The Os municipality was approached after consultation and discussions with members of the planning staff of Innlandet County Authority. Os was a perfect pilot case since the municipality matched the development characteristics needed, and the municipality was planning a full revision of their Master plan in 2024. The municipalities have the responsibility of formulating strategy and policy for local development. It is to be holistic and sensitive to the local context. Therefore, the pilot testing could be of much use to Os.

From the start, we ensured the municipality’s leadership understood the special challenge of this task. Namely, to discuss the consequences of aging and depopulation and a planning situation where development had to be envisioned in a situation without population growth.

Os municipality’s mayor and CEO accepted the ‘challenge’ of being a pilot test case in December 2023 and having a small administration they seized the opportunity to bring additional expertise and knowledge into the planning process.

4.3.2 The RUPIL process of Os (process design) and the participants

Os municipality was about to revise its Master plan – the societal development part, and RUPIL was incorporated as a part of the process. Os municipality aimed to develop Os municipality as a whole society, where the local community in the different valleys was mobilized to contribute to this shared aim. It was also important to mobilize NGO and small-scale businesses including farmers and other stakeholders. Os municipality was eager to use the RUPIL process to enhance innovation for societal

development even without population growth. In March 2024, Os municipality informed the municipal council of the management and process of the planning, where RUPIL was included.

The dates for the three workshops were set in collaboration with Os municipality.

The workshops were dedicated to different innovation phases related to insight work, problem exploration, idea development, testing, and implementation.

- The first participation workshop was held on April 18 with 22 participants
- The second participation workshop was held on April 29 with 23 participants
- The third participation workshop was held on June 10 with 18 participants

All three workshops were carried out at the TOS arena in Os municipality. The municipality provided premises and catering. The municipality was also responsible for inviting participants to the workshops, and the invitations were designed in a collaboration between the municipality and the project. Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences was represented by Line Marie Tholstrup, Trude Hella Eide, and Ulla Higdem, who were responsible for the academic implementation of the workshops. Nils Håvard Dyrendal Høgseth from Innlandet County Authority participated in workshops 1 and 3.

The participants in the workshops were mainly representatives from the municipal council in Os, the municipal administration as well as representatives from the Council for persons with disabilities, the Elderly Council, Os Farmer and Smallholder Association, Dalsbygda Women's Rural Association, Rørosregionen Business Group, and Dalsbygda Community House. The invited actors constitute a broad and non-homogeneous body of participants invited to the RUPIL process, which was highly productive from an innovation perspective.

4.3.3 Experiences and results from the workshops

In the first workshop the review of development trends and status in Os municipality regarding population development, population composition, service needs, and municipal economy was presented. The facilitators presented statistics at the beginning of the workshop to enhance a collective or common understanding of the situation.

In addition to the presentation of key figures for Os municipality, time was initially spent explaining and justifying the understanding framework "realistic planning," that underlies the RURALPLAN project. It was central that the municipality and the participants related to the realistic prerequisites for the societal development of the municipality and to develop goals and strategies that were realistically adapted to these premises. An important point was that it was not only municipalities with population growth that needed development or could have development. This also applies to municipalities that do not experience population growth.

When exploring the problem, the groups discussed and derived five main challenges for Os, which are:

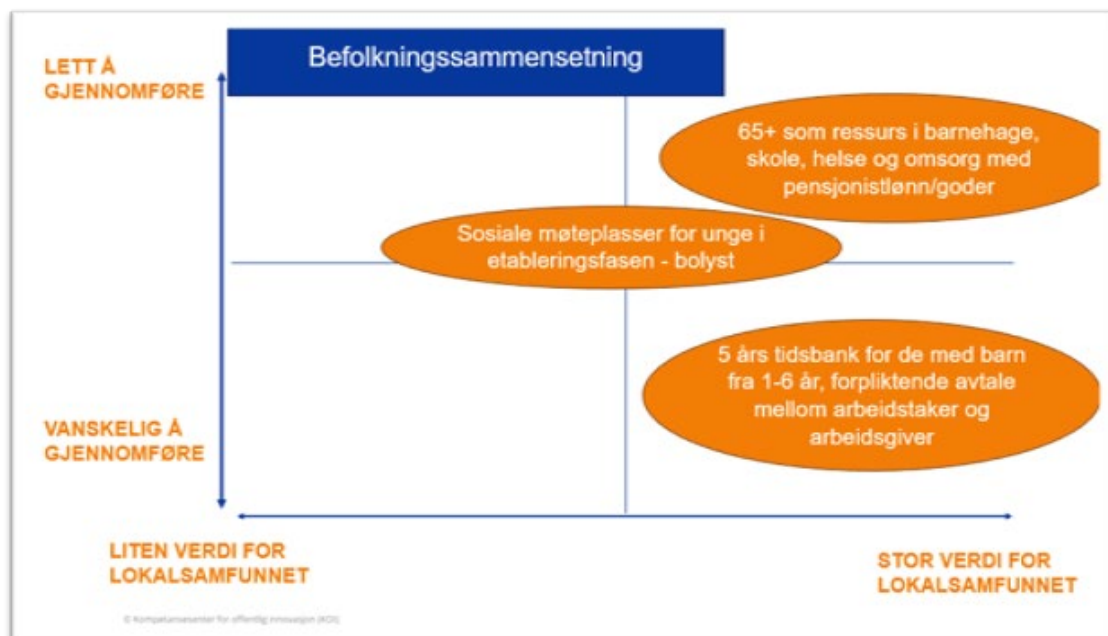
- 1) Demography and the composition of the population,
- 2) Housing and attractiveness of living (place to live),

- 3) Business,
- 4) The municipality as an organization,
- 5) Regional cooperation, and
- 6) Public health.

New groups were established when the participants chose one theme, they wanted to work further with for the idea development phase. No group was established for the topic of public health, and the theme was out of the further process.

The matrix of assessment of ideas was used (see the example below), and the groups prioritized and presented the three ideas to work further with. The interest in the theme 'The municipality as an organization, resulted in two groups.

Figure 4.13
Assessment of ideas on two parameters



Source: INN

The figure above illustrates the assessments of three ideas of solutions to the challenge of demographic composition, as one example. The first oval (up to the right) is about making use of people 65+ years as resources in kindergartens, schools, health- and care services with so-called 'pensioner wages'. This idea is regarded as easy to implement and having great value to society. The second oval from above is the idea of creating social meeting arenas/places for young people in 'the establishment phase' to enhance the attractiveness of living in Os. As illustrated, this idea was regarded as harder to implement, bearing value for society, but a bit more modest than the former idea. Finally, the oval at the bottom is the idea to create a 5-year 'time bank' for those with children from 1 -6 years old. The employer and employee

are to sign an agreement where the employee is allowed to work fewer hours than normal suitable to the employee within a 5-year period. After 5 years the employee is to work more hours for a period to compensate for the lesser hours in earlier years, as we understood it. This idea the group has assessed as easy to implement, holding great value to society.

At workshop two, each group chose one of the three ideas for further work, first describing the chosen idea in writing (conceptualization) and then working with prototyping. In Os one group chose to make a storyboard, one developed a zoning plan concept, while the remaining three groups made physical prototypes. These five prototypes were presented to the participants in the participation workshop in a café dialogue where the participants visited each other, had the prototype presented, and were given the opportunity to ask questions about the solutions. After this, the groups made changes to the prototype based on the feedback. This served as testing of the prototype.

At workshop three, it was essential for the facilitators to remind about the realistic planning ambition by repeating some central development trends in Os municipality. An introductory short repetition of the content from the first and second participation workshops took care of this.

Below we have summarized the development of each of the 4 themes, from prototyping via the SWOT analysis to the assessment of who could contribute to the realization of the solution and how, as well as who could contribute to reducing the risk associated with implementation.

As a conclusion to the final workshop, each group presented their proposed solution. Each group was asked to clarify which challenge the idea is developed to solve to ensure a clear link to the goals for community development in Os municipality.

Population composition (Demography)- social meeting arenas for young people in their establishment phase

The idea behind this prototype is to facilitate young people so they can realise their desire and opportunity to establish themselves in Os municipality by offering various housing forms and good financing schemes.

The prototype illustrates some measures on the way forward:

1. Residential courtyards are established with different types of housing and ways of living around a courtyard, everything from micro-houses to large properties. With a diversity of housing types, Os will also develop a housing market with houses in different price categories. In the proposed residential courtyard, all forms of living and family types are facilitated. Such courtyards could be facilitated not only in Os, but also in the two valleys Tufsingdalen and Dalsbygd.

2. A trial living arrangement is established where one can come and try what it is like to live in Os municipality. It will make it easier for people to accept a job in Os municipality and consider establishing themselves more permanently.
3. In the so-called allocation scheme that exists for refugees who are allocated to a municipality, there are good support schemes via the Housing Bank, where one can, for example, buy plots. In Os, there are housing plots that have been established with all the necessary infrastructure, at "a current price", without anything having been built there yet. This opportunity should be highlighted.

Figure 4.14
Prototype visualisation of social meeting places



Picture: INN

SWOT analysis has been conducted for the initiative and the working group highlighted the following factors as key:

Chart 4.10
SWOT social meeting places



The groups assessment of roles and responsibilities

The Norwegian State Housing Bank offers financing options. Entrepreneurs and private developers should share risks with the municipality in the development, land-owners are called upon to make areas available, volunteers and associations should try to include newcomers into society and strengthen their networks, also sharing local knowledge and finally the municipality is called upon to exploit their ability to manoeuvre in such issues.

Housing and attractive living environments

This group chose to prototype attractive living environments through a type of storyboard.

The main point of the prototype is that Os municipality must have good websites with well-produced digital media content about the municipality for those who want to wish to gain more information about what Os has to offer. Today, website platforms are experienced as static and somewhat boring. A follow-up responsibility must be placed with a media and PR person in the municipality.

A SWOT analysis has been conducted for the initiative and the working group highlighted the following factors as key:

Chart 4.11
SWOT-analysis Housing and attractiveness of living



The groups assessment of roles and responsibilities

The challenge is to rethink ways of living, or innovative ways of living, that will encourage young people to take a chance on living in Os. The group has proposed establishing mixed types of housing, i.e. micro houses, mini houses, and other forms of living, established in courtyard solutions that provide residents with common meeting places. These solutions and opportunities in Os must be advertised.

It will be important to listen to experiences from reference projects and from those who choose and live in alternative forms of housing today. That is, the group wants an overview of what kind of needs and desires held by young people in the establishment phase. This may include among others, returnees and potential immigrants.

To realize this solution, the group envisions bringing together stakeholders such as landowners, local businesses, local contractors involved in the construction of the solutions and infrastructure, the local bank that can contribute with tailor-made top financing - beyond the Housing Bank's offer for young people. The Housing Bank's

schemes and opportunities there must be examined more closely, also in relation to the schemes they have for special groups (refugees and others). In addition to allotment agreements (for those most disadvantaged in the housing market), there are schemes with Rent to Own, Housing Cooperative arrangements in small areas and other pilot forms that can be developed. Os municipality should be responsible for marketing these solutions.

Business development - access to business areas - Create Creative Meeting Places

This prototype was made as a draft zoning plan where new interesting business areas have been identified. The draft assumes that it is appropriate to focus on the development of the industries that already exist in Os, and that primarily among the existing private companies there are opportunities for new jobs. There are some challenges related to noise and traffic load in the outlined business areas that need to be considered.

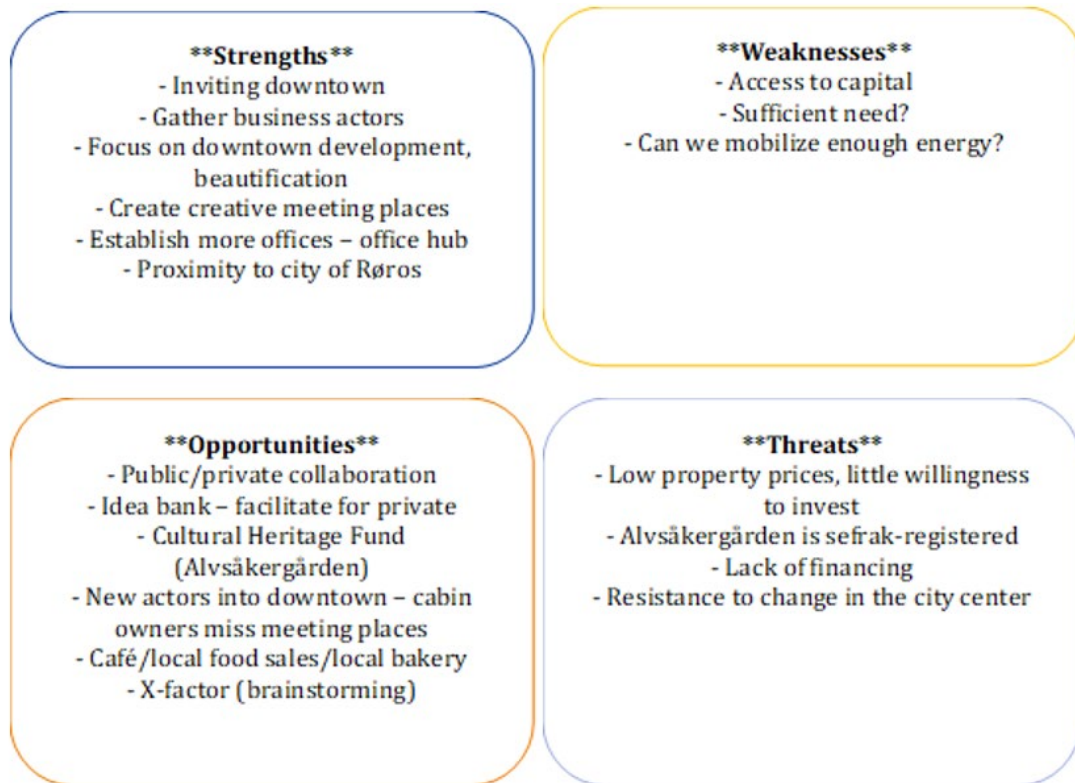
Figure 4.16
Prototype drawing business development



Picture: INN

A SWOT analysis has been conducted for the initiative and the working group highlighted the following factors as key:

Chart 4.12
SWOT Business development



The group's assessment of roles and responsibilities

The contributors to realize this idea are the property owner(s), and they should form a new cooperative organization including the municipality, the local bank, and local entrepreneurs at the site of this business area. Since there is one old building here, from before 1900, one may exploit the possibilities of financing by grant scheme for example from the cultural heritage fund. Also, there is a need for enthusiasts who believe in the concept.

The implementation challenges may be reduced by a “plan and do it” approach, using relevant advisors with experience and asking the municipality to support access to public grant schemes for older buildings.

The municipality as an organization

The story in this prototype is to go from today's grey situation (before), where much is difficult, the municipal cash flow is almost empty and there is a risk of ending up

on the ROBEEK-list (this is a Register of those who are Banned on New Loans), maintained by the national government. Being on the ROBEEK list means the municipality or county needs approval from the state for decisions that affect its economic situation) and over to a situation where the municipality as an organization and the inhabitants meet on common arenas to develop things together (after).

This is founded on the so-called “heat pump principle - 1Kw in 4 Kw out”, i.e., what you invest in common solutions, you will get back in abundance. The municipality thus goes from ‘a grey past’ to a blooming future in this way keywords are ownership, unity, joy of creation, colourful inhabitants, and where the municipal treasury is not so depleted as today. The prototype illustrates some measures on the way forward:

1) Pensioner Company AS. This could be a private establishment of a company (AS), or a private/public collaboration where pensioners can perform work that is needed either on a pensioner’s salary, or with better pay from an AS. The AS would have to coordinate the work needed.

2) House hosts. This is a concept for, for example, kindergartens and nursing homes, where the tasks can be setting the table, serving food, talking, playing games, going for walks, etc. A house host can also function as a work trial opportunity for people who are not in the workforce, but who would like to be.

3) The municipality must develop collaboration arenas that can contribute with resources towards different solutions for Os’s community.

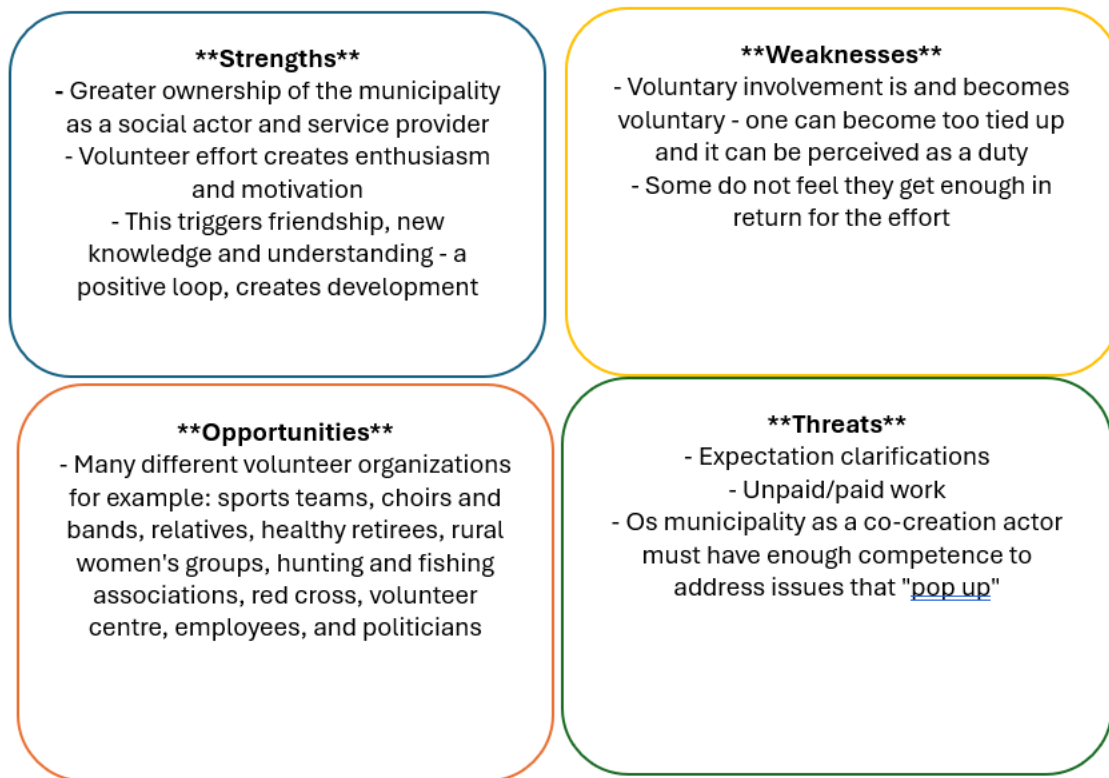
Figure 4.17
Prototype visualisation municipality as an organisation, the future Os



Picture: INN

A SWOT analysis has been conducted for the initiative and the working group highlighted the following factors as key:

Chart 4.13
SWOT-analysis Co- creation



The group's assessment of roles and responsibilities

Municipal council and administration can contribute to the realization of initiatives by allocating resources for mapping and planning, and the coordination of the right resources in the right place.

The Volunteer Centre (Frivillighetssentralen): will play a key role in having an overview to ensure the coordination of volunteers, teams, and organizations.

Establish a volunteer network: Where parts of, for example, the Volunteer Centre can participate in gathering new ideas and new knowledge.

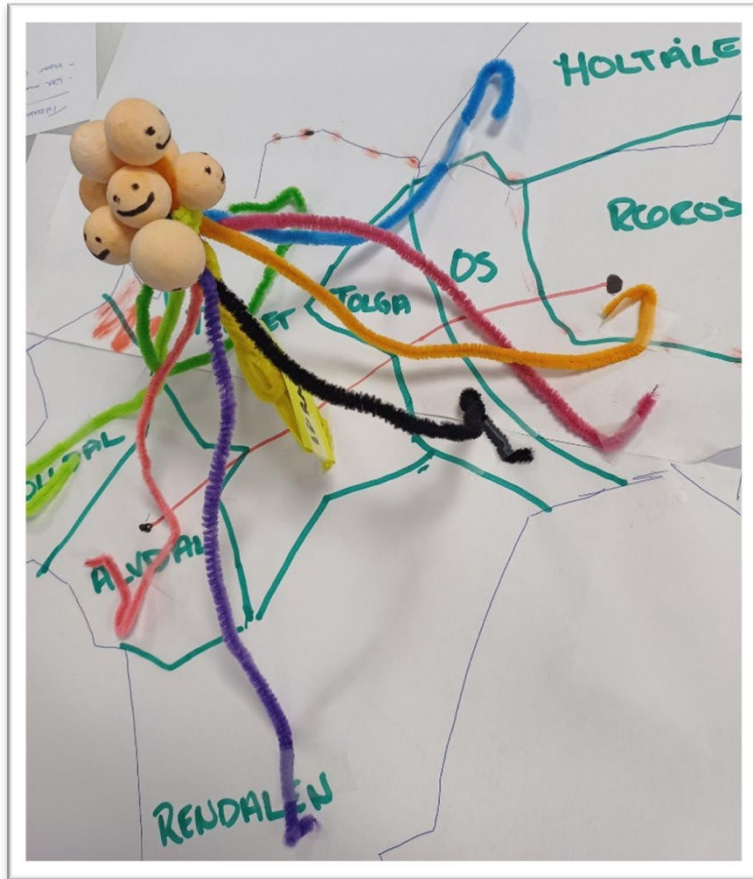
Regional cooperation

This prototype showcases the establishment of a Joint Youth Council for the entire Nord-Østerdal region (Tolga, Os, Tolga, Tynset, Folldal, Alvdal, Rendalen (Innlandet) and Røros and Holtålen (Trøndelag)). The Youth Council should be linked to the "mayor's bench" in the inter-municipal political council in Nord-Østerdalen, which is the cooperation body between the municipalities Os, Tolga, Tynset, Folldal, Alvdal and Rendalen, as well as Innlandet County Municipality.

The purpose of the Youth Council is to offer young people the arena and opportunity to think regionally and not just from a municipal perspective. That is, the desire for the future development becomes "a larger regional us" and to lowers the municipal

borders in practice. It is the young people who are the future of the region and who could think about planning in this way.

Figure 4.38
Prototype visualisation the Regional Youth Council



Picture: INN

A SWOT analysis has been conducted for the initiative and the working group highlighted the following factors as key:

Chart 4.14
SWOT Regional Youth Council



The groups assessment of roles and responsibilities

The actors needed to realize this idea are the municipality, local youth councils, teams and associations, high schools/junior high schools (suggest that young people become part of the council), public health nurses, youth clubs, county municipalities (participate in the investment), youth parties, political leadership (anchoring, coordination of meetings).

Some of the tasks are: how to realize the idea to think holistically (We in this area), Creating a feasibility analysis - how can this be done in an efficient/good way? The Council members should be responsible for giving feedback to the municipalities and the city council. There must be a secretary who should be an adult contact from a municipality (rotate this role). There is a need to anchor this in the municipalities, everyone must desire to invest in this/contribute towards the funding.

Who can help in acting and reducing the conditions that threaten the implementation of the idea, is it the county municipality that must be a party that can help us think locally and provide an economic carrot?

5 From workshop results to strategies in planning

The test period of RUPIL in this targeted analysis had to be rather short and set within a timeframe that could more or less be adapted to the actual planning context. Therefore, each pilot case did not have sufficient time for full-scale development of strategies, which is normally a part of societal planning. To further enrich the discussion, we suggest more comprehensive strategies for each case, building on the pilot's ideas, concepts, and prototypes, as well as assessing the results related to each planning context. Hence, these suggestions are those of the research and facilitator team's analysis and elaborations.

5.1 Albula, Switzerland

In the Albula region we find a "rich" environment of strategies and planning initiatives that were elaborated in recent years, that build on each other and are inter-linked. Concerning the RUPIL workshops the following concepts are to be mentioned. At the end of 2021, the region elaborated a participatory "*regional spatial concept* (regionales Raumkonzept)" that involved political authorities, the population as well as related institutions. The "regional spatial concept" serves as a compass for the spatial development of the region up to the year 2040. This concept not only deals with spatial planning issues in the narrow sense, but also addresses social, economic, and environmental issues.

The results of the spatial concept provide a point of orientation for sustainable spatial development. They should be incorporated into as many plans as possible, for example in the ongoing revision of the "*regional structure plan* (Regionaler Richtplan)", which is a plan that focuses on determining spatial development principles and coordinating spatially relevant activities according to the cantonal plan.

The most recent project on strategic planning that the region has been involved in is the revision of the "*regional location development strategy* (Standortentwicklungsstrategie)" last updated in 2019. This initiative amends the above-mentioned "*regional, spatial concept*" with institutional, organizational and financial issues, and builds on the results of all the previous strategies mentioned above. The regional authorities are interested in coupling our RURALPLAN with the "regional location development strategy". This means taking up defined measures and the achieved results of preceding strategic activities as a common ground and then, as a new element, searching for synergies and potentials between the Albula region and the surrounding regional centres in terms of services of general interest. In this way the intrinsic assumption of the new regional policy – one of the main Swiss instruments for reducing territorial disparities – is that regional centres serving as engines of local and regional development can be checked and better put into practice. Consequently, commuters have been a particular focus addressed in the RUPIL workshops to integrate their perspective from outside. The output of the RUPIL process contributes to the "regional location development strategy" and depicts in which fields

and in which manner the region will cooperate with the surrounding regional centres. The "regional location development strategy" is a synthesis of several existing sectoral strategies and can be seen as a coherent and holistic lens, to see how future socio-demographic and economic challenges in the Albula region and surrounding regional centres can be tackled.

The proposed measures within the RUPIL process move in two strategic directions that perfectly dovetail into the "regional location development strategy":

- 1. To improve the exploitation of the region's potential for immigration, by improving the housing supply and by optimizing the residential attractiveness for the local population and for newcomers.**

Under this point we include the «prototype 1 housing policy to create new opportunities to live in the Albula region». Despite good commuting opportunities we should not forget that the Albula region hosts a rich fabric of SMEs, and if they become more attractive as an employer this also contributes to the residential attractiveness of the Albula region (Prototype 2 attractive employers). Finally, the cultural and social aspect is decisive for a region to become a place to live and work (Prototype 4 creative meeting places and cultural development).

- 2. Maintaining local supply functions in the Albula Valley and Surses, despite a thinned-out active population and centralization pressure.**

The prototyping in the field of health services (prototype 3 'improve health services') showed that solutions shall be sought beyond the local and regional context. Synergies with the services of surrounding regions and regional centres should be sought (prototype figure 4.3). Furthermore, it must be mentioned that tourism is also a great supporter of services of general interest. This is why investments in the tourism sector also improve the service availability in each region (Prototype 5 'create opportunities for the local economy and in the supply of daily goods').

5.2 Malung-Sälen, Sweden

The workshops in the RURALPLAN process have been about finding important areas to deal with in connection with the work on the "overview planning" in Malung-Sälen municipality, but also to develop strategies and measures for Malung-Sälen's overarching Målbild (vision or goal).

Målbild 2027 and the overview planning constitute central management documents for Malung-Sälen, where the municipality is the planning authority and has the role of being a democratic body and policy maker, a community developer, and a service provider. We focused on a 'realistic planning model' where the probable

demographic development for the municipality is the basis. At the same time, we emphasized that community development is not dependent on population growth and that it is necessary to think anew about how society can develop, what roles the municipality as an organization might have, and how the politicians, inhabitants, businesses, teams, and associations can enter into new constellations, collaborations, and activities. Our starting point has also been that those who live and work in the municipality have the best prerequisites both for defining what the good life in Malung-Sälen will consist of and what strategies and measures it may be useful upon which to focus. Such a line of thought is part of a strategic and innovative bottom-up planning form.

The workshops carried out in Malung-Sälen proposed a selection of prioritized strategic proposals for measures and actions, including which actors can contribute to their realization. The strategic initiatives have been selected as being significant for the development of Malung-Sälen, and thus provide good suggestions for strategies, follow-up actions, and the concretization of Målbild 2027, but can also be interesting for the forthcoming planned work on overview planning - such as infrastructure strategies. The assessments of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats also provide valuable insight into the challenging portrayal of the individual strategies. It is the Malung-Sälen municipal council that is responsible for the work with the target goals, namely the overview planning, the financial plan, and the action program, and thus charged with makes the final strategic decisions.

We have suggested the new strategies below based on the material of Malung-Sälen:

1. Health and care services in collaboration

In this strategy, which could perhaps be called "Vård- och omsorgstjänster i samverkan" in Swedish, where the municipality to a much greater extent than today collaborates with the local community provision of good services, but also enters closer cooperation with the region and the services offered there. In addition, there is the measure called "Senior power", which is a new and broadly composed offer for elderly residents as 'help for self-help' to maintain functions, activity, and well-being. The purpose is to support residents in their third age with a life characterised by a high degree of quality and the postponement of the need for municipal health and care services among pensioners. This relies on professional support for good choices to promote physical and mental health.

The third central point is to look for opportunities to "Use the staff in the services more flexibly" than today.

2. Malung-Sälen's improved infrastructure

This strategy includes areas already being actively worked on, and which probably also enter the overview planning, and will become more clearly visible in a new goal in the longer term. Improving Malung-Sälen's infrastructure is about the following:

- a) Introduce 'Bädd päng' (Bed-money)
- b) Bus Sälen and bus connections to the west

- c) Passenger traffic on the railway to Norway
- d) Passenger traffic on the railway

Figure 5.1
The Västerdalen railway



Källa: Trafikutredning av Västerdalsbanan, Trafikverket 2012.

Source: The Swedish Transport Administration 2012

The purpose of 'Bädd päng' is to establish a good financial basis model that can contribute to the financing of collective efforts that also benefit the business sector, such as reintroducing passenger traffic on the Västerdalsbanan railway (see figure 5.1). This will also require other investments, grants from funds, and EU funds for realization.

3. Lively town centre

In the suggested strategy 'a Lively town centre' (Levande centrum), we include these sub-points:

- a) Make Malung's gym attractive for young people (see next point),
- b) Make the town centre nice, welcoming and contribute to the attractiveness of establishing offices and shops,
- c) Develop meeting places, market activities, and experiences, and create positive advertising for the places.

This strategy may also include projects and ideas where the business community, voluntary organizations, youth, and the municipality can cooperate.

4. Strengthening skills and competence by getting young people to live, work, and function in Malung-Sälen

Several initiatives are connected to form this strategy, which includes, contributing to Malung's Gymnasium being an attractive school choice for the municipality's young people, educating relevant labour locally, getting employers out to young

people, and mobilizing the municipality's young inhabitants to share their views on what places like Malung, Lima and Sälen should contain that is attractive to young people. Within this strategy, many relevant suggestions and assessments on how the municipality may invite young people to describe how they perceive what the good life in Malung-Sälen will contain, and not least how the municipality can showcase all possible manner of job opportunities for the municipality's youth.

Also Included are suggestions for summer camp and breakfast meetings with possible workplaces as measures to make education and career path within the municipality more visible and attractive for children and young people who have grown up there.

5.3 Os, Norway

The workshops in the RUPIL process have been about finding important areas to address in the social part of the municipal plan, where Os municipality is the planning authority and has the role of a democratic body and policy maker, community developer, and service provider. We have focused on a "realistic planning model", where the likely demographic development for the municipality is assumed, and the municipality relates to the challenges this development brings. At the same time, we have emphasized that the development of the municipal society is not dependent on population growth, which implies it is necessary to rethink how the society can develop, what roles the municipality as an organization can have, and also that politicians, residents, businesses, teams, and associations can enter into new constellations, collaborations, and activities. Our starting point has been that those who live and work in the municipality are in possession of the best prerequisites for defining what the good life in Os might be, and what strategies and measures can be used to achieve this goal. Such a mindset is part of a strategic and innovative bottom-up form of planning.

The three participatory workshops that have been conducted in Os have provided a selection of prioritized strategic efforts with many suggestions for measures and actions, including an assessment of which actors can contribute to the realization of these. We consider the strategic efforts to be of great importance for the development of Os, and as such provide good suggestions for strategies, but also for the action part of the municipal plan. The assessments of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats also offer good insights into the challenging picture encountered in the individual strategies. Some of the measures are directly area-oriented and will require more concrete area planning follow-up before realization. It is the municipal council that is responsible for the work with the action part of the municipal plan, and which also prioritizes, adjusts, and adopts.

As a summary, we suggest these new strategies based on the proposals that have emerged:

1. The Future Os Municipality - the cooperative municipality

This provides a good description of what this contains and what actions may be important to develop a flourishing future and good lives in Os. The keywords are ownership, unity, co-creation and joy of creation. In addition, the other strategies below also contain measures that also seek to concretize possible municipal cooperative roles in the future.

2. A Diverse and Inclusive Society

Under this point, we include both housing and the desire to live in Os through attractive and especially varied housing forms and housing areas that facilitate inclusion and community. The varied forms of housing make it attractive to live in Os, regardless of life stage and situation.

- a) Housing and desire to live in attractive housing areas and residential environments
- b) Social meeting places for young people in the establishment phase, which also includes various housing courtyard solutions.

3. Os is part of a larger regional “we”

In the larger regional “we”, several different regional collaborations are included, often across county borders, in the entire North-Østerdal region. The purpose is both identity and ownership, but also solving specific challenges. Os already has many inter-municipal forms of cooperation. The challenge here is to increase young people participation on the team in the big “we”. There are several measures, including: A Joint Youth Council for the North-Østerdal region, called RUR (Regionalt Ungdomsråd, Regional Youths’ Council).

4. Creative meeting places and downtown development for business development

The business development strategy takes existing businesses as a starting point and aims to establish creative meeting places, office hubs and develop areas and buildings in the city centre.

5.3.1 What about the goals for the Os community?

Goals have been discussed through the work with the individual strategies and efforts, such as “The good life in Os”, or “A diverse and inclusive society”. Of course, it will be up to Os municipality to discuss how this should be formulated. There will always be people who choose to live outside the cities. A municipality that facilitates diversity, inclusion, and flexible solutions for housing and work will also offer many opportunities.

The Norwegian Planning and Building Act § 11-2 says:

“The social part of the municipal plan should address long-term challenges, goals and strategies for the municipal community as a whole and the municipality as an organization. It should contain a description and assessment of alternative strategies for development in the municipality.

The social part of the municipal plan should be the basis for the sectors’ plans and activities in the municipality. It should provide guidelines for how the municipality’s own goals and strategies should be implemented in municipal activities and by participation from other public bodies and private.

Municipal sub-plans for themes or areas of activity should have an action part that indicates how the plan will be followed up the next four years or more. The action part should be revised annually.”

Our understanding is that the work done in the participatory workshops has helped to provide content to the law’s intention and to the municipal strategic and societal planning of Os.

6 Discussion of the experiences derived from the three cases

Analysis of what can be learnt from an evaluation of the cases.

6.1 The model

The three pilots tested were situated in three countries with different institutional settings regarding planning authorities and systems. The Swedish and Swiss pilots implemented RUPIL in a modified version over two long days, while the Norwegian case was carried out in the original version. The evaluation does not indicate any differences in the satisfaction of the participatory and innovative process of RUPIL. The evaluation and our assessment suggest the RUPIL model provides for close collaboration, participatory activity, concrete, and realistic discussions on possible future solutions within prioritized themes.

An overwhelming majority of participants in the pilot processes, responded positively to how the work was done, co-learning and co-creation were highly valued, and especially the diverse composition of actors working together was appreciated:



It has contributed positive to the climate of cooperation in the municipal council – something happens when you build Lego together! The workshops have also contributed to strengthening the relationship between politicians and administration. It has been an effect that the municipality had not thought of, but which we can see now”

Municipal leadership in Os, Norway

And:



Good with the workshops, they provide opportunities to meet different types of actors that we do not meet daily, for new meetings and dialogues”.

Municipal leadership in Malung-Sälen, Sweden

And:



Stakeholders from regional administrations, agriculture, commuters, second homes and health institutions were involved. Very good group dynamics!”

Leadership in Albula, Switzerland

However, some respondents reflected on how to include an even broader range of participants in the process, such as associations and businesses or politicians, regarding context. This indicates how thorough and well-designed the composition of participants must be, and the amount of time needed to inform, invite, persuade, and prepare relevant actors (and society) for the coming RUPIL activities. It is however important to remember that people living in small places often fill multiple roles, which means that more interests are represented in a meeting than the number of people participating in the process.

How to design the process (including the composition of actors) is context-dependent and must be done in close collaboration with the planning units, and authorities. We have learned that the initial phase of the collaboration should have been allocated more time than we had for the pilot cases. With additional time available a more in-depth discussion of topics will be possible, but this must be paired with a good reflection on the composition of the group because not all participants have the specific know-how needed to achieve this end.

Small rural municipalities and sub-regional cooperation, as Albula, most often have a very lean administration (MacMaster 2023), often weak on planning competence, capacities, or both. In the three pilots the project 'Lent a hand', provided competence and facilitation skills in the planning processes, and could relieve the authorities from some of their demanding tasks. The RUPIL process is a bottom-up approach and provides concrete ideas for implementation in its prototyping phase. To assure a strategic embedding of these ideas (see also Chapter 5 "from workshop results to strategies"), enough time must be anticipated and allocated in the final stages for creation and sharing, also involving politicians and regional coordinators.

Some respondents address the importance of political anchorage for implementation if the strategies and measures are to become a reality. This is a vital question, which is discussed further, and related to the different contexts, in the final report.

6.2 The revised RUPIL

The model 'Rural Planning and Innovation Lab' is designed to support local master/strategic planning to create innovative responses for development in rural areas facing demographic challenges and /or shrinking.

Throughout the RURALPLAN project, we have accumulated insights into the efficacy of the RUPIL model and identified areas requiring adjustments, enhancements, and modifications, bearing in mind the goals of the model and transdisciplinary approach addressed in Chapter 2.2.

Importantly, any improvements to the model must still be feasible within the three-day framework, with the possibility that it can be extended. The revised RUPIL

version, illustrated in Figure 6.1, represents the *pedagogical* version developed to be communicated to the field of practice to better illustrate:

- a) the territorial and strategic planning context,
- b) to visualize the iterative process,
- c) to split one phase of the tested model into two manageable parts, and
- d) the accompanying Toolbox is an integrated part of the model, easily accessible in the web version by clicking on the boxes in the illustration, describing each phase.

The *analytical* revised RUPIL model is presented in the Final Report.

The RUPIL model and the accompanying Toolbox aims to be self-instructive, that is to be of use for rural planning authorities experiencing demographic challenges.

Facilitating a RUPIL process necessitates a specific level of process and planning competence. Process management involves the meticulous planning and execution of a process to achieve the desired outcomes. It entails creating an environment conducive to dialogue, enabling participants to leverage their resources to address the challenges they encounter. Establishing a secure framework that fosters participation, ownership, and commitment is essential. However, practical experience remains the most effective means of becoming a proficient facilitator.

Phases 1 and 2 involve the presentation of the case municipality/region, the current planning processes, and the framework underpinning these processes. Participants found it beneficial to gain an overview of their municipality/region's situation, recognizing that their circumstances are not unique, but rather part of a broader European trend of ageing and depopulation. During these initial phases, to create a knowledge-based and realistic approach, it is crucial to establish a shared understanding of a realistic planning approach grounded in the factual context of the case municipality/region. The demographic changes must not be trivialised but taken seriously and integrated in all relevant parts of the planning process; and it must be discussed how the community will deal with these changes. It is evident that this aspect could have been underlined more strongly from the facilitators' point of view. Shifting away from the traditional growth paradigm towards more realistic expectations, where development is understood more broadly than population growth, is a challenging conceptual shift. More time should be allocated to prepare participants for this paradigm shift.

Phase 3, gaining insight, focuses on establishing a comprehensive understanding of a problem and identifying previously unrecognized connections. It is therefore essential to engage a diverse array of citizens, business actors, volunteers, politicians, and other stakeholders to contribute varied perspectives and insights, and to participate in and contribute to the resolution of these issues. We recognize the necessity of dedicating more time to the invitation process for workshop participants and in so doing, ensuring the assembly of a broad and representative panel. This

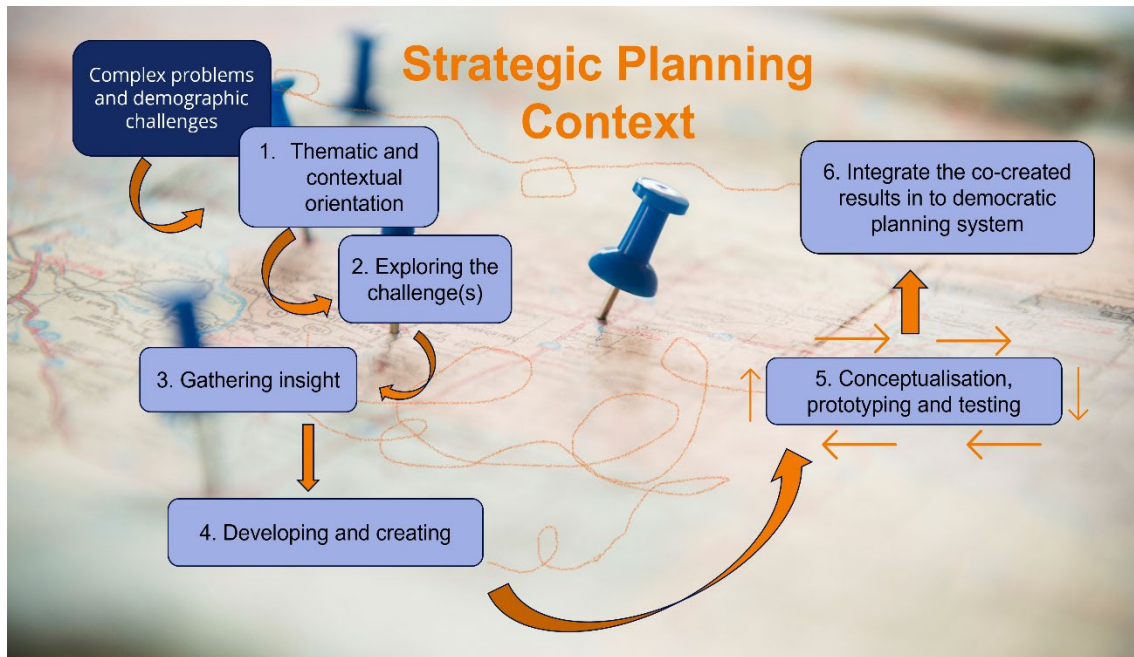
contributes to engaging social actors in planning and enhances new roles for participating politicians.

Originally, **phase 4** encompassed the development of ideas, conceptualization, prototyping, and testing. Given the numerous elements involved, we have decided to divide this phase into two distinct phases for clarity. In the revised RUPIL model, phase 4 will focus on development and creation, while **phase 5** will encompass conceptualization, prototyping, and testing.

We have also learned that it is crucial to elucidate the iterative process involved in phase 5. The prototypes must undergo multiple rounds of testing and refinement before they can be incorporated into the political planning process in **phase 6**. If RUPIL is a part of a comprehensive planning process, all ideas should be recorded, as a point of reference to enhance further development. In a comprehensive strategic planning process framed within the RUPIL process, this enables more ideas to be developed fully (as prototypes), before entering **phase 6**.

The RUPIL model and process are framed within a strategic planning context, and the result is its integration into a democratic and political planning proposal, relevant to most contexts. RUPIL may be applied as a main approach to seek and develop innovative strategies and solutions in the planning process, or as a vital part of the process itself. The actual planning authority, either on the local, sub-regional, or regional level must ensure the legitimacy of the process before starting with RUPIL. The planning authority should also decide how the results of RUPIL should be integrated into the ordinary governmental procedure of the planning activity, providing democratic legitimacy; as well as ensuring legal and formal confirmation on collaborative activities and the government's commitment to collaborating governmental bodies at different levels, interests, and actors by an action program. This we call the governance of planning.

Figure 6.1
The revised pedagogical RUPIL



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6.3 Strategies

In this section, we suggest vital areas upon which local and regional policymakers should consider focusing, in order to enhance rural areas facing demographic challenges to become as inclusive, and resilient, providing opportunities for quality of life as satisfactorily as possible. We of course propose this based on the pilot testing study. Our recommendation of focused areas is derived from a limited study of three pilot cases. However, we must remind the reader of the three cases and their differences within the overall problem description, which provides contextual variety.

In the final report of RURALPLAN, we discuss innovative planning and innovation in more depth. Even so, we will here underline how it is defined in this study where *innovative planning is mainly concerned with systematic, territorial, societal, and co-produced change, which breaks with established practices and seeks to legitimize new social objectives or effect a major reprioritization of existing objectives.* (Hagen & Higdem 2020 a, 5).

To enhance place-based, democratic, and participatory innovative planning, we recognize that what is innovative in a way that challenges break with established practices or seeks new social objectives, will differ between contexts. Hence, it is *where* the innovation (goal, strategy, policy, measure) happens that is important, not if a similar phenomenon has occurred before in another context. Consequently, the idea of “borrowing”, or getting inspired by ideas for subsequently adapting them to other and new contexts, is innovation.

It is interesting to note common strategies that appear for planning and future strategic work to deal with relevant challenges posed by demographic issues, regardless of context. However, these common pathways have context-related ideas attached, and it is often there we find innovative initiatives and ideas. Overall, the strategies derived from each pilot case are divided into three main categories:

a) Strategies related to the concepts of living good lives, b) strategies directed at dealing with demographic change, including shifts in resource allocation for public services and investments, and c) strategies that aim at counteracting the current development. Some strategies may be associated with more than one category above. None of the three cases see shrinking or demographic change as an opportunity, except the idea of drawing on the pensioners as a resource for the local communities.

The specific strategies in the three cases are described and explained earlier in the report. Seen together they point to a direction where strategies to deal with shrinking rural areas should put emphasis upon and direct attention to the following themes and issues:

- The young local inhabitants, especially between approximately 15 years old (upper secondary school) and the beginning of their 30s (the establishment phase). This includes motivation, information, and matching local job opportunities with young people. This is also important to meet the needs of local businesses, services, and governments for labor (see the point on “local labor market below). The need for new, diverse, and affordable housing with inclusive social meeting places is central. Examples of innovative solutions from the cases include “Kennenlernetage” (get-to-know-days) and initiatives to bring together possible employees and employers through digital platforms or summer camps for young people. In these ways, youths meet businesses and the public sector’s workplaces and possibilities. Also, a regional Youth council may contribute to advancing strategies in this area.
- The elderly local inhabitants, from the age of retirement. This focus includes adapted and social housing in inclusive housing areas, social meeting places and housing between generations, prevention of health problems, and drawing upon pensioners as resources in local services, and cultural and social life. These measures can in many cases be advantageously combined. Examples of innovative solutions from the cases include initiatives such as “Senior Power”, pensioner companies, and pensioners as “House Hosts” in kindergartens or nursing homes. Another example is to create a variety of housing from micro to macro sizes in residential courtyards, to include all types of citizenship, and to create social arenas.
- Local labor market. Strengthening the local labor market is crucial for enabling businesses and governments to fulfill their tasks and to enhance further development. Such focus includes information and the motivation of youth (see also above), meeting places/fairs, and establishment of regional services, to provide a wider offer to inhabitants and employees. Examples of innovative solutions from the cases include new forms of regional market

days, the establishment of an Interregional Health Centre, business areas and hubs, co-location in local centers and new arenas between inhabitants' businesses and cultural activities.

- Cooperation, new roles and tasks. Most measures do require and are best solved, through cooperation between several actors. This may require actors to take on new roles and tasks and to share responsibility in new ways. Included are municipalities or regions to share implementation of social services, finance, and plan housing in new ways, and pensioners to take responsibility for services, social and cultural services. We have already given some examples of innovative solutions from the case studies above. However, we will underline the overall strategy for the municipality in one case, called “The Cooperative Municipality”, where the municipality finds and establishes collaborative arenas to contribute to developing and executing collective solutions in new ways. Digital platforms for promoting regional offers and cooperation among citizens. This strategy of creating new (forms of) meeting places and cultural development involves cooperation between different cultural associations, where the goal is “the lively valley”. It includes the establishment of a volunteer network and denominating a coordinator key role for the overview and coordination of volunteers, teams, and organizations.
- Break with “frozen” frameworks. Several measures do require solutions that do not fit into existing frameworks and traditions. Includes living arrangements that do not fit into existing planning regulations and rural traditions, the importing of ideas from other places, and new ways of financing service and infrastructure. Examples of innovative solutions from the case studies include “Bed Money” alternative to tourist tax, which is an innovative way to co-finance projects. In this case, the money is allocated to finance public train transport, new forms of financing affordable housing (collective solutions), new ways of planning areas for micro-to macro housing where financing is undertaken in collaboration between public and private parties.

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