

BEYOND THE CITY LIGHTS: A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING DIGITAL NOMADISM IN RURAL AREAS WITH A FOCUS ON YOUTH WORK



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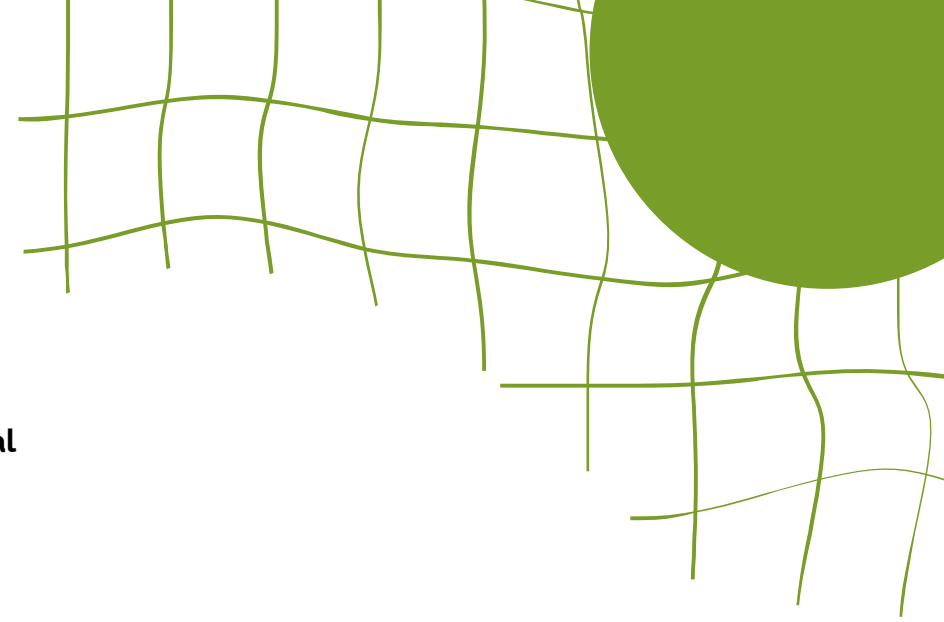


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PROLOGUE

Hello! Welcome to a world where rural areas are bustling with activity, where cafés and coworking spaces are vibrant, full of people from all over the globe, and where the local economy of your rural area is thriving thanks to the influx of digital nomads. Does it sound like utopia? Is this just fantasy? No, this is the future that is possible. This guidebook has been created to show you how to make it a reality.

This practical guidebook provides you with the necessary tools and resources to create a welcoming environment for digital nomads. You will learn how to market your community to digital nomads, provide them with the amenities and services they need, build a vibrant community of remote workers, and make your initiative thrive and last in time.



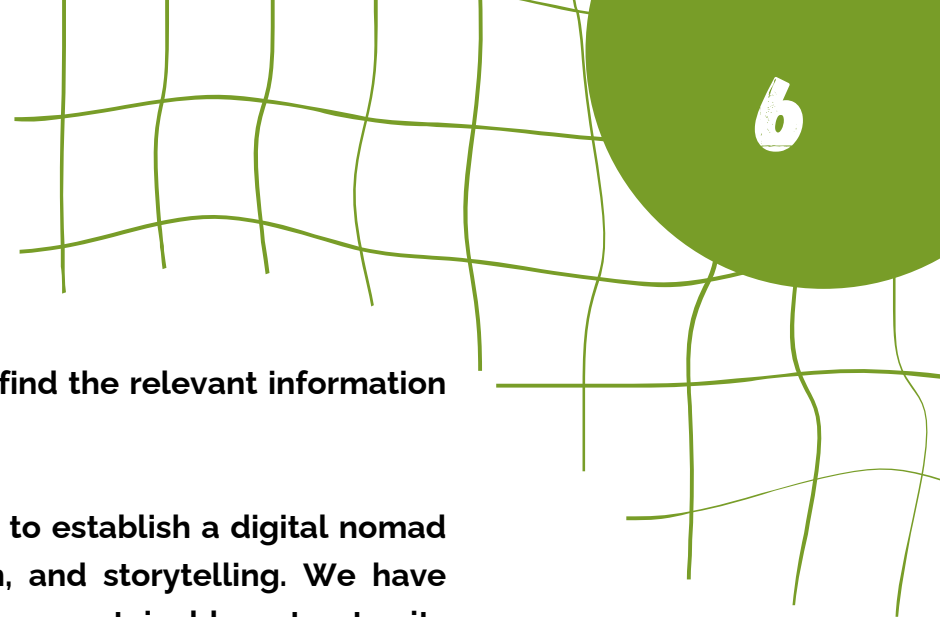
Whether you are a local government official, an entrepreneur, a young person who is committed to changing the world, a community leader or a youth worker, this guidebook is for you. Together, we can create a world where rural areas flourish thanks to the presence of digital nomads, and not threatened by the outmigration.

The digital nomad lifestyle is becoming increasingly popular as more and more people realise that they can travel the world while working online, from anywhere, with a well-performing internet connection. Digital nomads are typically highly skilled and educated and have a disposable income that they are willing to spend in the communities they visit if their experience is meaningful. Rural areas have a lot to offer digital nomads, including affordable housing, stunning scenery, and a slower pace of life.





PROLOGUE



This guidebook is organized into three chapters, making it easy to read and find the relevant information you need.

CHAPTER 1: A GUIDE TO INDIVIDUAL AREAS will teach you establishing how to establish a digital nomad retreat, covering important topics such as infrastructure, content creation, and storytelling. We have shared our insights on the value of youth work and advice to develop a sustainable retreat, its environmental footprint and social impact. Karin, your fictional guide, will walk you through the needs and wishes of digital nomads.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT THE YOUTH SECTOR CAN DO focuses on the strategy that youth organizations and youth workers can take to support digital nomads. It adds value and complements the EU Youth Strategy for the validation and development of youth workers all across Europe.

CHAPTER 3: WHERE TO GET FINANCING explores sustainable financial opportunities to establish a retreat or start a business venture in rural areas.

If you want to learn more about attracting digital nomads to your community, please read on.



CHAPTER 1: A GUIDE TO INDIVIDUAL AREAS

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RETREAT, COLIVING OR ANYTHING ELSE

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Dear reader!

In the following chapter, you will learn about taking your first steps towards attracting young digital nomads to your area! By following Karin's (your (fictional) guide) instructions, you will learn the needs and wishes of the digital nomads who want to live in the countryside. Karin will guide you step by step into the world of digital nomads. You will learn about different aspects of establishing a digital nomads retreat, for instance, infrastructure and activities, among other important aspects.

"Hi! My name is Karin, and I am thrilled that you are ready to embark on the journey to establish a retreat in the countryside for digital nomads with me! But first, let me tell you my story: after finishing university studies, I realised I had had enough of stressful city life. I needed something else, not just sitting in coffee bars, shopping and wasting my time stuck in permanent traffic jams or commuting! I decided to discover myself further, move to the countryside, back to my roots, where I found peace and tranquillity.

Are you interested in learning how I made it and what I learned on my journey? Come with me! I will help you understand the world of digital nomads and lead your first retreat in the countryside! "





STEP 0: RETREAT OR COLIVING?

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Before you start working on attracting digital nomads to your area, you may want to consider what type of place you want (or can) establish in your area. Basically, there are (at least) 2 options, either a retreat or a coliving.

RETREAT

A digital nomad retreat is a curated experience where digital nomads can come together to work, learn, and socialise. These retreats typically offer coworking spaces, workshops, and activities to help remote workers connect and network with one another. They may also provide accommodation, meals, and other amenities to make the experience comfortable.

A retreat is a normally short-term shared living experience and, therefore, easier to organise than providing a coliving space experience.



COLIVING

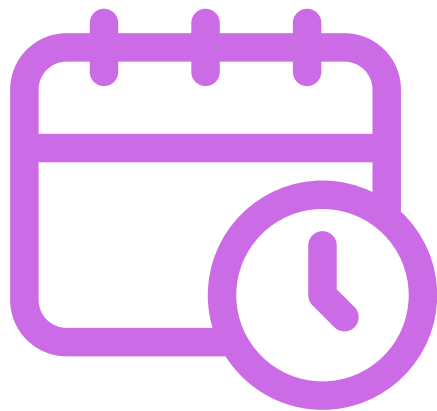
Coliving is a modern form of shared housing with other like-minded people. A strong community is a key to this concept, as it's not just about sleeping and working but also enjoying free time together, discussing interesting matters and social belonging.





STEP 1: DATE & TIMEFRAME

Before planning any activities, it is essential to carefully consider the retreat's date, timeframe, and duration. Whether the activities occur during winter or summer, a different approach will be required to ensure their success. Additionally, the duration of each activity, be it a retreat lasting for one week or extending over two months, will significantly impact the number and variety of activities that need to be organised.



"I'm absolutely stoked about joining a digital nomad retreat for around two weeks. It's like the perfect combo, you know? I can dive into this transformative retreat experience while still doing what I love – writing and teaching. Just thinking about connecting with fellow nomads, sharing stories, and making real connections gets me super hyped! And imagine if it's a summer retreat – that's a total dream! I can soak up the sun, explore the awesome outdoors, and dive into all the cool cultural stuff around. It's gonna be such a soul-fueling, creativity-boosting adventure. Can't wait to get on board and make some unforgettable memories!"



STEP 1: DATE & TIMEFRAME

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WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

When organising a digital nomad retreat, youth work experience holds a significant advantage. Experienced youth workers bring valuable insights and understanding of younger participants' diverse needs and preferences, like Karin, who seek transformative experiences. By focusing on the creative approach and attention to detail, youth workers can play a vital role in curating a retreat that resonates deeply with participants like Karin, elevating it into an unforgettable journey of growth, exploration, and meaningful connections.

GREEN TIP

When considering the retreat's date, take into account the seasonal resources and eco-friendly activities that align with the region's cultural heritage. A summer retreat can offer outdoor explorations, connecting participants with the local natural wonders and traditional festivities. At the same time, a winter escape can foster indoor eco-conscious activities that celebrate the area's artistic and culinary heritage. Additionally, choosing a longer duration for the retreat not only allows for a more sustainable stay but also provides ample time for participants to immerse themselves in the local culture, engage in workshops, learn traditional crafts, and preserve the region's unique cultural legacy. This mindful approach not only minimises environmental impact but also enriches the retreat experience with meaningful cultural exchanges and a deeper appreciation for the local heritage.





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

An important part of every retreat is infrastructure. Let's highlight what you must consider while establishing a village or small-town retreat.

ACCOMMODATION

First, do not forget that your guests will need a temporary home. Depending on your capabilities, you might be able to accommodate everyone in one building (e.g., a farm, an apartment block, a dormitory), but often, that's not possible! You can also ask different providers in the village or town for their apartments or even place them in regular rental flats (similar to Airbnb). An Italian organisation, Kino, organises retreats in a very similar way.



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"I've got this vision in my mind, the ultimate retreat – a quaint farmhouse in a peaceful, picturesque town. Gardening, nature, and writing all come together in this magical setting. It's more than just a place to stay; it's my creative sanctuary. A cosy haven where I can pen my enchanting tales and feel truly inspired. This farmhouse retreat feels like the perfect home away from home, where I can recharge, connect with myself, and make dreams come alive."





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

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WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Many youth workers are already experienced with organising exchanges among young people and know the needs and expectations of young people. As the retreat is organised similarly, they will be familiar with the process already. The accommodation can also be organised in the local youth hostel, especially if its activities are connected with the youth club or organisation.



GREEN TIP

Try to choose accommodations that harmoniously blend with the local environment and cultural landscape, preserving the region's unique character and minimising ecological impact. Opt for accommodations built using traditional and eco-conscious architectural techniques, showcasing the region's cultural heritage while promoting energy efficiency.





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

COWORKING

Coworking spaces play a crucial role in digital nomad retreats and represent a feature which makes digital nomad retreats different from other experiences. When planning a retreat, you must understand that your coworking space will be available at any time of the day due to different time zones. The coworking space should also have basic infrastructure and amenities: high-speed Internet connection, printing and scanning. Your coworking space should be available at any time of the day due to different time zones, include coffee/tea and snack areas, and have enough workspace.

TIP: When working with 20 participants, you must provide a comfortable workspace for each. Alternatively, a workplace can also be a sofa, hammock or any other outdoor place (if it's warm enough). Participants will also need to have meetings. If you have soundproof booths or designated quiet areas, you will significantly improve their experience.

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"I'd love a coworking space that's environmentally conscious and embraces the local culture and heritage. An inspiring place with sustainable design and a touch of traditional craftsmanship. Imagine being surrounded by local artwork and literature, connecting with the community's creative spirit."





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

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WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Experienced youth workers can equip the place in a way that it's attractive to young people and add their personal touch. They can organise icebreaker activities and team-building exercises to help participants connect and work together effectively.



GREEN TIP

Create coworking spaces that blend with local architecture and cultural aesthetics, using eco-friendly materials and traditional craftsmanship. Furnish the coworking area with locally handcrafted furniture and decor, showcasing the talents of regional artisans and supporting the local economy. Incorporate natural elements like indoor plants, sustainable wood, and earthy colours to create a calming and culturally immersive coworking environment.



STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET CONNECTION

A digital nomad needs a reliable and fast internet connection to conduct day-to-day work and leisure activities. Without it, productivity can be significantly hampered, leading to delays and frustration. For individuals like Karin who engage in online teaching, a fast internet connection is vital for delivering live classes, sharing educational resources, and interacting with students.

Remember: If possible, avoid using unreliable connections (e.g. mobile tethering) as a high-performing connection is necessary for conducting the work seamlessly.



"Having a reliable internet connection during this retreat is a game-changer for me! As an online teacher, staying connected is crucial to keep doing what I love while immersing myself in this amazing experience. It's incredible to think I can share knowledge and connect with my students right from the heart of nature – teaching with such a stunning view is a dream come true!"



STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

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WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Youth workers often have strong digital skills and are familiar with various online tools and platforms. They can provide technical support to participants in navigating and maximising the use of high-speed internet for their work and activities. Youth workers can ensure that all participants have equal access to high-speed internet and digital resources. They can bridge the digital divide by providing support and training to those with limited tech skills.



GREEN TIP

You can raise awareness among participants about the importance of sustainable internet usage (e.g. choosing environmental-friendly cloud providers, using energy-saving settings). This might be crucial, especially when you cannot provide unlimited internet speed for the participants. Encourage participants to take breaks from digital devices and connect with nature or engage in local cultural activities. Provide spaces where participants can unplug and appreciate the natural and cultural beauty of the retreat location.





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

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FOOD ARRANGEMENTS

When organising food catering, the possibilities are as diverse as the flavours themselves. You may choose to combine different catering approaches based on your capacity and preferences:

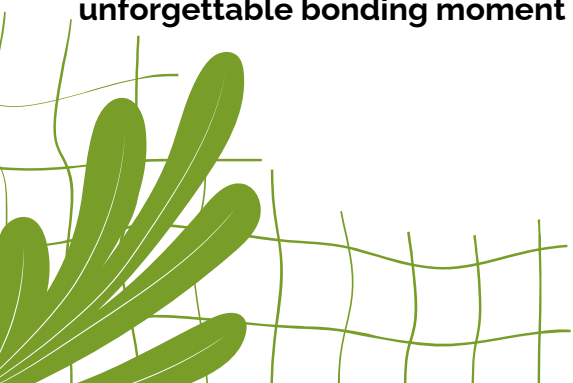
SELF-CATERING Participants are their own chefs preparing their meals. This option provides freedom and flexibility to cater to their specific dietary needs. This option extends the opportunity to provide a farm-to-table experience when you collaborate with local farms to offer the freshest seasonal produce.

POTLUCK STYLE Participants contribute by bringing a dish to share with others. This adds a touch of camaraderie and community spirit to the retreat. Encouraging participants to showcase their culinary skills and share their favourite dishes with others will create an unforgettable bonding moment over delicious food.



"I've always dreamt of experiencing a retreat with food that celebrates the local culture and supports the community. I wish for a sustainable and inclusive dining experience where my dietary needs are considered, and we can connect over delicious food in a warm and welcoming atmosphere."

CATERING SERVICES You might provide a catering service for participants by having your chef or arranging catering by an external provider. This option offers convenience and allows participants to focus solely on the retreat's activities. Caterers provide tailored menus to accommodate dietary preferences, ensuring an enjoyable dining experience.





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

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When arranging food in a retreat, it's important to consider factors such as dietary restrictions, budget, participant preferences, and the desired level of involvement or convenience. Tailoring the food arrangements to match the retreat's objectives and the participants' needs will contribute positively to an enjoyable culinary experience.

WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Youth workers often have much experience in organising exchanges in their local area. They also understand young people's catering preferences and the need for healthy eating habits, embracing cultural diversity and promoting environmental responsibility. Youth workers can strengthen community ties by engaging with young local farmers and food producers and highlight the need for locally produced food.

GREEN TIP

Consider the region's cultural heritage while sourcing local and seasonal ingredients for the retreat's meals. Prioritise sustainability by opting for organic and vegetarian options, reducing the environmental impact. Implement food waste reduction strategies such as meal planning and composting. Encourage participants to practice mindful consumption and opt for eco-friendly packaging materials. Embrace the natural and cultural heritage of the area by making conscious choices during meal preparations, fostering a deeper connection with the environment and community.





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

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TRANSPORTATION

Preparing a retreat in rural areas is different from urban areas. Here are some suggestions to follow:

1) TRANSPORT OPTIONS Prepare instructions for participants on different transportation options. In case you cannot use public transport, you can explain how to find alternative options (e.g., hitchhiking, carpooling). A special bulletin board (or some digital solution) where guests can express their wish for transport might also work.

TIP: Remember to include maps, directions, and any specific accessibility information related to the transportation services available.

2) SHUTTLE SERVICES Help participants reach their destination for the first time. You could provide a shuttle service to the nearest railway or bus station.

3) PARKING FACILITIES Arrange convenient and accessible parking facilities for participants who choose to drive to the retreat.

4) BICYCLES FOR RENTING Provide on-site bicycle rental services, allowing participants to access bicycles for their transportation needs during the retreat easily. Install bicycle racks or secure storage facilities near common areas to encourage participants to park and lock up their bicycles. You can also offer basic bicycle maintenance tools and equipment, such as tire pumps and repair kits, or provide information about a bike repair shop.





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE



"It would be fantastic to explore the local culture and heritage while opting for sustainable travel methods. If we can make information readily available about routes, schedules, and any discounts, it will encourage everyone to choose greener alternatives."


WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Youth workers in rural areas normally understand what it is like to travel or move around in a rural area with limited connections. As many participants might come from the city, where they're used to different solutions (public transport, taxi), youth workers should help them understand the reality of rural areas, especially about the improvisation or long-term planning of the activities (shopping, hair-dresser etc.). Youth workers can support contacting transportation providers or ask other local people to share the ride with participants.



GREEN TIP

As you plan your retreat, consider the importance of environmentally friendly transportation options. Encourage participants to carpool, use public transport, or opt for biking to minimise their carbon footprint and support sustainable commuting. Providing comprehensive information on available routes, schedules, and potential discounts for these eco-friendly choices will make it easier for attendees to embrace sustainable travel. As part of your commitment to environmental responsibility, consider offering incentives like discounted fees or rewards for participants who choose sustainable transportation.





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

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ADDITIONAL SPACES

Depending on the activities, you might also want to think about additional infrastructure to upgrade the experience of your retreat:

1) RECREATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES Consider the idea of providing a gym, yoga studio, a refreshing swimming pool or an outdoor sports area. If your retreat is in a rural area, plan some activities in nature.

2) COMMON AREAS AND SOCIAL SPACES These facilities help increase the sense of community and connection among participants by allowing them to interact, share experiences, and build lasting friendships. These areas promote a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere, encouraging open communication and exchanging ideas, leaving participants with cherished memories and a sense of belonging.

3) WORKSHOP AND EVENT SPACES Include inviting and versatile spaces for workshops, seminars, presentations, and group activities, equipped with necessary audiovisual equipment, comfortable seating arrangements, and flexible layouts to accommodate various event formats.

4) PRIVACY AND QUIET SPACES Offer secluded and quiet spaces where participants can retreat for focused work, personal reflection, or relaxation. These places can, of course, also be outdoors.





STEP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

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"I adore the diverse facilities that offer opportunities to learn and bond with my retreat mates. It feels comforting to find understanding hearts and to be valued for who I am. I also enjoy my "me-time" to regain my strength and enhance my personal growth. This retreat reminds me that I am not alone on this journey of life."

WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Youth workers can organise engaging workshops and sessions within these spaces so that participants explore new interests and skills. Their guidance and involvement contribute to a positive atmosphere where your retreat attendees feel comfortable expressing themselves. By working hand in hand with youth workers to provide these leisure spaces and opportunities, retreat organisers can ensure that the retreat becomes an unforgettable experience where your retreat guests can thrive, grow, and cherish moments of relaxation and personal growth.





STEP 3: PLAN ACTIVITIES

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After overcoming infrastructure challenges, it is time to focus on captivating activities. This is also the point where retreat becomes so much more than a typical tourist stay. Based on our interviews and survey within the Nomazine magazine, we have discovered that community is everything for digital nomads. So how do you create a thriving community? Prepare interesting and interactive activities where participants can learn skills, show knowledge and build a strong community!

Here are some ideas to prepare activities and build a community:

1) ACTIVITIES ARE ONLY SUPPLEMENTARY

Activities are an added value to the retreat, but they shouldn't overshadow its purpose. Remember that digital nomads dedicate most of their day to work. Flexibility is essential. Consider varying schedules with optional activities, as some participants might have evening commitments or work outside regular hours.

2) PARTICIPANTS MIGHT PREPARE THE ACTIVITIES ON THEIR OWN

Encourage participants to be involved in the organisation of activities. They might organise a movie night, present their country (for multinational events), cooking or dancing classes... It depends on what kind of participants you have. The activities can be tailored to suit the diverse interests and talents of our participants. You can also arrange for participants to present their work, their own projects if they wish.

3) INVOLVE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

To create a fully immersive experience in your area, you could propose activities prepared by the local community or experts. By understanding and learning about cultural heritage, they will gain new skills which nurture their personal and professional growth. You can organise heritage workshops (e.g. pottery, wood making) or even farm activities, where participants reconnect to their roots.





STEP 3: PLAN ACTIVITIES

4) ORGANISE A FULL-DAY EXCURSION

Once per week (preferably at the weekend), you can organise an excursion into the local area. It is the perfect opportunity for team building, bringing participants even closer together. And, of course, the local community members are welcome to join, adding their unique perspectives to the participants' community.



"Personally, engaging in activities, meeting the locals, and going on exciting excursions is my recipe for fun-filled adventures! I never expected to feel like this before coming to the retreat."

WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Youth workers have vast experience in creating age-appropriate activities that resonate with the participants. Moreover, engaging local people adds a special dimension to the retreat. By involving them as community managers or simply, as participants in the activities, the retreat enables genuine connections for life. Experienced youth work organisations bring the power of networking and collaboration, valuable resources and knowledge that will help your retreat's success.





STEP 3: PLAN ACTIVITIES

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GREEN MEASURES

Foster a profound connection with the environment by offering nature-based activities that celebrate local cultural heritage. Engage participants in serene nature walks, invigorating hikes, and impactful beach clean-ups while promoting ecological awareness and conservation values.

Encourage sustainability through craft and art projects that incorporate recycled materials and natural elements, exemplifying our commitment to environmentally responsible practices. Integrate environmental education into activities, incorporating local cultural heritage elements to showcase the region's biodiversity and historical significance.

Emphasise the "Leave No Trace" principle during outdoor activities, ensuring that the retreat experience aligns with our dedication to preserving both nature and cultural heritage. As you organise the retreat, let nature and heritage intertwine to create an unforgettable and environmentally conscious journey for all participants.





STEP 4: CARE FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY!

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Including the local community in the retreat or activities is key for mutual benefits and a richer overall experience. Here are some steps to take to ensure their involvement:

1) DEVELOP ACTIVITIES FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY Organize lectures, workshops, concerts, or art events where retreat participants can share their experiences and expertise. Motivate participants to interact with the local community by offering workshops or lectures on topics of mutual interest. This creates a platform for knowledge exchange and cultural enrichment.

2) RETREATS AS AN ADDED VALUE FOR THE COMMUNITY Highlight the positive aspects of collaboration, multiculturalism, and inclusion in the local community. Cultivate understanding and appreciation by showcasing local talents, artists, musicians, or performers. This provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and share the community's cultural heritage.

3) VOLUNTEER AND SOCIAL IMPACT ACTIVITIES Plan volunteer initiatives such as environmental cleanup, assistance to the elderly, or collaboration with local NGOs. Encourage participants to actively engage in these activities, contributing to the local community's well-being. Collaborate with local youth or community centres to expand the reach of social impact activities.

4) EMPOWER THE LOCAL COMMUNITY THROUGH JOB OPPORTUNITIES Prioritise hiring local community members for positions within the retreat. Create a diverse workforce that reflects the local community, fostering cultural exchange and understanding. Explore collaborations with local businesses, such as partnering with restaurants or caterers to provide meals for retreat participants, thus generating employment opportunities for local chefs and staff. Your commitment to supporting the local community strengthens the bonds between retreat participants and permanent residents while positively impacting the region's economy.





STEP 4: CARE FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY!

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5) SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INITIATIVE Collaborate with the local community to develop sustainable tourism initiatives that spotlight the region's natural and cultural heritage. Encourage responsible tourism practices, such as promoting eco-friendly activities, supporting local conservation efforts, or organising guided tours led by experienced locals who love their area.



By following these steps, you can guarantee the active involvement of the local community in the retreat, fostering meaningful connections and creating a positive social impact.

"Meeting the local community has been wonderful...participating in their cultural activities, collaborating with local artisans, and supporting community initiatives have truly enriched our journey. I have discovered so many talents and skills I did not even know I had. The bonds we've formed with the locals have made this retreat experience truly unforgettable. They have left a lasting impression on all of us."

WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Youth workers possess a wealth of strengths that contribute to positive and meaningful community engagement. Their enthusiasm, relatability, and empathy build trust and forge genuine relationships. Their creativity, cultural sensitivity, communication and facilitation skills create a valuable, inclusive, thriving community environment, driving positive change for locals and retreat participants.





STEP 4: CARE FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY!

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GREEN MEASURES

Your retreat can contribute to environmental preservation by incorporating conservation activities such as tree planting and wildlife monitoring. Moreover, working closely with local environmental organisations and supporting conservation initiatives helps positively impact the community and fosters environmental responsibility among participants.

Provide retreat participants with the chance to volunteer for local conservation projects, including research, habitat restoration, and community outreach. You may want to allocate a portion of the retreat's budget to support local conservation initiatives, either through direct financial contributions or by purchasing goods and services from eco-friendly businesses that you know that they are actively contributing to conservation efforts.

By engaging in hands-on conservation efforts and learning about the area, participants might become future advocates for environmental protection locally and internationally.





STEP 5: ACCESSIBILITY

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Considering the diverse range of guests joining the retreat, some may have accessibility challenges. To ensure an unforgettable experience and comfortable stay for everyone, here are thoughtful suggestions for a successful inclusive retreat.

1) ACCESSIBLE SPACES Prioritize selecting retreat venues that are wheelchair accessible. Even though historical buildings may pose challenges, aim to provide accessibility to all essential areas, like restrooms, dining rooms, and communal spaces. Implementing clear signage and visual aids will be immensely helpful for guests with visual and hearing impairments, ensuring they feel welcome and supported.

2) ENGAGE COMMUNITY MANAGERS It is highly recommended to have community managers who possess a good understanding of accessibility needs and guidelines. Collaborate with local support groups or disability organisations to educate and train community managers on various disabilities. This will empower them to offer essential assistance and support to participants with disabilities, including guidance on accessible routes, provision of mobility aids or equipment, and arranging additional assistance when necessary.

3) INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT Encourage participants to communicate their accessibility requirements in advance. Work closely with them to identify their specific needs and develop personalised solutions. This may include arranging for accessible transportation, ensuring appropriate seating arrangements, or providing auxiliary aids such as sign language interpreters or captioning services for those with hearing impairments. Remember, the well-being of all the participants in the retreat is one of your top priorities.

4) ADAPTIVE ACTIVITIES Design activities that individuals of diverse abilities can enjoy. Incorporate inclusive practices such as providing alternative formats for information, offering multisensory experiences, and allowing room for modifications or adaptations to accommodate different levels of physical or cognitive abilities.





STEP 5: ACCESSIBILITY

5) DIGNITY AND RESPECT Promote a welcoming and respectful environment where all participants feel valued and included. Encourage open communication, active listening, and empathy among participants and staff. Create opportunities for participants to share their experiences, perspectives, and needs, strengthening a sense of community and understanding.



Remember, accessibility is an ongoing commitment. We should listen and learn from our participants' feedback to continuously improve our accessibility measures. By prioritising accessibility and engaging with community managers, you can ensure a more inclusive and enriching experience for all participants in the retreat.

"I deeply value inclusion and accessibility in a retreat. Experiencing the world with high sensitivity, I understand the importance of creating an environment that welcomes everyone. In my life, I have encountered challenges in places where my personality traits were overlooked or not understood. Here, I can be myself without fear of judgement or discomfort. Thankfully I can experience this retreat without feeling overwhelmed or excluded."

WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Trained to be sensitive and understanding, youth workers actively listen to participants' accessibility needs and help you offer personalised support to create a welcoming environment in your retreat. They can assist you by conducting accessibility surveys, contacting other local organisations and assessing whether the retreat venue and activities meet appropriate standards. Youth workers guide and engage in accessible communication, empowering participants to enjoy the retreat fully. They will seek feedback to improve future retreats in terms of accessibility.

STEP 5: ACCESSIBILITY

GREEN MEASURES

Ensure your retreat's facilities are accessible and eco-friendly. Opt for sustainable construction with materials like recycled or bamboo flooring. Plan accessible transportation options, and offer information in various formats, such as large print or digital copies, accommodating different needs. Embrace inclusivity with sign language interpretation or captioning services. Design activities with accessible trails to explore the rural surroundings, celebrating the local culture and heritage in an inclusive environment.





STEP 6: YOUR UNIQUE STORY

After (or before) you decide for activities, think about your unique story. What is the selling point which will attract guests to visit you? Why would participants come to your retreat and not to others? Yours will join an array of already existing experiences, which means that you might compete with them for guests.

Here are our 8 suggestions for creating a Unique Retreat Story:


1) FIND YOUR PASSION Start with your own passion or area of expertise. The retreat will be the most succesful if it is based on your personal story or hobbies. If you're an artist, focus your retreat on artistic activities and your own experience!

2) EMBRACE THE LOCAL CULTURE AND HERITAGE It doesn't matter if you're a newcomer or born in the area where the retreat will take place. Create a retreat which will be based on the local (heritage) stories. Engage with the local community to understand and appreciate their traditions, customs, and cultural heritage. Incorporate these elements into the retreat's activities to create an authentic and meaningful experience.

3) HIGHLIGHT SUSTAINABILITY Integrate sustainable practices into every aspect of the retreat, from eco-friendly accommodations to locally sourced food and waste reduction initiatives.

4) OFFER DISTINCTIVE ACTIVITIES Craft activities and workshops that align with the retreat's theme and location, offering participants a chance to delve deep into the essence of the countryside and learn new skills. You might organise hiking activities or meditation and yoga, which is especially suitable for young people who seek outdoor activities which they cannot do in urban areas.

5) FOSTER MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS Cultivate a sense of community and friendship among participants by encouraging shared experiences and moments of reflection. Focus your retreat on the strong community!



STEP 6: YOUR UNIQUE STORY

6) REGENERATION IN NATURE People from urban areas normally choose retreats in the countryside, as they want to escape from the stressful urban area and feel the peace and quiet in the countryside. Despite working in a digital world, they can always have a break, a short stroll in the nearby wood, or just relax on the meadow for 10 minutes.

7) LISTEN AND EVOLVE Continuously gather participant feedback and adapt the retreat's offerings to meet their needs and desires. Let the retreat's story evolve with each iteration, making it even more compelling and relevant.

8) CREATE AN AMAZING MARKET CAMPAIGN Your retreat's unique features and benefits will attract your participants. This step involves creating a compelling online presence on social media, and perhaps collaborating with influencers or digital nomad communities!





STEP 6: YOUR UNIQUE STORY

SUCCESS CASES

You can find some inspiration from the renowned coliving places which attract digital nomads by providing an unique story:

1) CHATEAU COLIVING & COWORKING COLIVING, FRANCE


An authentic 12th-century castle in Normandy, France. Here the old meets a very modern way of life, with digital nomads creating a vibrant home for everyone to work and live in. It offers a sense of community, plenty of social life and fun activities to be enjoyed, from yoga classes and workouts to movie and game nights. There are French Crepes every Sunday with local jam and yoghurt, which is one of the ways to support local businesses.

2) SUMMER OF PIONEERS, GERMANY

A German social enterprise Neulandia, organises 6-month-retreats in the German countryside called Summer of Pioneers. The initiative attracts mainly young people – digital nomads and remotely working people, as they are flexible in terms of travel and work – to „test“ living in rural areas in Germany for six months. Young people come with fresh ideas and perspectives, with different experiences of how they can really make a difference and push the transformation process in the area.

3) ZELLIN HOUSE – A RESTORED HOUSE FOR NOMADS IN BULGARIA

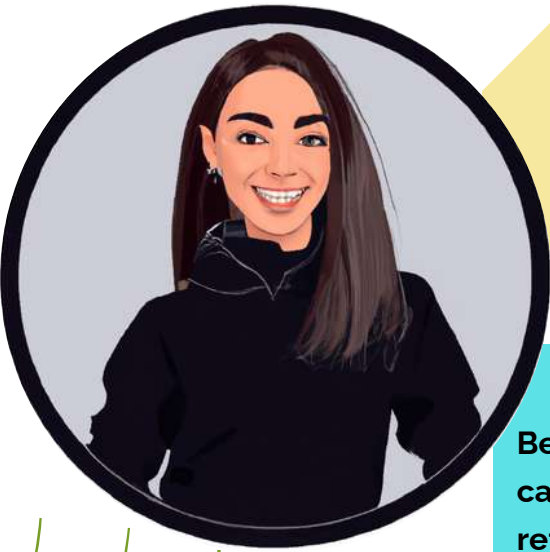
The ZeLLin House is a starting point of the Nomadic UnityHub project. In 2018, the Nomadic UnityHub team began the work process of restoring the old house to reopen it as an international coworking and coliving space for digital nomads. With an initiative called “revive a house – build a community”, it brings together the local community, entrepreneurs, and business accelerators. The team organises events and workshops, yoga classes, jazz nights around the campfire, entrepreneurial events and much more.



STEP 6: YOUR UNIQUE STORY

5) REC.ON – A SUSTAINABLE COLIVING PROJECT IN ANDALUSIA

A REC.On Project is a coliving place in Andalusia, Spain, open to artists, writers, travellers and digital nomads. Based on the upcycled design, it's an inspirational place for remote work and relaxation in the pristine Spanish countryside.



"In this retreat environment, I have discovered the joy of gardening—a hobby I never considered back home. Taking care of little plants and watching them grow brings me so much happiness! This retreat has opened a world of green possibilities for me, enhancing my love for nature and my expected new passion for gardening. I can't wait to see what beautiful things I can grow and why not? even have my own orchard in the future!"

WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Being active in youth work, youth workers can base a retreat on the youth-centric approach. Youth workers can tailor the retreat's activities and communication to resonate with a younger audience, ensuring that the retreat experience meets the unique needs and expectations of young digital nomads. Young people from local area can become involved in the retreat programme as a »buddies«. They can introduce participants to the local community, invite and accompany them at the local events or festivals, explain more about the local culture and customs, recommend authentic and lesser-known places to explore, or just support them in everyday challenges.

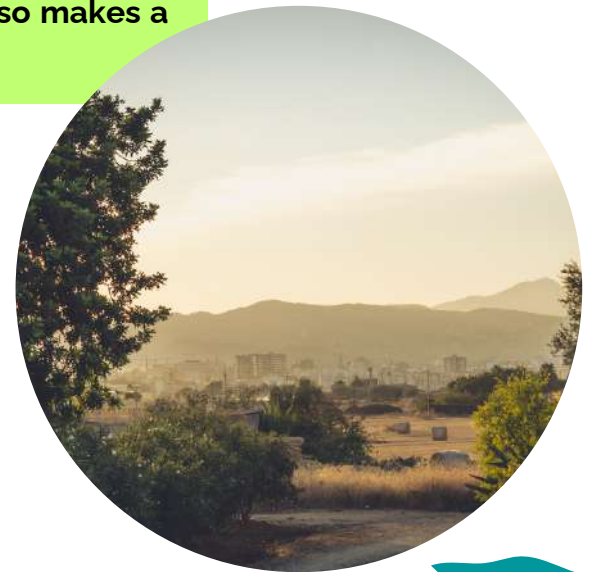


STEP 6: YOUR UNIQUE STORY

GREEN MEASURES

If you follow the above mentioned suggestions on developing your unique story, you will already provide a green & local unique retreat. If you want to upgrade the experience, base your retreat and experience on farm-to-table dining, cultural immersion, nature-based experiences, local community involvement, waste reduction initiatives, eco-conscious transportation. You might even include environmental education and consider obtaining eco-certifications, which might attract some more demanding guests!

By incorporating these green and local measures into the unique story of the digital nomad retreat in the countryside, you create a truly transformative experience that not only attracts participants but also makes a positive impact on the environment and local communities.





STEP 7: SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW UP

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Before welcoming the first guests, consider the financial plan (not just short-term, but also long-term) if you decide to organise retreats regularly or even plan to establish a coliving.

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING

A crucial aspect of organising a digital nomad retreat in the countryside is meticulous financial planning and budgeting (you will find valuable information in Chapter 3). By taking a comprehensive and strategic approach to finances, you can ensure the success of the retreat while maintaining its long-term sustainability. Here are some suggestions on how to master the financial aspect of your retreat:

1) COST BREAKDOWN: Begin by creating a detailed breakdown of all foreseen costs associated with the retreat. This should include expenses for accommodation, infrastructure, activities, transportation, meals, marketing, staff, permits, insurance, and any other relevant expenditures. When calculating the costs, explore the area to see what the competition is doing and find a unique selling point (See Step 6 for reference).

OUR SUGGESTION: Set aside a contingency fund for unforeseen expenses or emergencies. Having a financial buffer ensures you can address unexpected challenges without compromising the quality of the retreat.

2) IDENTIFY REVENUE STREAMS: Explore various revenue streams to fund the retreat. This could include participant fees, sponsorships, partnerships with local businesses, public grants, crowdfunding campaigns, or collaborations with relevant organisations. Diversifying revenue sources can help reduce financial risks.

Keep in mind that digital nomads like to choose destinations which are cheaper than their home location. They can still receive wages in their own country but decide to live in areas with lower financial costs temporarily.





STEP 7: SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW UP

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3) BUDGET FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Allocate a portion of the budget for community engagement initiatives. This could include funding local workshops, cultural exchanges, or supporting social impact projects that benefit the local community, especially young people. In the long term, this will provide an anticipated impact on the local community, which is one of the main aims of your retreat.

4) SUSTAINABLE SPENDING: Prioritise sustainable spending practices, opting for eco-friendly and locally sourced materials whenever possible. This aligns with the retreat's values and contributes to a positive environmental impact.

By approaching financial planning and budgeting with foresight, you can create a solid financial foundation for your digital nomad retreat. Striking a balance between covering essential costs, engaging with the local community, and fostering sustainable practices ensures participants a memorable and impactful experience while leaving a positive legacy for the environment and the community.





STEP 7: SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW UP

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IMPACT

Assessing the impact of your digital nomad retreat is essential to measure its success and identify areas for improvement. A sustainable retreat should provide a long-term impact for the local community (and notably for young people from rural areas).

1) PRE-RETREAT SURVEYS: Conduct surveys with participants before the retreat to understand their expectations, interests, and goals. This valuable feedback can help tailor the retreat experience to meet their needs and preferences.

2) POST-RETREAT EVALUATION: Gather feedback from participants through post-retreat surveys or interviews. Inquire about their overall experience, the value gained, and suggestions for future improvements. Use this feedback to refine your approach for future retreats.

3) IMPACT INDICATORS: Define specific impact metrics aligned with the retreat's goals, such as increased cultural understanding, personal growth, community engagement, or environmental conservation. Monitor and measure these parameters to track the retreat's success.

4) LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT: Promote long-term engagement with participants and the local community beyond the retreat's conclusion. Encourage ongoing connections, support for community projects, and initiatives that extend the retreat's impact.

5) SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES: Implement social impact projects or environmental initiatives during the retreat to leave a positive footprint on the local community and environment. Document and share the outcomes of these initiatives to inspire future sustainability efforts.





STEP 7: SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW UP

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6) STORYTELLING AND PUBLICATIONS: Share inspiring stories and testimonials from participants and the local community through publications, social media, or a dedicated website. These narratives can attract future participants and demonstrate the retreat's impact.

7) LEARNING OUTCOMES: Reflect on the learning outcomes of participants, both in terms of skill development and cultural understanding. Highlight success stories and personal growth experiences to showcase the transformative power of the retreat.

8) CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: Use the insights gained from impact evaluations to continually improve the retreat's design, activities, and community engagement. Emphasise a commitment to a positive and lasting impact on all stakeholders involved.

Measuring and maximising the impact of your digital nomad retreat is not only a valuable assessment tool but also a driving force for positive change. By focusing on meaningful outcomes and encouraging sustainable practices, your retreat can leave a lasting legacy in the lives of participants, the local community, and the environment.





STEP 7: SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW UP

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SCALE-UP

Scaling up your digital nomad retreat can be a strategic step to expand its reach and impact. Here are some considerations and steps to effectively scale up your retreat:

1) ORGANISE ANOTHER RETREAT: If your first retreat is successful, organise another one! Maybe next year or already in the next months! It could have a different target group or different activities.

2) DIVERSIFY LOCATIONS: Consider hosting your retreat in multiple locations, offering distinct cultural experiences and natural beauty. Participants might change location after 1 or 2 weeks and explore another interesting rural area! You might organise the retreat with another partner and split costs and organisation (providing activities). This solution might also be interesting if you're organising a retreat for the first time!

3) FIND A PARTNER FOR PROMOTION AND ORGANISING: If your retreat happens only once in a year, consider finding a partner who can promote your retreat and has many connections with digital nomads all over the world. One example is Kino, an Italian organisation that organises and promotes retreats for digital nomads in different rural areas in Italy.

4) ESTABLISH A COLIVING SPACE: Upgrading a digital nomad retreat to a permanent coliving space can be the natural step towards creating a sustainable community. Before starting the transition, assess the demand for a permanent coliving space in your chosen location. Conduct surveys, gather feedback from past participants, and analyse market trends to understand the potential interest. Ensure that the coliving space provides the necessary infrastructure and amenities to meet the needs of long-term residents. In the coliving space, you should have all activities in one place, as you want to create a strong community space. Involve the local community in the transition process and seek their input on how the coliving space can positively impact the area. Building positive relationships with locals can contribute to the final success of the project.





STEP 7: SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW UP

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MAKE A CHANGE IN THE LOCAL AREA

A thoughtfully planned and executed retreat can lead to various changes in rural communities and among young people. Here are some potential long-term impacts:

1) ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: By hosting a digital nomad retreat, rural communities can experience economic empowerment and stop the outmigration of young people. The influx of participants stimulates local businesses, creates job opportunities, and generates income for various service providers, thus contributing to the region's overall economic development.

2) SKILL DEVELOPMENT: Engaging with digital nomads and participating in retreat activities can offer young people in rural areas access to new skills and knowledge. They may learn from participants' expertise in diverse fields, empowering them with valuable insights that can be applied to various aspects of their lives and future careers.

3) CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND APPRECIATION: The interaction between retreat participants and locals fosters cultural exchange and appreciation. Through shared experiences, the digital nomads and the young people in rural communities gain a deeper understanding of each other's culture and higher cultural sensitivity and tolerance.

4) ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS: Retreats focusing on sustainable practices can raise awareness among participants and locals about environmental issues and conservation efforts. This heightened consciousness can lead to changes in behaviours and practices, promoting eco-friendly initiatives in the long term.

5) SOCIAL INTEGRATION: The presence of digital nomads in rural communities can help break down barriers and bridge the urban-rural gap. Retreats that actively involve local youth in various activities create opportunities for social integration, promoting a sense of belonging and inclusivity.





STEP 7: SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW UP

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6) ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT: Interacting with entrepreneurial digital nomads can inspire young people in rural areas to pursue their own business ventures. The exposure to innovative ideas and business models can ignite the entrepreneurial spirit in the local youth, encouraging them to explore opportunities and become self-reliant.

7) COMMUNITY INITIATIVES: Retreats can inspire and support the creation of community-driven initiatives. Local youth, empowered by their experiences during the retreat, may initiate projects related to sustainable practices, cultural preservation, and social welfare, benefiting the community as a whole.

8) COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING: Retreats encourage collaboration between digital nomads and local communities. Such partnerships can continue beyond the retreat, resulting in ongoing relationships and networking opportunities that enable long-term support and joint ventures.

9) INSPIRATION FOR OTHERS: A successful retreat in a rural community can serve as a model for other regions. It can inspire similar initiatives and encourage stakeholders in other areas to invest in sustainable tourism, youth engagement, and cultural preservation.



Overall, a well-designed retreat can create a ripple effect, leaving a positive and lasting impact on rural communities and young people. The systematic changes that emerge from these interactions can lead to sustainable development, community resilience, and a sense of pride and hope among the local youth.





STEP 7: SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW UP

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WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

Youth workers are pivotal in facilitating and catalysing the systemic change that can be brought about through digital nomad retreats in rural communities. Their expertise, skills, and understanding of young people's needs and aspirations make them invaluable contributors to the success and impact of such initiatives. Here's how youth workers can actively participate in developing systemic change:

1) YOUTH-CENTRIC APPROACH: Youth workers are well-versed in employing a youth-centric approach, ensuring that the needs and interests of young people in rural communities are at the forefront of planning and carrying out retreat activities. By involving local youth in the decision-making process, they can empower them to be the masters of their own future.

2) EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP: Youth workers can inspire leadership qualities among local youth. Through mentorship and guidance, they can encourage young people to take on active roles in retreat activities, community projects, and sustainable initiatives. Empowered youth are more likely to become agents of positive change in their communities.

3) UPSKILLING: Youth workers can facilitate skill development workshops and training sessions during the retreat. By equipping local youth with relevant skills in areas such as entrepreneurship, digital literacy, sustainable practices, and cultural preservation, they enhance their capacity to contribute to the local community's growth.

4) CULTURAL EXCHANGE: Youth workers can facilitate meaningful cultural exchange between digital nomads and local youth by organising activities that promote mutual understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, thus enriching both the retreat experience and the local community.





STEP 7: SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW UP

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WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS

5) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Building strong ties with the local community is essential. Youth workers can actively engage with local leaders, parents, educators, and other stakeholders to ensure the retreat's impact extends beyond its duration.

6) YOUTH ADVOCACY: Youth workers can advocate for young people's rights and aspirations, amplifying their voices and advocating for their needs on a broader scale. By engaging with policymakers and influencers, they can bring attention to the potential of digital nomad retreats as a tool for community development and youth empowerment.

7) CONTINUED SUPPORT: Any change requires ongoing support. Youth workers can establish mentorship programs, alumni networks, and virtual platforms that enable continued communication and support for local youth even after your retreat ends.

8) MONITORING AND EVALUATION: Youth workers can play a crucial role in monitoring and evaluating the retreat's outcomes and impact, together with you to identify areas for improvement and future growth.





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CHAPTER 2: WHAT THE YOUTH SECTOR CAN DO?

nomadland

THE ROLE OF TOURISM WORKERS

3.3

THE ROLE OF DECISION-MAKERS

3.2

SUGGESTIONS ON WORKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WITH DIGITAL NOMADS

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3.1

THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORKERS

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BRINGING NEW PERSPECTIVES TO THE YOUTH WORK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

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WHY DIGITAL NOMADS NEED YOUTH SECTOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

1



INTRODUCTION

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This chapter can be a great source of ideas, as well as a ground for a better understanding of digital nomads' needs, the youth sector, and youth work potential. You will explore the Youth Sector and discover its' elements, what youth work is, and look into the needs of digital nomads. Youth work, together with the public and private sectors, can play a significant role in supporting digital nomads by providing various resources and opportunities tailored to their specific needs. And the opposite! Digital nomads can be an excellent source of skills, knowledge, and experiences that can contribute to community development, support youth work practice and generate new services in the countryside.

Let's explore, analyse, identify, and look into how to build a resilient ecosystem for the fulfilment of digital nomads' needs, as they can play an important role in the development of the countryside.





WHY DO DIGITAL NOMADS NEED THE YOUTH SECTOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

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The youth sector is a complex ecosystem of various key actors who play important roles in addressing the needs and concerns of young people, promoting their well-being, and empowering them to reach their full potential and become productive and responsible citizens by engaging them in social, cultural, and democratic processes.

Youth work is youth-centric, and its activities boost the engagement of young people while at the same time taking care of their personal, emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical well-being.

Digital nomads need the youth sector in the countryside because it provides a structured framework for their engagement, well-being, and empowerment. The youth sector's focus on holistic development and community involvement aligns with the needs and aspirations of digital nomads, making it an ideal partner in creating a supportive environment for them in rural areas.

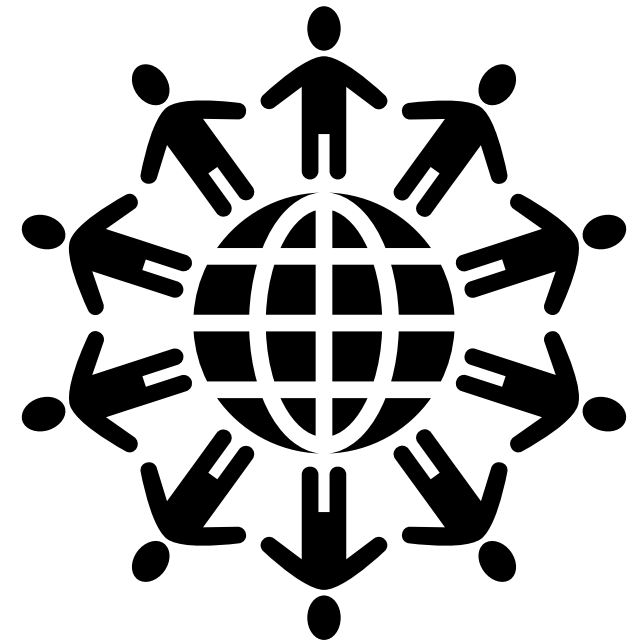


WHY DO DIGITAL NOMADS NEED THE YOUTH SECTOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

We will mention important key actors to give you an overview but will later in the text focus on youth work in non-formal settings, mostly provided by youth organisations and NGOs.

Key actors:

- Government bodies at local, regional, and national levels.
- Researchers and Academics.
- Businesses and Corporations.
- Parents, Families, and Communities.
- International Organizations.
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- Youth Organizations.
- Youth Workers and Youth Leaders.
- Education institutions.
- Health and Social Services providers.



When thinking about the youth infrastructure, you have to consider the local context and the specific needs of youth, as well as the stage of development of the youth sector in your community.





WHY DO DIGITAL NOMADS NEED THE YOUTH SECTOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

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4 STEPS FOR IDENTIFYING THE SITUATION OF YOUTH WORK IN YOUR AREA:



1. Assess the stage of development of the youth sector in your community before bringing digital nomads into the focus.
2. Detect key actors and relevant stakeholders actively engaging youth in your community and surroundings. Check on the capacity of key actors, both human and financial resources.
3. Research and pin down available youth infrastructure and other potential infrastructure that could be beneficial to the youth and digital nomads.
4. Find out how many local youngsters engage in short and long-term volunteering opportunities. Discover what are the long-term goals of key actors in the youth sector.





WHY DO DIGITAL NOMADS NEED THE YOUTH SECTOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

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All this will give you an overview of the youth sector and enable you to detect strong and weak points on which you can create a starting point for supporting digital nomads in your community by engaging with the youth sector.

YOUTH INFRASTRUCTURE THAT BENEFITS DIGITAL NOMADS

Youth-oriented infrastructure creates an environment where they can thrive, learn, and contribute to society positively. That's essential for empowering youth and enabling them to achieve their full potential. Both offline and online infrastructure not only benefit the youth directly but also contribute to the overall development and progress of society. Youth-oriented infrastructure can easily cover most of the digital nomads' needs and serve as an engaging momentum among digital nomads and local youth. Imagine that youth-oriented infrastructure offers support programs for young digital nomads, gives them free or cheap access to digital tools, a strong internet connection and offers co-working space and/or co-living/residency in exchange for a volunteer program that boosts the knowledge and digital skills of local youth. It's a win-win-win situation. Digital nomads' needs are covered, local youth have more opportunities for developing knowledge and skills, and community benefits in the long-term by attracting young people to the countryside and holding local youth in the countryside by giving them new learning opportunities and working perspectives.





WHY DO DIGITAL NOMADS NEED THE YOUTH SECTOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

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Let's name a few youth-oriented infrastructures by providing you with ideas on how this infrastructure can support digital nomads, especially in attracting them to the countryside:

Youth Centres: Depending on their programs and infrastructural possibilities, they could offer mentorship and support programs to young digital nomads and serve as info and a starting point for cultural, community and democratic engagement of digital nomads with local young people and community. Youth workers or youth leaders working in the youth centre could act as community managers to digital nomads who come on retreats or coliving coworking facilities.

Youth Clubs/Associations: When they are established in the countryside, they have limited human, financial and infrastructural resources, and they could benefit from digital nomads by offering them community and youth-oriented volunteer programs, cultural exchange activities, community meeting points and engaging events that they are searching for when choosing a temporary place for living and working.

Co-working: Ideal place for meeting like-minded people, networking, establishing new cooperations and working. Co-working spaces can offer a variety of options for digital nomads, especially for youth, such as free meeting offices, free or cheaper working desks, organised networking events, etc, to enable their entrepreneurial spirit and business to grow.





WHY DO DIGITAL NOMADS NEED THE YOUTH SECTOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

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Co-living: As a safe space for covering the basic living needs of digital nomads, it should provide new value and be a welcoming and engaging place that ties up a person with positive energy with the local community. The coliving emotionally ties young digital nomads to the community and local environment to make them feel at home and welcomed. For example, youth workers or youth leaders could organise community events to discover local cuisine and experience traditional customs and food at local hosts. On the other hand, digital nomads could host community dinners and share their food heritage with locals.

Residencies: Art residency programs are widely known as a successful way to enable emerging artists from all around the world to (co)create artworks. Imagine how beneficial it would be to offer digital nomad residencies to young people and support them in co-creating and co-working opportunities. Depending on the longevity of residency programs, this would give additional value to community development, especially if, within the program, we focus on the exchange of knowledge and skills between digital nomads and local youngsters.

Incubators: They are a great place for young entrepreneurs since they provide support and mentorship programs to their startup ideas or already established businesses that need support for growth. They could offer social entrepreneurship and social innovation programs which boost local development, taking into consideration the needs of the community and are based on cultural and natural heritage or available local resources. When we think and speak about incubators, they are not only oriented on new technology and ICT, but also support local associations and help individual (rural) entrepreneurs to develop their ideas by providing a full-scale range of services. Find more information in references at the end of this guidebook.





WHY DO DIGITAL NOMADS NEED THE YOUTH SECTOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

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Cultural and Creative Spaces: Fostering creativity opens new horizons and brings new ideas into action while culture raises spirits and inspires, boosts engagement, and builds social relationships. Youth workers and/or cultural workers could organise special cultural events to get to know local culture, traditions, and customs. Moreover, creative spaces could benefit from digital nomads by giving them the opportunity to organise creative workshops for the local community.

Online Platforms and Networks provide access to essential information about the local community, national and local legislation, cost of living, and safety tips. They could facilitate communication and connection with the local youth and digital nomads. Moreover, digital platforms such as Worldpackers (www.worldpackers.com), Workaway (www.workaway.info), and WWOOF (www.woof.net) could be a great source for digital nomads to find opportunities in the countryside, as well as for youth organisations to attract digital nomads to their programmes or initiatives.

Youth work is mostly provided by youth organisations, NGOs, youth workers, and youth leaders in nonformal settings. If you would like to discover more about youth work in nonformal setting there is literature available online.





WHY DO DIGITAL NOMADS NEED THE YOUTH SECTOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

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BENEFIT AND IMPACT OF YOUTH WORK

We would like to give some of the key benefits and impacts of youth work in order to simplify connecting the dots and to establish a fundament for addressing the perspectives that the youth sector can contribute to attracting digital nomads in the countryside.

BENEFITS AND IMPACTS INCLUDE:

- Personal Development
- Social Inclusion and Community Engagement
- Empowerment and Agency
- Educational Support
- Health and Well-being
- Reduction of Risky Behaviours
- Employment and Career Development
- Bridging the Digital Divide
- Promoting Cultural Awareness and Diversity
- Social and Economic Impact
- Prevention and Intervention

Overall, youth work is a proactive and empowering approach to addressing the needs and aspirations of young people, enabling them to become active, responsible, and resilient individuals who positively contribute to their communities and society at large. By developing specific programs that support young digital nomads, we will attract skilled and knowledgeable young people to the countryside who are, by default, open to giving value back to the community.



BENEFITS



BRINGING NEW PERSPECTIVES TO THE YOUTH WORK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

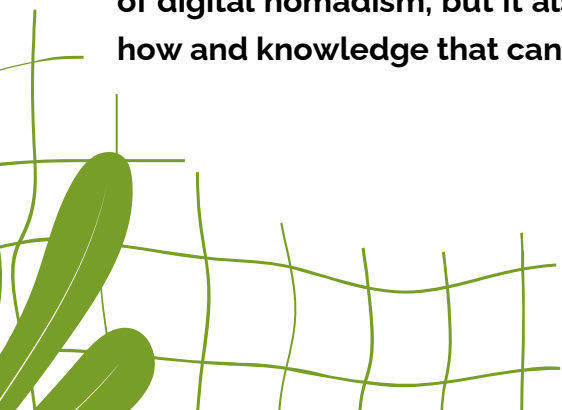
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When thinking about youth work and its potential to create a supportive ecosystem for digital nomads we can't help but think that youth work can encompass a combination of community-oriented, digital nomad-oriented, and youth-oriented approaches and that these elements can complement each other in various ways. The main characteristic of this approach can easily be reflected in the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 three core areas of action: Engage, Connect and Empower. Working towards building a supportive ecosystem for digital nomads in countryside, youth sector is especially contributing to the following Youth Goals:

- 6. Moving Rural Youth Forward,
- 7. Quality Employment for All,
- 8. Quality Learning and
- 9. Space and Participation for All.



Organisations, youth workers, youth leaders, and youth can help create a supportive ecosystem for a more inclusive and diverse digital nomad community in several ways. Not only can youth work empower young people to explore and succeed in the world of digital nomadism, but it also creates a welcoming environment and community to host digital nomads, thus attracting know-how and knowledge that can benefit the local community.





BRINGING NEW PERSPECTIVES TO THE YOUTH WORK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

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Digital nomad-oriented approach

Youth Workers and Youth Leaders can provide access to resources to digital nomads, such as co-working spaces, technology, and internet connectivity, and facilitate networking events, both online and in-person. They can promote cultural exchange by facilitating opportunities for community engagement, especially with young people. One of the keystones of youth work, inclusion, can be reflected here as well, making digital nomadism accessible to a wider range of young people from different backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses by providing them with special programs and access to the youth infrastructure. Youth organisations, together with youth, can create a welcoming community that offers a sense of belonging and provides practical advice on topics like visa regulations, tax considerations, local transportation, and cultural and sports events to digital nomads.



BRINGING NEW PERSPECTIVES TO THE YOUTH WORK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

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Youth-oriented approach

Youth work programs can offer training and workshops that equip young people with competencies to become digital nomads themselves. They can offer career guidance and mentorship to help young individuals explore digital nomad opportunities and offer support for young entrepreneurs, including access to funding, business development resources, and advice on starting and growing a business while on the road. By supporting young people to work with digital nomads (as tutors or “buddies”), they can gain skills in different areas, e.g., decision-making events management, and learn about approaches that incorporate multicultural and community elements.



BRINGING NEW PERSPECTIVES TO THE YOUTH WORK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

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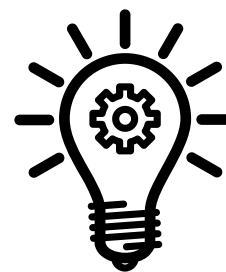
Community-oriented approach

Youth organisations could, with the support of digital nomads, have a positive impact on the local communities and give quality inputs for community development. One of the aspects of youth work is advocacy, and youth work can play a role in advocating for policies and regulations that are favourable to digital nomads, especially young digital nomads.





START WITH A STRATEGY!



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This chapter explores the pivotal roles of various stakeholders—youth workers, decision-makers, and tourism professionals—and the mechanisms that guide their actions. Their collective mission is to craft an environment that not only beckons digital nomads but also enriches the lives of rural residents, especially the younger generation.

As we navigate the pathways of transformation, we delve into the concrete actions we can undertake, strategies that empower digital nomads to express their needs and aspirations while fostering a harmonious relationship between them and local communities. Together, through this alliance of the youth sector, decision-makers, and tourism workers, we strive to redefine the future of the countryside, making it a hospitable haven for all. In developing this section, we would also like to thank the participants of the training activity, which took place on the island Iž in Croatia and united more than 20 participants from 4 different European Countries.





THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORKERS

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Youth workers can play an essential role in facilitating a welcoming environment and inclusive and supportive ecosystem for digital nomads by nurturing a youth-centric approach and fostering local youth engagement. Their role is to create opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and personal development and act as intermediaries by advocating for local policies and resources that foster the integration of digital nomads in the countryside. Once you have assessed the stage of development of the youth sector in your community, it is time to bring digital nomads into your focus and, based on their needs, provide opportunities for bringing them into the countryside and engaging with local youth. Youth workers should think beyond traditional boundaries and redefine their roles to be innovation catalysts. The beauty of their work is to create a dynamic environment that not only attracts digital nomads but also drives community growth and transformation.







THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORKERS

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OUR RECOMMENDATION:



- Start an intersectoral and interdisciplinary festival that will celebrate the digital nomad lifestyle. Bring in inspirational and motivational speakers who will share hands-on experience, give workshops, and create networking opportunities during the festival.
 - Create a volunteering program that will engage local youth in supporting digital nomads' integration into the cultural and social life of the community by providing clear tasks to volunteers and describing the benefits of such engagement.
 - Develop a mentorship program for young digital nomads and offer support and resources, business development assistance, networking opportunities, and access to funding opportunities.
 - Create the Nomad-in-Residence programs and invite digital nomads to live and work in the countryside.
 - Develop a common vision of community development with local government, tourism workers, and local stakeholders to facilitate growth by digital nomads' presence.
 - Organize a few-day event that will gather local youth and digital nomads in a short time which will focus on specific topics, for example, a hackathon or skill-sharing events, workshops, and activities on innovation based on local resources which will boost the entrepreneurial skills of local youngsters, but still provide added value to the digital nomads.
 - When creating programs, festivals, events, and workshops, focus on making digital nomadism accessible to a wider range of youth with fewer opportunities. You can provide special programs, access to the youth infrastructure, and support services that help young individuals explore opportunities as digital nomads.
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THE ROLE OF DECISION-MAKERS

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Decision-makers can play a very important role in attracting and supporting the community of digital nomads and the first step is to create a welcoming environment for digital nomads. We do not only mean direct support for digital nomads but also support for actors in the local community who are one of the most important elements that attract digital nomads. For instance, decision-makers, together with the youth sector, could develop policies and funding programs that promote inclusivity, economic development, and cultural exchange. Local governmental bodies, together with tourist offices and the tourism sector, can prepare measures and activities and support local rental households in the promotion and establishment of needed conditions to host digital nomads through different tenders, funding opportunities and/or by providing visibility opportunities and networking. Nevertheless, here are ideas of actions decision-makers could take to create a welcoming environment for digital nomads.



THE ROLE OF DECISION-MAKERS

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OUR RECOMMENDATION:



- Encourage collaboration between local businesses and digital nomads through workshops, projects, and events, including projects where digital nomads develop solutions for the local community.
- Create and promote co-working spaces and digital nomad-friendly cafes with strong Wi-Fi.
- Encourage the development of affordable, flexible accommodation options, such as co-living spaces, short-term rentals, and hostels, and partner with local businesses to offer discounts or special deals for digital nomads.
- Offer local SIM cards and prepaid mobile data plans to make it easier for digital nomads to stay connected.
- Host digital nomad meetups, events, and networking opportunities to help newcomers connect with the local and nomad communities.
- Invest in high-speed internet infrastructure to ensure reliable and fast internet access or support local rental households through tenders to enable in high-speed internet.
- Provide access to legal and financial advice, including tax information for digital nomads.
- Encourage cultural exchange programs and activities.
- Implement eco-friendly initiatives and promote responsible tourism practices to protect the local environment and natural resources.
- Create a local advisory council or working group that includes digital nomads and young workers to provide input on local initiatives.



RECOMMENDED



THE ROLER OF DECISION MAKERS

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OUR RECOMMENDATION:

- Cooperate with tourist boards and offices and launch marketing campaigns targeting digital nomads to showcase the region's unique attractions, culture, and lifestyle.
- Establish channels for digital nomads to provide feedback and suggestions for improving the local environment and community.
- Continuously adapt and refine policies and services based on the needs and preferences of digital nomads, including accessibility solutions.
- Additional foster retreat and coliving activities in remote areas and include young people from these areas in activities development.

By taking these steps, decision-makers can create an environment that not only attracts digital nomads but also benefits the local economy, promotes cultural exchange, and enhances the overall quality of life for both residents and visitors



RECOMMENDED



THE ROLE FOR TOURISM WORKERS

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Tourist workers are people who work in the tourism industry, providing services (for example: hotel staff, tour guides, waiters, chefs, transportation workers...). They are essential for rural areas because they support greatly the local economy.

Many digital nomads are drawn to rural areas because they offer a more affordable and laid-back lifestyle than urban areas. By working together, tourist workers and digital nomads can create a mutually beneficial relationship. Tourist workers can help to bring economic benefits to their local communities, and digital nomads can enjoy a unique and rewarding lifestyle in rural areas.

Here are ideas of actions tourist workers could take to create a welcoming environment for digital nomads and contribute to the common strategy.



THE ROLE FOR TOURISM WORKERS

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OUR RECOMMENDATION



- Create specialised tourism packages that combine experiences catering to both digital nomads and local youth and are developed by young people from your area. These could include adventure tours, cultural immersions, and eco-friendly activities.
- Understand youth work opportunities and collaborate with local youth workers in developing activities for engaging digital nomads. This could involve mentorship programmes, workshops or events.
- Create informative materials, digital or print, to provide information on national legislation, local laws, visas, hospitality, opportunities, relevant stakeholders, and key actors in the local community, together with cultural and natural heritage information.
- Develop a digital nomad information hub or website that provides essential information about the area, including visa requirements, cost of living, healthcare options, and safety tips.
- Provide clear guidelines for digital nomads on transportation, accommodation, available infrastructure, environment, and community.
- Provide accommodation solutions which are suitable for digital nomads (WIFI, coworking places, common areas ...)
- Use social media and online platforms to reach the digital nomad community and promote rural areas as attractive destinations.
- Ensure the safety of digital nomads by promoting a secure environment and providing information on local emergency services.
- Offer information about local healthcare facilities, health insurance options, and vaccinations.
- Develop a certificate, e.g., a Digital Friendly Badge, for accommodations covering the needs of digital nomads and incorporate it in all your promotional materials.
- Establish feedback mechanisms to continuously improve the experience for both digital nomads and local youth.
- Adapt the strategy based on real-time feedback.



SUGGESTIONS ON WORKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WITH DIGITAL NOMADS



In today's dynamic landscape, the rise of digital nomadism has cast a spotlight on the potential of the countryside to serve as a haven for remote workers and youth without boundaries. But the quest for creating an ecosystem that not only attracts digital nomads but also nourishes the long-term well-being of local communities, particularly the youth, is a complex undertaking. This journey entails a profound understanding of resilience, sustainability, and adaptability, and it's a collaborative effort that brings together the youth sector, decision-makers, and tourism workers.

In this pursuit, we delved into the mechanisms and strategies necessary to succeed in attracting digital nomads to the countryside while ensuring their integration with local communities. In order to steer a positive change in the countryside, it is necessary to have mechanisms that allow digital nomads to voice their concerns and aspirations while establishing a foundation for a symbiotic relationship between digital nomads and rural communities. The partnership between the youth sector, decision-makers, and tourism workers seeks to redefine the future of the countryside, making it a welcoming abode for all.





SUGGESTIONS ON WORKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WITH DIGITAL NOMADS



A resilient ecosystem that meets the needs of digital nomads involves a sustainable and adaptable environment that can withstand challenges and changes over time. Steering towards a resilient ecosystem for digital nomads involves a holistic approach that takes into account the needs of both the nomads and the local communities and youth when we are speaking about youth work. By prioritising sustainability, cultural exchange, and adaptability, decision-makers, together with the youth sector and tourism workers, can create an environment that not only attracts digital nomads but also contributes to the long-term well-being of the region and its residents, especially youth.





SUGGESTIONS ON WORKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WITH DIGITAL NOMADS

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Involved stakeholders should continuously listen to the needs of digital nomads and have hands-on mechanisms that enable them to adapt easily to the constantly changing phenomenon. Therefore, it is recommended that the youth sector, decision-makers and tourism workers in the countryside have:

- Regular feedback mechanisms that digital nomads can easily access and use to provide input, suggestions, and concerns.
- Dedicated online platforms or communities where digital nomads can share their experiences, connect with each other, and engage with stakeholders.
- Advisory councils or working groups composed of digital nomads, youth workers, youth leaders, local residents, business owners, and local government representatives.
- Regular surveys and assessments of the digital nomad community's needs and preferences.
- Open and transparent dialogues between stakeholders and digital nomads.
- Support services to act swiftly to address challenges or issues that digital nomads face.
- Flexibility in policies and programs to accommodate the changing circumstances and needs of digital nomads.
- Collaboration among stakeholders, digital nomads, and local communities to find mutually beneficial solutions.
- Data-driven decision-making.
- Transparent communication about changes, improvements, and the outcomes of their feedback..
- A long-term vision for the ecosystem's development while remaining adaptable to short-term needs and challenges.

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CHAPTER 3: WHERE TO GET FINANCING

nomadland

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pridružiti
inovacije
v dedščini

ATPERSON

INNOVATION

UDRUGA
PRIZMA

YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

OVERVIEW OF FINANCING INSTRUMENTS

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INTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

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EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

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FINANCING THROUGH EUROPEAN FUNDS

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PRACTICAL EXERCISES



WHO SHOULD READ THIS CHAPTER?

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In this chapter, we will highlight the main financial opportunities available for the development of digital nomadism in rural areas. We will focus on European international grants as well as other funding opportunities (private financiers, crowdfunding, etc.). External funding sources for the youth field will be at the forefront, as the guide will primarily focus on the youth sector, including decision-makers and related stakeholder groups. You will learn what to be careful about when thinking about financing your budget!



If you are active in youth work and want to learn something more about financing projects, this is the place for you! It can be crucial to lay the ground stone for impacting digital nomadism and the wider stakeholder community as beneficiaries. We will talk about the important (international) public grants and also explain what crowdfunding is, as well as providing you with some simple suggestions about getting private funding!

But first, you will be introduced to the financing mechanisms in general, with a special focus on the youth and coliving sector. No Money? Cash is a really fundamental for financing. This includes rising it, spending it, and investing it. Creating a financing process is the most effective way to operate your commercialisation business - and its financing – and to keep it on track.

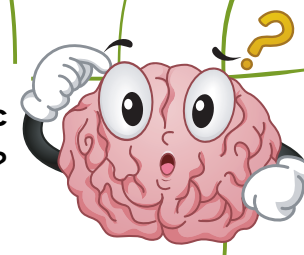




WHO SHOULD READ THIS CHAPTER?

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Do you know the difference between internal and external funding? Did you consider gaining the economic value of services that you develop for the local community based on your individual experiences and skills sets? Or what is equity and debt?



That are just some of the terms you will read more about in our simple guide to the financing of the retreat or coliving! Before planning, implementing and operating your cultural tourism concept, alternatives for the successful financing of business operations have to be considered. Each individual financing option has to be discussed and consequently the various alternative actions an entrepreneur may take have to be addressed.

Therefore, entrepreneurs in the coliving and youth fields need an overview on the different forms of financing, but also obtain on their own more detailed insights into the motivations and perspectives of potential capital providers. Consequently, this chapter will introduce some of the relevant financing schemes and the unique features of the financing possibilities being available.





OVERVIEW OF FINANCING INSTRUMENTS

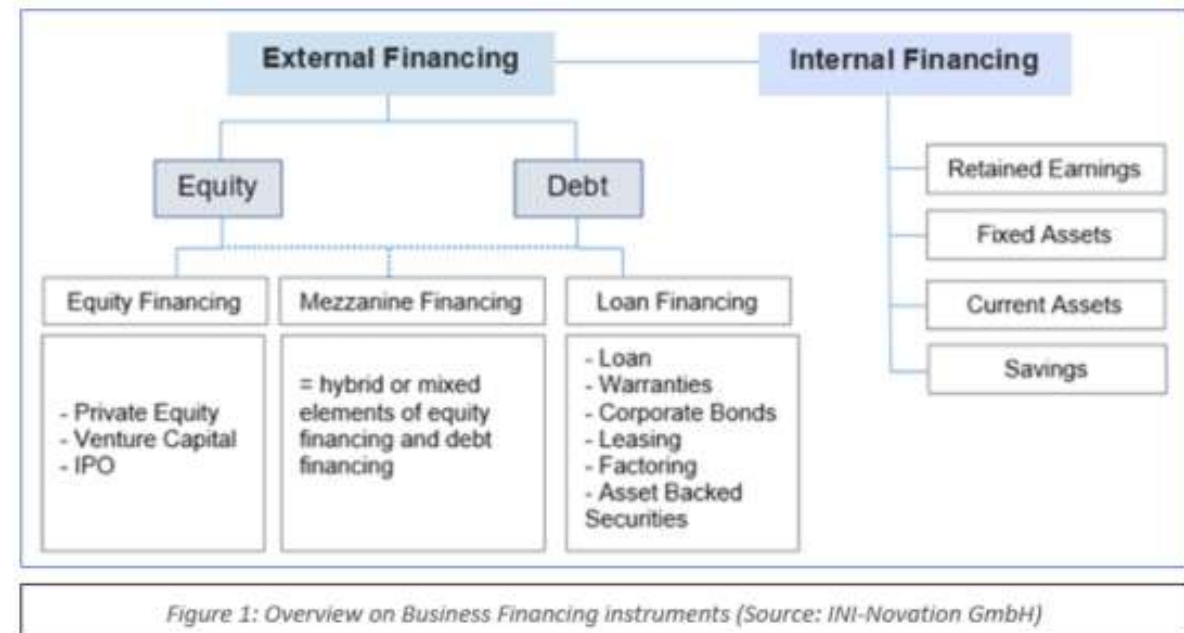
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In this section the general options and mechanisms for financing and fund raising will be described to introduce you into the financing world. Financing establishment of a business, financing an innovative activity idea or financing commencing a new life as digital nomad is a way for individuals and companies to secure funding or raise money to position themselves using business ideas for commercial purposes and for generating return on financing investments. Also, in the cultural and tourism sector, companies may have their own reasons for raising capital, but more are increasingly starting to rely on their business concepts.

Ramping up a youth support and coliving business needs funding, which can thus be from its own resources, or it can be sourced from somewhere else. When you aim the funding from your own sources i.e. from your own assets, from your own profits, we would call it an internal source of financing. When you need huge money and only internal sources are not enough, you might want to go out and take loans from banks or other financial institutions

The following chart provides an overview on the different funding schemes in general:





OVERVIEW OF FINANCING INSTRUMENTS

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By making a quick comparison, we will realise that there are key differences between internal financing and external financing:

- Internal sources of finance are sources inside the business. External sources of finance, on the other hand, are sources outside the business.
- Entrepreneurs typically look for funding internally when the fund requirement is quite low. In the case of external sources of financing the funding requirement are usually quite huge.
- Should you manage to source the funding internally, the cost of capital is pretty low. In the case of external sources of financing, the cost of capital is medium to high. Internal sources of funding don't require any collateral. But external sources of funding require collateral (or transfer of ownership).

And you should know, when to use what; or to be more specific: you should be aware of the fact that not at every time of the life-cycle of your entrepreneurial youth work or coliving concept all financing sources and funding schemes are properly available.

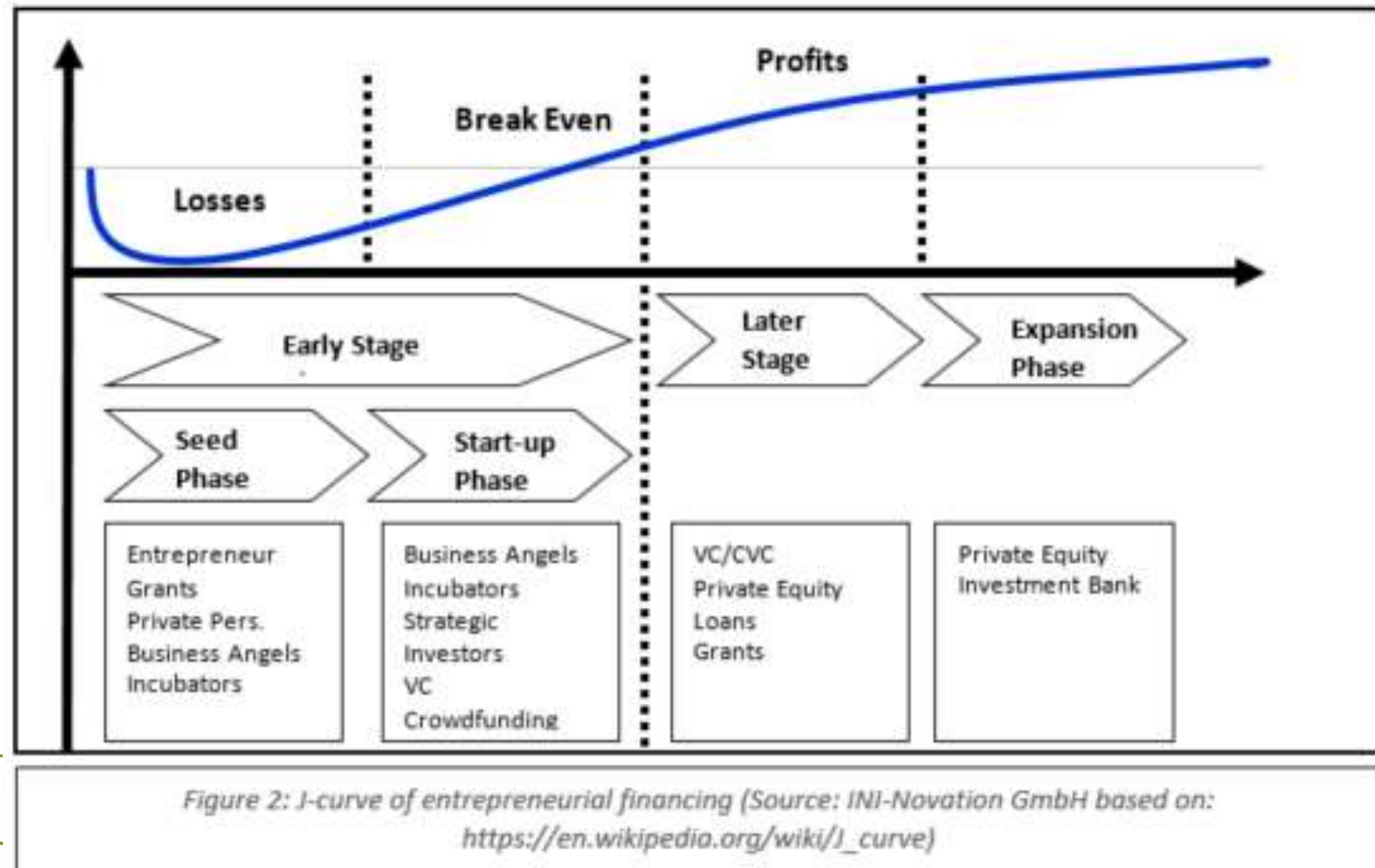




OVERVIEW OF FINANCING INSTRUMENTS

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The “J-curve of entrepreneurial financing” (in literature also often referred to as “hockey-stick curve”) describes the different phases of financing a business from starting it up towards growing and sustainable operation. Each of these phases require a primary focus on the different financing sources and poses specific challenges accordingly.

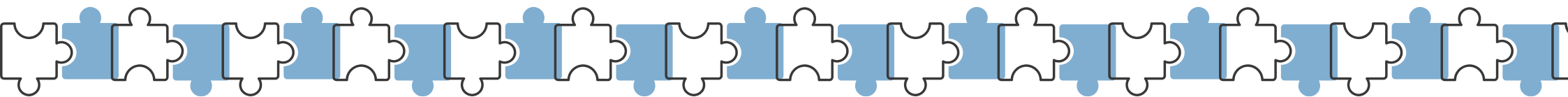




OVERVIEW OF FINANCING INSTRUMENTS

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As the chart above shows, the J-curve is used to illustrate the tendency of entrepreneurial financing to deliver negative returns in early years and investment gains in the outlying years. In the early years, a number of factors contribute to negative returns including bootstrapping costs, marketing costs, salaries, management effort, basic equipment costs etc. Over time your operations will begin to experience unrealized gains followed eventually by events in which gains are realized and an expansion of your business can be accomplished by so-called “organic growth”, which means mainly out of own revenues.



The chart also shows that in each and every of this growth path there are only specific funding instruments available as the business grows as laid out in the next sections. You will learn a lot about financing instruments which are not easy to get and which are not necessarily sustainable. These instruments are at best a supplement to your entrepreneurial commitment for boosting your youth and coliving activities. They will never be at the centre of your business if you want to organise your activities and projects sustainably. At first glance some of the instruments presented below might seem very far from your working reality. Believe us: It is not! If you want to position yourself professionally in your target market, sooner or later you will have to deal with it, because this will become or is already part of your entrepreneurial strategy.

But don't be fooled by the wealth of possible financing instruments: These are tools for the development of your activities, not an end in itself. Your first objective as a youth worker and coliving entrepreneur will therefore always be to generate direct income from your business activities, that is, from your internal funding mechanisms.





INTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

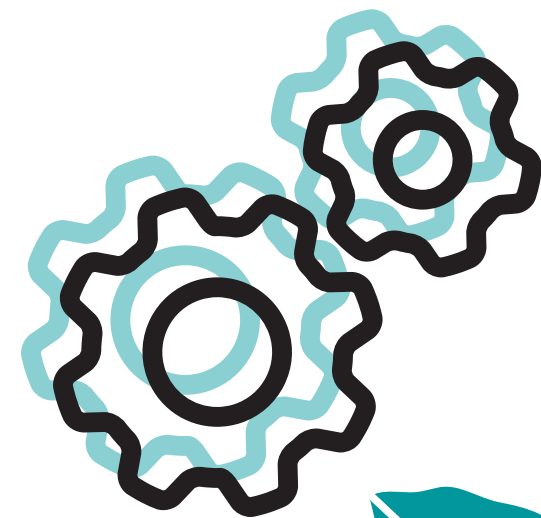
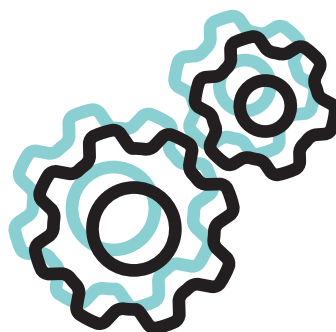
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In the global marketplace, the financing debate often revolves around the best option one can use to fund its activities. Unfortunately, external sources of financing — sponsors, donators, lenders or investors — are often sceptical, especially in the case of smaller businesses like those which you will most probably steer in your target sector. This can leave you to rely on internal sources of finance for investing in your business, activities and projects, which are summarized in this section.

When you use the mechanism of internal financing you may fund your activities with your own liquidity, the so-called cash flow. This may be personal savings or money available in your bank accounts or even money that may be available in a very short term through a so-called liquidation of assets. However, selling assets decreases the value of your organisation and can trigger transaction costs, as well as taxes. Internal funding keeps all assets in the institution and incurs no additional expenses beyond the cost of the planned project itself.

Applying those mechanisms of internal financing prevents you from paying interest to the bank or sharing ownerships, profits and dividends with an equity investor. Using internal funding offers the advantage of keeping control in the hands of the company's founders or the individual entrepreneurs. You also do not have to go through an application process for public grants. Here are some options for internal funding:





INTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS



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RETAINED EARNINGS

Retained earnings are an easy source of internal financing to use because they are liquid assets. Retained earnings are the portion of net income that you have retained in your business and that is not paid out to the owners.

FIXED ASSETS

Fixed assets are those that are not easily converted to cash. Typically, these assets include equipment, property and IP. Because these assets take time to convert to cash, they cannot be relied on for short-term access to finance.

CURRENT ASSETS

Current assets consist of cash or anything that can easily be converted into cash. You should be careful, however, not to decrease your current assets to levels less than your current liabilities, as this may prevent you from paying off your debts.

PERSONAL SAVINGS

Savings are the backbone of many small businesses. If your business doesn't have the assets to finance your activities, you may still have finances that you can contribute to the business. This provides an alternative to seeking external donors or loans and allows you to retain control over your business.

FREE RESOURCES

Have you ever thought about the free resources which are available for you? They can be taken as internal financing as well although they might not look as financing at first sight. Voluntary contributions by supporters, networks and free information on any relevant matter might be that kind of resources. E.g. the chambers of commerce offer numerous free support measures which are resources you have free access to – just grab it!





INTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

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There are several advantages of building our activities and projects on internal funding mechanisms. Please find below the most important considerations:

- **Internal funding vs. bank financing:** When you use company funds, you do not have to pay interest to the bank. You also do not have to go through the application process, which can be costly if you have to pay someone to prepare profit and loss statements, balance sheets and other documentation required by the bank.
- **Internal funding vs. selling stock:** One way to raise money for your business projects is to sell stock to investors. This gives them part ownership of your business. Using internal funding offers the advantage of keeping control in the hands of the business' founders.





INTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

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- **Internal funding vs. selling assets:** Some businesses try to fund new expenditures by selling assets. This decreases the value of the company and can trigger transaction costs, as well as taxes. Internal funding keeps all assets in the company and incurs no additional expenses beyond the cost of the project itself.
- **Internal funding vs. government grants:** Especially in the youth work sector, your business may qualify for government grants under certain circumstances. However, the application process can be lengthy and expensive. The expense comes from preparing the documentation for these grants. You have to win the approval of the agency giving the grant, and this can involve many individuals and committees. With internal funding, you can start on your project immediately, with no approval required other than that of your management.




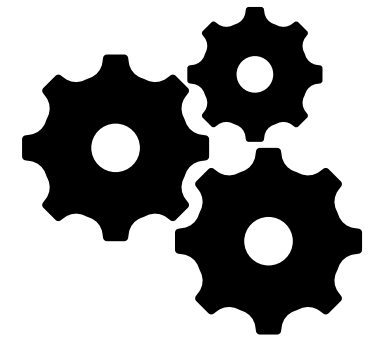


EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS




In this section, the different mechanisms for external financing and fund raising will be compared and summarized. With debt financing you may fund your project or business operations by borrowing on financial exchanges or reaching out to private or public lenders. Organizations reaching out to such private lenders as banks and insurance companies can receive funds through loans, overdraft agreements and lines of credit. Equity financing enables an organisation to fund its activities while maintaining a clean credit profile. The organisation raises money by selling co-ownership. In modern economies, equity funding often gives way to a long-term shareholder-oriented strategy. Buyers of equity, the so-called shareholders, may receive dividend payments in cash or stock. They may also enjoy another monetary benefit when stock prices rise on financial markets.

Likewise, donations and grants are proper external funding mechanisms. You will read it at the end of this section and – with a special focus on your digital nomadism business – also in section 4.



Your access to financing options depends on how attractive your youth and coliving support business looks to donators and financial institutions. Your capacity to plan and manage your financing needs and to develop a robust business proposal is a crucial issue; and this includes also knowledge of available financing options. Strategic business planning is essential to put in place the structures in order to respond to the financing needs of your business and to assure the viability of your business in increasingly complex capital structures.





EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

Capital structure is a business finance term that describes the proportion of an organisation's capital, or operating money, that is obtained through debt and equity. Since capital is expensive for many businesses, it is particularly important for you to determine a target capital structure.

DEBT

Debt includes loans and other types of credit that must be repaid in the future, usually with interest.

EQUITY

Equity involves selling a partial interest in the company to investors, usually in the form of stock. In contrast to debt financing, equity financing does not involve a direct obligation to repay the funds. Instead, equity investors become part-owners and partners in the business, and thus are able to exercise some degree of control over how it is run.





EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS



All businesses need access to sufficient financing to grow. Even where you may not wish to invest, expand and grow your business, your organisation will still need financing to support your day-to-day operation and to maintain your market position. Both, debt and equity financing offer also digital nomads, youth workers and coliving entrepreneurs a number of advantages and disadvantages. The key for you is to evaluate your particular situation and determine its optimal capital structure by comparing advantages and disadvantages of financing instruments:

ADVANTAGES OF DEBT AND EQUITY FINANCING

The main advantage of debt financing is that it allows you as owner and/or manager of your business to retain ownership and control of your organisation. In contrast to equity financing, you as responsible actor are able to make key strategic decisions and also to keep and reinvest more organization's profits. Another advantage of debt financing is that it provides you with a greater degree of financial freedom than equity financing. Debt obligations are limited to the loan repayment period, after which the lender has no further claim on the business, whereas equity investors' claim does not end until their stock is sold (so-called "exit strategy of equity investors"). Debt financing is also easy to administer, as it generally lacks the complex reporting requirements that accompany some forms of equity financing. Finally, debt financing tends to be less expensive for organizations over the long term, though more expensive over the short term, than equity financing.





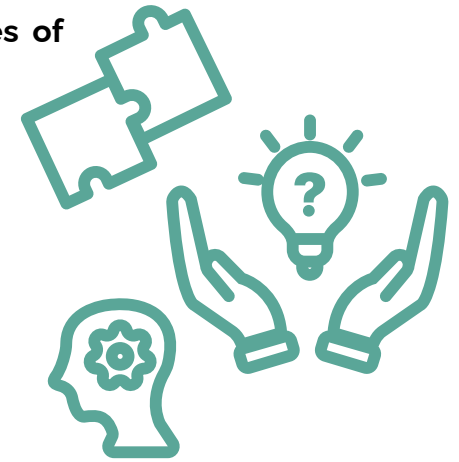
EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

The main advantage of equity financing for organizations and individuals, which are likely to struggle with cash flow initially, is that there is no obligation to repay the money. Equity financing is also more likely to be available to concept and early-stage businesses than debt financing. Equity investors primarily seek growth opportunities, so they are often willing to take a chance on a good idea. But debt financiers primarily seek security, so they usually require the organizations to have some sort of track record before they will consider making a loan. Another advantage of equity financing is that investors often prove to be good sources of advice and contacts for small business owners and management.

DISADVANTAGES OF DEBT AND EQUITY FINANCING

The main disadvantage of debt financing is that it requires you or your organisation to make regular monthly payments of principal and interest. Often, when you experience shortages in cash flow it may make such regular payments difficult, and most lenders provide severe penalties for late or missed payments. Another disadvantage associated with debt financing is that its availability is often limited to established institutions. Since lenders primarily seek security for their funds, it can be difficult for unproven businesses to obtain loans.

The main disadvantage of equity financing is that the owners must give up some control of the business. If investors have different ideas about the organization's strategic direction or day-to-day operations, they can pose problems. In addition, some sales of equity can be very complex and expensive to administer. Such equity financing may require complicated legal filings and a great deal of paperwork to comply with various regulations. For many small institutions, therefore, equity financing may necessitate enlisting the help of attorneys and accountants.



EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

SPECIFICS OF DEBT FUNDING

Many entrepreneurs begin their operations by borrowing money from friends and relatives. The main advantage of this type of arrangement is that friends and relatives are likely to provide more flexible terms of repayment than banks or other lenders. In addition, these investors may be more willing to invest in an unproven business idea, based upon their personal knowledge and relationship with the entrepreneur, than other lenders. A related disadvantage, however, is that friends and relatives who loan money may try to become involved in its management. Please be advised that you as small business owners create a formal agreement with such investors to help avoid future misunderstandings.

Banks are the sources that most people immediately think of for debt financing. There are many different types of banks, although in general they exist to accept deposits and make loans. Most banks tend to be fairly risks averse and proceed cautiously when making loans. As a result, it may be difficult for a business or project development and sales initiation business to obtain this sort of financing. Commercial banks usually have more experience in making business loans than do regular savings banks. It may be helpful to review the differences among banks before choosing one as the target of a loan request. In any case, banks may be valuable “free consultants” to your funding initiative, because they are well evaluating the business opportunity as part of their customer acquisition and customer binding strategies.

The interest rate charged on the borrowed funds reflects the level of risk that the lender undertakes by providing you the money. For example, a lender might charge a startup company a higher interest rate than it would an organisation of public interest that had shown financial sustainability for several years.

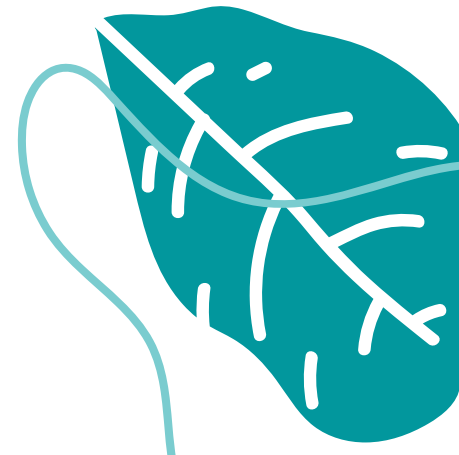


EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

SPECIFICS OF EQUITY FUNDING

Equity financing is a strategy for obtaining capital that involves selling a partial interest in the business to investors. In contrast to debt financing, equity financing does not involve a direct obligation to repay the funds. Instead, equity investors become part-owners and partners in your business, and thus are able to exercise some degree of control over how it is run.

Since creditors are usually paid before owners in the event of business failure, equity investors accept more risk than debt financiers. As a result, they also expect to earn a higher return on their investment. But because the only way for equity investors to recover their investment is to sell the co-ownership at a higher value later, they are generally committed to furthering the long-term success and profitability of the company. In fact, many equity investors in startup ventures and very young companies also provide managerial assistance to the organisation's owners and managers.



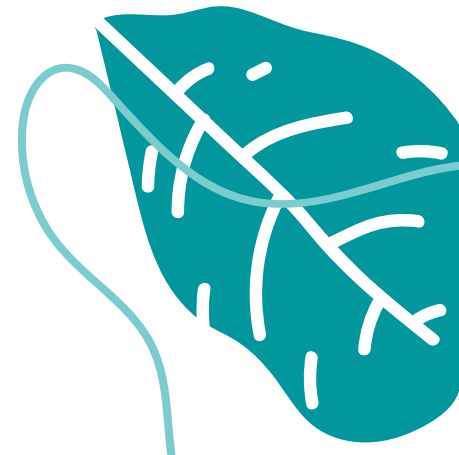
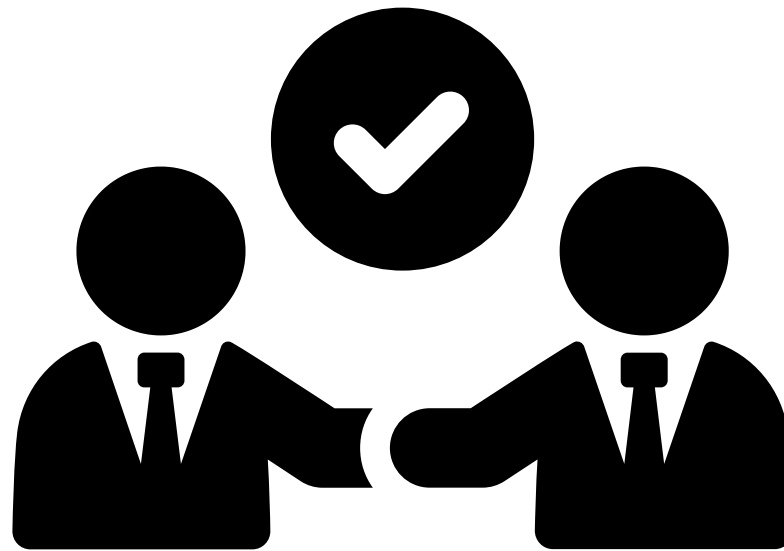


EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

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Equity financing for small businesses is available from a wide variety of sources. Some possible sources of equity financing include the business owner's friends and family, groups of local business owners to wealthy entrepreneurs known as "business angels", employees, customers and suppliers, former employers, venture capital firms, crowdfunding and crowd investing organisations, investment banking firms, insurance companies, and large corporations:

- **Large corporations** often establish investment arms very similar to venture capital firms. However, such corporations are usually more interested in gaining access to new markets, products and technologies through their investments than in strictly realizing financial gains. Partnering with a large corporation (e.g. as product reseller or distributor) through an equity financing arrangement can be an attractive option for a digital nomad. The association with a larger company (e.g. telecom provider or energy supply firm) can increase an organisation's credibility in the marketplace, help it to obtain additional capital, and also provide it with a source of expertise that might not otherwise be available.





EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

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- The most common method of using employees as a source of equity financing is an **Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP)**. Basically, a type of retirement plan, an ESOP involves selling stock in the company to employees in order to share control with them rather than with outside investors. ESOPs offer small businesses a number of tax advantages, as well as the ability to borrow money through the ESOP rather than from a bank.

- Private investors are another possible source of equity financing. A number of **government sources** also exist to fund small businesses through equity financing and other arrangements.

- Another interesting mechanism, which especially may apply well for new product developments, is **equity crowdfunding**. It is an innovative financing approach that can provide organisations and business ventures a simple, low-cost way to raise capital from public and private investors. These internet-based models provide an alternative source of financing especially for those that do not have access to financing through traditional means. Equity crowdfunding provides a means for investors from the "crowd" (or investing public) to invest in a project or organisation in exchange for shares. Business owners can offer "perks" or rewards (such as free product samples or discounts) in exchange for the investment. However, you as business owners and manager have to stipulate the amount they wish to raise from investors. Once this funding is utilised, any surplus (minus fees) becomes available to the organisation for its crowdfunding purpose. Crowdfunding is usually facilitated via an online equity crowdfunding intermediary and is most commonly used by entities at the earlier stages of their development. Legislative changes are opening up opportunities for projects to raise funds from many investors, each contributing small amounts of financing, while diminishing transaction costs, as these investments are made online and through bank transfers. Another advantage of these finance techniques is that they enable the borrower to gather funds in a shorter time span than other financing means.



- Peer-to-peer lending (also known as **crowd-lending**) is a form of debt crowdfunding. It matches people who want loans with people who are potentially willing to fund those loans. The matching is completed via an intermediary, a peer-to-peer lending service, typically provided online.





EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

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FUNDING THROUGH GRANTS AND DONATIONS

We must also take into consideration that many small youth work and coliving activities, especially in rural areas, are managed by people who do not have an academic degree in business administration. The business of these “lifestyle entrepreneurs”, often young people, or people with a migrant background, or people working on a co-operative model, faces bigger challenges in accessing external financing. As digital nomad, your business proposals may consequently not be well-founded or commercially robust. Banks are increasingly more reluctant to finance you and other newcomers.

Therefore, it is recommended to look at various sources of funding that are available via donations, grants and other similar funding instruments, most commonly supported by governments or not-for-profit aid organisations.

A grant is an amount of money to fund certain projects. One may receive a grant for academic, scientific or development work, or to further one's education or to engage in charity work. Grants are also a key part of many philanthropic foundations' activities.

A charitable donation is a gift made by an individual or an organization, mostly to a non-profit organization, charity or private foundation. Charitable donations are commonly in the form of cash, but they can also take the form of real estate, assets, appreciated securities, clothing and other assets or services.





EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS



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Grants are non-repayable funds or products disbursed or given by one party (grant makers), often a government department, corporation, foundation or trust, to a recipient, often (but not always) a non-profit entity, educational institution, business or an individual. In order to receive a grant, some form of "Grant Writing" often referred to as either a proposal or an application is required.

Most grants are made to fund a specific project and require some level of compliance and reporting. The grant writing process involves an applicant submitting a proposal (or submission) to a potential funder, either on the applicant's own initiative or in response to a Request for Proposal from the funder. Other grants can be given to individuals, such as victims of natural disasters or individuals who seek to open a small business. Sometimes grant makers require grant seekers to have some form of tax-exempt status, be a registered non-profit organization or a local government. Project-related funding involving business, communities, and individuals is often arranged by application either in writing or online.

Sources for funding can be found within the organisation's country as well as abroad. As stated earlier, a choice for many small local contributors means that you are growing local roots and a local constituency; in return for contributions these people would wish for a voice in policy making. Funding from local organisations has a number of advantages. The procedures are often easier to follow. And international donors want to know that local sources have been tried first. When applying for funds from abroad, the national registration of your organisation and formal approval of your project by your government is often necessary.





EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS



http://



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The main institutions to apply to for the kind of funds are:

- **Local organisations:** think of Rotary or Lions clubs, churches, temples, mosques, hospitals, local business associations, the 'rich' in your community etc.
- **Governmental agencies** or regional institutions.
- **Voluntary funding organisations:** These include missions, aid agencies and other groups, both religious and secular. Most of them are based in Europe, North America and Australia. Such groups are often interested in supporting smaller-scale development and cultural or historical projects. A list of names can be obtained from national and voluntary organisations and from embassies.
- **Searching the web:** Fund raisers should go to the websites of the big international organisations that cover the groups they are trying to find (i.e. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation). If you type into the 'search' slot smart topic names, the sites tell you there are several projects like the one in your targeted activity management area. If you then look for contact information you will find the address of the regional office and an email address. You will find more tips on fundraising through donations under this link: <https://youtu.be/IPac2YPpvAc>.
- **International Aid organisations:** These include the United Nations Agencies such as WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, the European Commission (EC), the World Bank (WB), and Asian Development Bank (ADB). However, they do not often support small-scale projects directly. Funds from these sources are more likely to be available via national umbrella organisations. It is worth finding out what their contributions to the government and to bigger NGOs in your country are. This information will be available from your government (ministry) or from local UN and EC delegations etc.
- **Foreign Embassies:** They often have funds available for small-scale projects. For example, Dutch Embassies have special funding sources for so called KAP projects. From these sources they can give direct support to projects with sums up to \$20,000. Special procedures/criteria need to be followed.



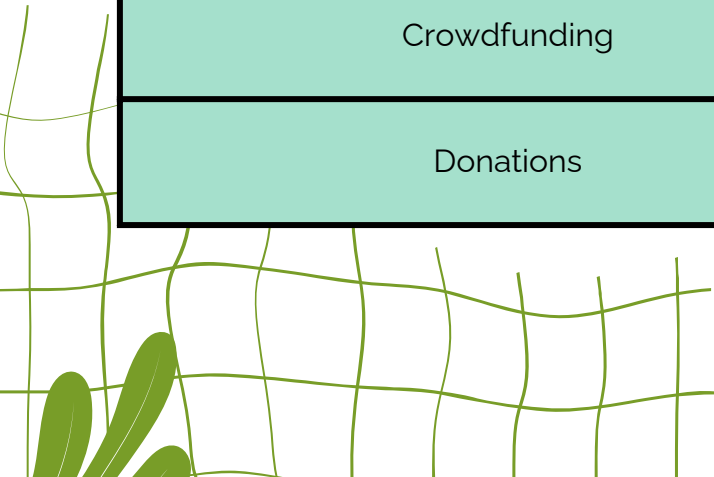


EXTERNAL FUNDING MECHANISMS



FUNDING THROUGH GRANTS AND DONATIONS

FINANCING INSTRUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR ENHANCING YOUR DIGITAL NOMAD BUSINESS	
PRIVATE SUPPORT	PUBLIC SUPPORT
Standard bank loans	Loan guarantees
Private equity and venture capital	Public venture capital
Mezzanine funding	Public mezzanine funding
Crowdfunding	Grants
Donations	Donations





FINANCING THROUGH EUROPEAN FUNDS



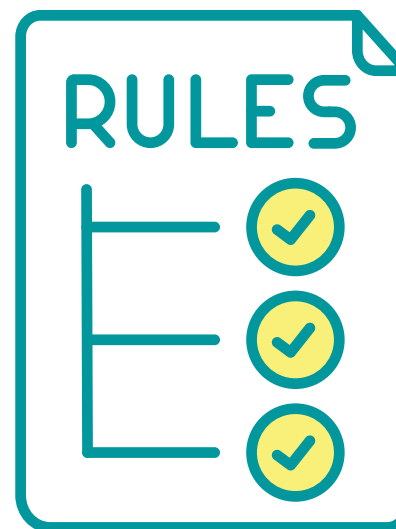
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The objective of this section is to summarize in an easily understandable and accessible form the various sources of funding that are available in the European Union. The various funds and programmes reflect the diversity of your sector's needs - and the range of EU thematic programmes can consequently support you. After exploring the "funding jungle", we assume that still a challenge remains to identify the most proper opportunities. We hope that this section will make the overview easier. It focuses on the most important EU programmes for the youth work and coliving sector addressing types programs eligible for funding your business.

In addition, this section provides examples of how to structure project concepts as well of examples of relevant European funding schemes.

The EU provides funding for a broad range of projects and programmes covering areas such as:

- Regional & urban development.
- Employment & social inclusion.
- Agriculture & rural development.
- Maritime & fisheries policies.
- Research & innovation.
- Humanitarian aid.





FINANCING THROUGH EUROPEAN FUNDS

Funding is managed according to strict rules to ensure there is tight control over how funds are used, and that the money is spent in a transparent, accountable manner. As a group, the EU Commissioners have the ultimate political responsibility for ensuring that EU funds are spent properly. But because most of the funding is managed within the beneficiary countries, responsibility for conducting checks and annual audits lies with national governments.

Over 76% of the EU budget is managed in partnership with national and regional authorities through a system of "shared management", largely through 5 big funds, the Structural & Investment Funds. Collectively, these help to implement the so-called HORIZON Europe strategy:

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – regional and urban development.
- European Social Fund (ESF) – social inclusion and good governance.
- Cohesion Fund (CF) – economic convergence by less-developed regions.
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).



Other funds are managed directly by the EU. These are provided in the form of:

- Grants for specific projects in relation to EU policies, usually following a public announcement known as a 'call for proposals'. Part of the funding comes from the EU, part from other sources.
- Contracts issued by EU institutions to buy in services, goods or works they need for their operations – like studies, training, conference organisation, IT equipment. Contracts are awarded through calls for tender.



FINANCING THROUGH EUROPEAN FUNDS

The period of funds and programmes covers the years 2021 to 2027, called „Horizon Europe“, an ambitious €100 billion research and innovation programme. „Horizon Europe “incorporates policy missions to ensure the effectiveness of research and innovation funding by pursuing clearly defined targets. The Commission has engaged policy experts to develop studies, case studies and reports on how a mission-oriented policy approach will work.

The various funds and programmes reflect the diversity of the different sector's needs; and the range of EU thematic programmes that can consequently support it. Creativity and rural area development, for instance, get support from various programmes, but gathering and digesting information about many programmes remains a challenge for hard-pressed private and public entities.



Figure 4: Structure of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme (Source: EU 2021²)



FINANCING THROUGH EUROPEAN FUNDS

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Work programmes announce the specific research and innovation areas that will be funded. You can access the forthcoming calls for proposals through the one-stop-shop Funding and Tenders Portal. When ready each call gives more precise information on the research and innovation issues that applicants for funding should address in their proposals.

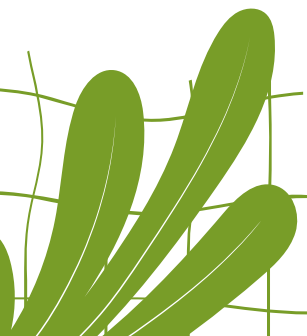
Proposals should also specify the intended outcome of the project and describe the impact-relevant key performance indicators/success criteria.

The **European Investment Bank (EIB)** (www.eib.org) is also actively supporting the creativity and cultural heritage sector. The EIB has experience in financing investments in small businesses through investment loans, framework loans and funds. EIB also funds ancillary services to cultural and youth supporting activities, such as infrastructural access and mobility to sites.

The **European Innovation Council (EIC)** (<https://eic.ec.europa.eu>) and the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)** (<https://eit.eu>) are part of a wider ecosystem to give Europe's many entrepreneurs every opportunity to receive initial funds and to grow.

The EIC provides direct financial support, investment opportunities and coaching to breakthrough and disruptive innovation projects from deep tech founders to start-ups, from entrepreneurial researchers to investors, and from corporate partners to global markets.

The **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)** is Europe's largest innovation network supporting the development of dynamic pan-European partnerships - EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICS) - among top companies, research labs and universities. The EIT Community offers a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship activities across Europe: entrepreneurial education courses, innovation driven research projects, and business creation and acceleration services.





FINANCING THROUGH EUROPEAN FUNDS

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For instance, EIT Culture & Creativity is an initiative designed to strengthen and transform Europe's Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) by connecting creatives and organisations to Europe's largest innovation network. With their Calls for Proposals EIT Culture & Creativity will lay the foundations to unleash the transformative potential of CCSI across nations, disciplines and the wider society, to spearhead the digital, green and social transformations; thus making the Cultural & Creative Sectors & Industries one of the main drivers of a liveable and sustainable future. Call information are made available under the following link: <https://eit-culture-creativity.eu/calls-for-proposals/>

For finding other financing sources for your project and/or business development and valorisation stakeholders should not attempt a scatter approach, sending requests to a wide group of organisations. It can damage the organisation's credibility. Instead, one should try to identify the few funders that have interests that are in line with the organisational and project objectives. If you do not qualify, do not apply. Many funding agencies now have web sites, opening opportunities to look them up and see what they state.





YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

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When you orient yourself towards preparation of a funding application or funding proposal, you should use a kind of mind-mapping template to structure your thoughts and activities. Here is an example of a template, considering most of the relevant aspects of your activity:

Title of your activity / project			
Holder(s) of the project			
Key stakeholders	(What are your target groups?) (On whom do you focus?)		
Deadline for submission		Submission source(s)	
What are your challenges (What are the needs? Why are you doing your project?)			
C ₁			
C ₂			
C _n			
What are your objectives (What do you want to do or to change?)			
O ₁			
O ₂			
O _n			
Task descriptions (Who? When? How?)			
T ₁			
T ₂			
T _n			



YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

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Outcome description	Expected results (What do you want to achieve?)	Outcome indicators	
R_1		Ind_1	
R_2		Ind_2	
R_n		Ind_n	
Impact description	What is the societal, ecological, economical, financial impact		
I_1			
I_2			
I_n			
Target duration	(from date to date) or (number of months or years)		

Figure 5: Template for structuring your activity proposal (Source: INI-Innovation GmbH)



YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

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The following picture shows a mind-mapping example:





YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

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Financing coworking and coliving spaces in rural areas can be challenging. It's important to research and identify the best financing options for your specific project, considering the costs, the potential return on investment, and the availability of funding sources in your area. Let us summarise for you the most appropriate ways for potential financing support:

Local, regional, or national governments

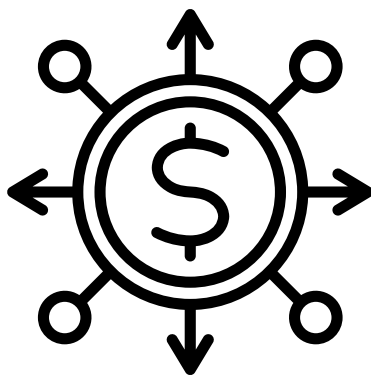
may offer grants or subsidies to support the development of coworking and coliving spaces in rural areas. These grants may cover a portion of the costs of building or renovating the space, or may provide funding for equipment or other resources (Example: Summer of Pioneers: <https://neulandia.de/summer-of-pioneers/>).

Crowdfunding platforms

can be a way to raise funds for coworking and coliving spaces. Through crowdfunding, individuals can contribute small amounts of money towards the project, and in exchange, they may receive perks such as access to the space or other benefits.

Private investments

Investors may be interested in supporting the development of coworking and coliving spaces in rural areas. This could include angel investors, venture capitalists, or other private investors who see the potential for growth in rural entrepreneurship.





YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

Community shares

are a way to raise funds from local people who are interested in supporting the development of coworking and coliving spaces. Through community shares, individuals can purchase shares in the project, and in exchange, they may receive a return on investment or other benefits.

Loans

Banks or other financial institutions may be willing to provide loans to support the development of coworking and coliving spaces in rural areas. These loans may be secured or unsecured, and the terms and conditions will depend on the lender and the specific project.

Crowdfunding platforms

connect investors with borrowers, allowing individuals to lend money to support the development of coworking and coliving spaces in rural areas. Crowdfunding can be a good option for those who cannot secure traditional loans or who are looking for alternative financing options.





YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

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Furthermore, there are several viable options to target EU funding support:

EU FINANCING SUPPORTING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DIGITAL NOMADISM ACTIVITIES

Each program has its specific eligibility criteria, application process, and funding amount, so it's important to research and identify the one that fits your needs best:

Erasmus+ for Young Entrepreneurs

This program offers funding for aspiring or newly established entrepreneurs to gain experience by working with a host entrepreneur in another EU country. The program covers travel and living costs, as well as provides a monthly grant (<https://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/>). This allows applicants to work as interns in partner organisations, for instance with the goal to gain valuable knowledge in how to develop a new retreat activity. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity to develop cooperation partnerships all over Europe.





YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

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European Social Fund (ESF) (<https://www.esf.de/>):

The ESF provides funding for training, education, and skills development for young people, including entrepreneurship and digital skills. The program also supports startups and small businesses through various initiatives.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (<https://commission.europa.eu>)

The ERDF provides funding for regional development projects across Europe, including support for startups and small businesses. The program offers grants, loans, and guarantees for activities such as innovation, research and development, and business support services.

European Union Youth Strategy (<https://youth.europa.eu/>)

This strategy aims to promote youth entrepreneurship and digital skills development across Europe. It offers funding for projects that support youth entrepreneurship, including mentorship, training, and networking opportunities.

Digital Europe Program (<https://commission.europa.eu/>)

This program aims to support the development of digital skills and the creation of digital jobs across Europe. It provides funding for projects that promote digital entrepreneurship and digital innovation, including the development of digital tools and services.



YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

The European Social Fund (ESF) <https://www.esf.de/> provides funding and guarantees for venture capital and equity financing, which can help support startups and small businesses. The ESF also offers support for angel investors, incubators, and accelerators.

EU FINANCING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RURAL AREAS, CREATING COMMUNITIES, COWORKING SPACES, AND COLIVING SPACES

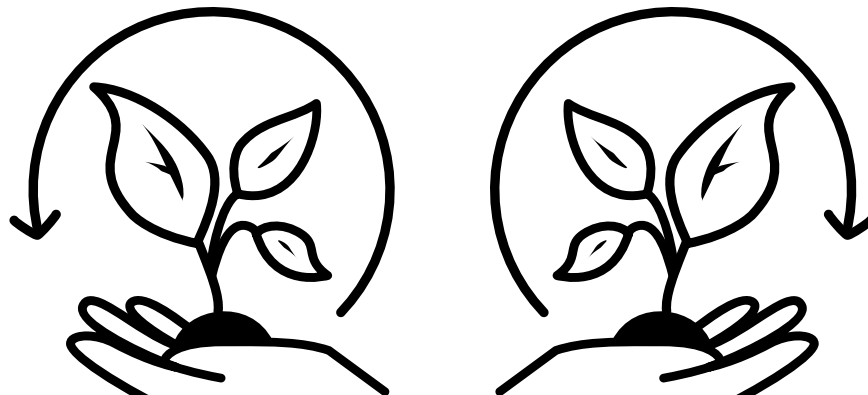
Each program has its specific eligibility criteria, application process, and funding amount, so it's important to research and identify the one that fits your needs best.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) <https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/>:

The EAFRD provides funding for rural development projects, including support for entrepreneurship in rural areas. The program offers grants for the creation of coworking spaces and other infrastructure to support rural entrepreneurship.

European Social Fund (ESF) <https://www.esf.de/>

The ESF provides funding for training, education, and skills development for young people in rural areas. The program also supports startups and small businesses through various initiatives, including the creation of coworking spaces





YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

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The Leader Program (LEADER Homepage)

is a rural development program that provides funding for community-led local development projects. The program offers grants for projects that support entrepreneurship in rural areas, including the creation of coworking spaces and coliving spaces.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF/<https://commission.europa.eu>)

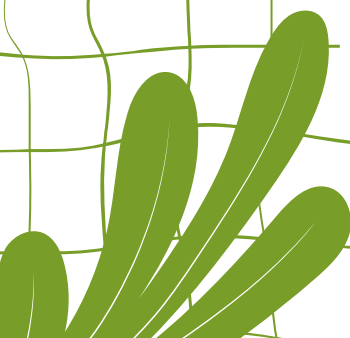
The ERDF provides funding for regional development projects across Europe, including support for rural entrepreneurship. The program offers grants, loans, and guarantees for activities such as innovation, research and development, and business support services.

Horizon Europe (Funding Programme HORIZON Europe)

Horizon Europe is the EU's flagship research and innovation program, which offers funding for projects that address societal challenges, including rural development. The program provides funding for projects that support entrepreneurship and innovation in rural areas, including the creation of coworking and coliving spaces.

European Investment Fund (EIF/<https://www.eif.org/>)

The EIF provides funding and guarantees for venture capital and equity financing, which can help support startups and small businesses in rural areas. The EIF also offers support for angel investors, incubators, and accelerators in rural areas.





YOUR WAY TOWARDS A PROJECT APPLICATION

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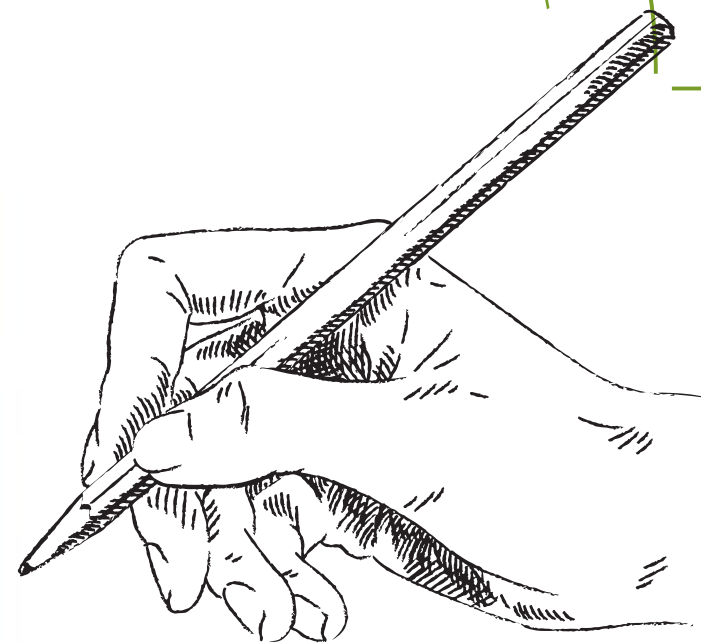


Figure 7: Drawing made by participants as result of the feed-back session within the NOMADLAND training programme in Veli Iz (Croatia) (Source: NOMADLAND proejct)





EXERCISES

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Exercise 1: Checklist for preparing and testing your marketing materials

Knowledge and intellectual assets are very valuable business creation and business development components that you can use to generate revenue or as value to negotiate partnerships. The first step in getting the most from it is identifying the types of assets you own, then building an asset management and valorisation strategy to support your business strategy. Since business cases should be supported by proper dissemination, please prepare a Marketing Materials Checklist.

Answer: Checklist sample for preparing and testing your asset marketing materials:

- ✓ Prepare a short headline (that covers what and why)
- ✓ Focus on the assets enabling solution to a customer problem (less is more).
- ✓ Focus on improvements, not cost reduction only.
- ✓ Illustrate (non-confidential) impact and benefits.
- ✓ Describe the asset item without re-vealing confidential information.
- ✓ List patents and associated IP like trade secrets, pro-totypes, materials, etc.
- ✓ Communicate openness for R&D or commercialization cooperation.
- ✓ Research and specify market size and growth.
- ✓ Include call(s) to action.
- ✓ Identify key people and note your contact details.



EXERCISES

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Exercise 2: Can you turn your own assets into a business?

Try to understand how your own assets can contribute to reach your business goals.

1. What assets do I have?
2. How do those assets help me to reach my business goals?
3. What resources do I need (immaterial resources and financing) to turn my assets into a business?

All these questions are open text answers, because they will adapt to your own business reality.



Exercise 3: Applying for EUIPO funds „Ideas powered for business SME”

Please prepare applying for EUIPO

<https://euipo.europa.eu/sme-fund-2023/user/login?destination=/sme-fund-2023/funds>

“Ideas powered for business SME” to receive a 50% discount in trademark and design application fees (national, regional and EU).

- a) What are the different steps that have to be taken?

Open text answer with a list of steps

- b) Please prepare a list of required information that have to be submitted:

Answer: Checklist for required information



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