Transdisciplinary Case Study of Southern Transylvania

FROM VISIONS TO REALIZATIONS – KEEPING THE PAST ALIVE WHILE ENABLING THE FUTURE

Designing a transdisciplinary research project

SESSION 1

CONTENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE TRANSDISCIPLINARY CASE STUDY

- Learn some basics of transdisciplinary research and related methods by applying it to a real-world context

- Gain insights in how to design transdisciplinary research projects

- Work collaboratively in teams and find out about new tools and methods for effective team-work

- Get to know your competencies as a transdisciplinary researcher

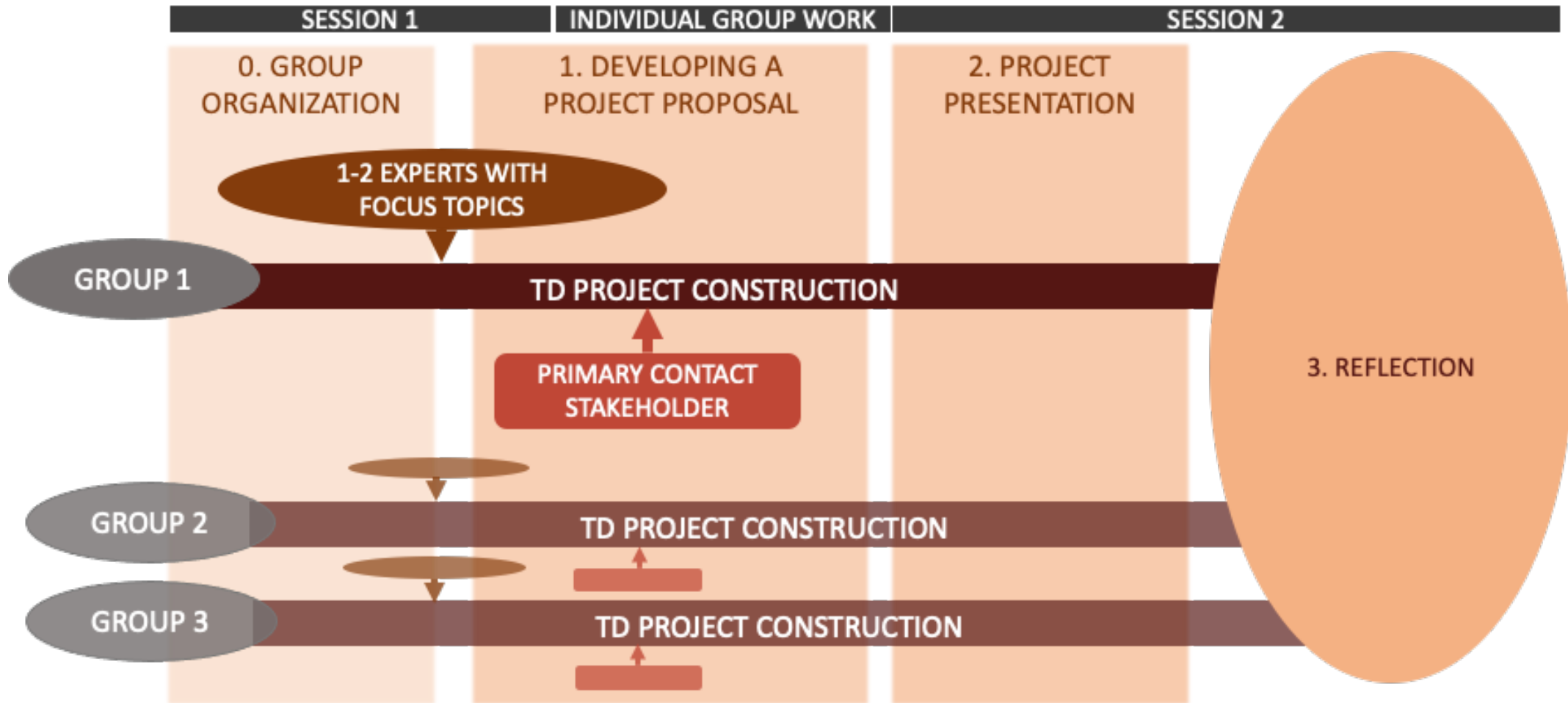- Adopt a role as a leading position in a transdisciplinary research project

THE REGION OF SOUTHERN TRANSYLVANIA

VIDEO from WWF Romania & Transylvanian Highlands (Eco-tourism Board)

CASE STUDY STRUCTURE AND AGENDA

CASE STUDY STRUCTURE - MAIN TASK

MAIN TASK

With your research team, develop a transdisciplinary project spanning 3 years. Its goal is to set in motion critical development for making the scenario *Balance brings Beauty* reality. You have unlimited personal and financial resources.

If necessary, you can make assumptions on what is happening and how these developments are influencing your project process.

TASK 0: **GROUP ORGANIZATION**

GROUP WORK

Get to know each other! Share your thoughts on the reflection task you prepared on your character, interests and competencies as a researcher prior to this session.

- Which of your competencies (i.e., knowledge, skills, attitudes) can help you and your group in designing a transdisciplinary project?

Organize and agree upon how you would like to work together as a group, e.g. a **platform for group communication, data exchange and general operational principles.**

MATERIALS TASK 0

TASK 0: **MATERIALS**
- POINTERS FOR GROUP ORGANIZATION (1)

- **Group operation**
  - How do you make decisions?
  - How do you ensure a positive mindset and fruitful collaboration?

- **Meeting routine**
  - E.g. implementing Check ins and Check outs
  - (Changing) meeting roles: e.g. moderator, note taker, time keeper, good-mood manager,...

- **Data management**
  - Where do you store your data?
  - Where do you collect ideas?

- **Group communication**
  - On which platform do you communicate?
  - Do you want to limit communication to a certain level?
  - How quick should the individual reply time be?

TASK 0: **MATERIALS**
- POINTERS FOR GROUP ORGANIZATION (2)

- **For group communication**
  - Messengers such as Telegram or Signal.
  - It can be beneficial to keep group communication off smartphones for a better work-life balance. In that case, there are other options such as:
  - Rocketchat Leuphana
  - Slack

- **For creative purposes, e.g. brainstorming**
  - Padlet
  - Miro

- **For sharing and storing data**
  - Academic Cloud (find user information provided by Leuphana here)
  - OneDrive
  - Google Drive
  - Dropbox

TASK 1

TASK 1: DEVELOPING A FICTIONAL TD PROJECT

TASK 1A - *EXPERTS*

You will **select two members in your research team**, which will take the roles of scientific experts of a certain field.

In your transdisciplinary project, the focus of your experts will relate to and impact the content and methods you use and are thus important influences for your project construction.

The **individual focus can be chosen by the experts' or your group's interest.** For this, you are encouraged to draw upon the reflection task you received before this session.

In the material slides for Task 1, you find inspiration for possible **focus topics.**

TASK 1: DEVELOPING A FICTIONAL TD PROJECT

INDIVIDUAL WORK

TASK 1A - *EXPERTS*

Briefly research your focus topic and read 1-2 introduction papers.

Take on the perspective of your focus topic and **identify aspects that could be relevant to your group's project planning (related to methods and/or content).**

TASK 1A: **MATERIALS**
- EXEMPLARY FOCUS TOPICS FOR EXPERTS

TASK 1A: **MATERIALS –** EXEMPLARY FOCUS TOPICS FOR EXPERTS

Leverage Points & Sustainability Transformations

Abson, D.J., Fischer, J., Leventon, J. et al. (2017): Leverage points for sustainability transformation.

Manlosa, A.O., Schultner, J., Dorresteijn, I. et al. (2018): Leverage points for improving gender equality and human well-being in a smallholder farming context.

Systems Thinking

Meadows, D. H. (2008): Thinking in Systems.

Arnold, R. D., Wade, J. P. (2015): A Definition of Systems Thinking: A Systems Approach

Resilience Thinking

Stockholm Resilience Centre (n.D.): Applying resilience Thinking. Seven principles for building resilience in social-ecological systems.

Feminist Research Approaches

Gottschlich, D., & Katz, C. (2016). Sozial-ökologische Transformation braucht Kritik an den gesellschaftlichen Naturverhältnissen. Soziologie Und Nachhaltigkeit, 2(1).

Jerneck, A. (2018). What about gender in climate change? Twelve feminist lessons from development. Sustainability, 10(3), 627.

TASK 1: DEVELOPING A FICTIONAL TD PROJECT

TASK 1B - *PRIMARY CONTACT STAKEHOLDERS*

Each group receives one **stakeholder** that they will primarily involve in their research project.

Have a look at the information you are provided with in the material slides and do some additional research. Then start working on the following questions, which will become important in your later project construction:

- Which **goals and expectations** does the stakeholder have?
- **How will you integrate** the stakeholder's goals and expectations into your research design (e.g. how do you combine these with your own goals and expectations)?
- Are there **challenges you see** in the collaboration with the stakeholder?
- How will you **convince** your stakeholder **of your research design**?

TASK 1B: **MATERIALS**
- PRIMARY CONTACT STAKEHOLDERS

One of the following three local sustainability intitatives/ NGOs in Southern Transylvania will serve as a primary contact stakeholder for your working group. More information about your contact stakeholder and their work can be found on the ascribed website(s).

TASK 1B: **MATERIALS -** MIHAI EMINESCU TRUST

Since 1998, the Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET) foundation has been involved in preserving the local heritage and has been actively contributing to the resettlement of the villages and communes of Transylvania and Maramureș, two of the most authentic areas in Europe. MET believes that all projects built through the use of heritage must have people living in their immediate vicinity, who benefit from and care for them in the center. To date, MET has succeeded in moving people from local Transylvanian communities through more than 1,500 projects developed in 26 villages and 5 cities. Specifically, MET trains the locals in traditional construction techniques and practices for agrotourism. Organizes English courses, promotes entrepreneurship and involvement locally. It offers support for the development of small tourism-related businesses, revitalizing village orchards and planting local varieties in areas where the forest is in full swing.

(Text from https://en.colinele-transilvaniei.ro/our-partners)

Link to old foundation website: http://www.mihaieminescutrust.org/about-us
Link to new foundation website: https://www.mihaieminescutrust.ro/en/

TASK 1B: **MATERIALS -** FUNDATIA ADEPT

The ADEPT Transilvania Foundation is dedicated to the conservation of biodiversity and rural development, since 2004 giving priority to the protection of High Natural Value agricultural landscapes in Transylvania. It supports communities of small farmers, who have modeled over the centuries and preserve these landscapes. It works with farmers, local communities, universities, NGOs and with the Ministries of the Government of Romania to find solutions to the problems that threaten the survival of remarkable landscapes and local communities of farmers. ADEPT carries out programs that combine economic and social benefits with biodiversity conservation and increasing local capacity for good management in the future.

(Text adapted from https://en.colinele-transilvaniei.ro/our-partners)

Link to Foundation Website: https://fundatia-adept.org/

TASK 1B: **MATERIALS -** SCHUBZ ROMÂNIA

SCHUBZ is a center of education for sustainable development in Râşnov, Romania. It works in a multinational network of experts and partners - SCHUBZ brings to Romania interactive, experiential training and methods in the field of Education for Sustainable Development. SCHUBZ aims to lead children and teenagers in developing a new attitude and way of living, bringing sustainability to their life by creating experiences, which connect children to nature and its importance for their life. At the same time, the center values local heritage and traditions, connecting local communities to nature and its resources.

The center works with schools, families, universities and non-governmental organizations to share knowledge and experience about education for sustainable development in Romania and abroad.

(Text adapted from center's website).

Link to website: https://schubz.ro/en/

TASK 1: DEVELOPING A FICTIONAL TD PROJECT

TASK 1C - *DEVELOP A PROJECT PROPOSAL*

You are free to create a **project proposal in any structure** or form that you would like and to include any content in it, that you deem important. Please think about these questions:

- What is your **schedule**?
- Which **methods** will you use, when and why do you use them?
- How do you plan to **integrate your focus topics**?
- How do you **integrate your primary contact stakeholder**?
- How do you ensure that the project will result in **societal and scientific impacts**?

TASK 1C: **MATERIALS**
- DEVELOPING A PROJECT PROPOSAL

TASK 1C: **MATERIALS**
- TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGIES

RECOMMENDED INFORMATION

td-net (2021): Tool-Box TD-net

Bammer, G. (2015): Eight Tool-Kits for transdisciplinarity

Bergmann, M. et al. (2012): Methods for Transdisciplinary Research

MORE IN DEPTH

Wiek & Lang (2016): Transformational Research

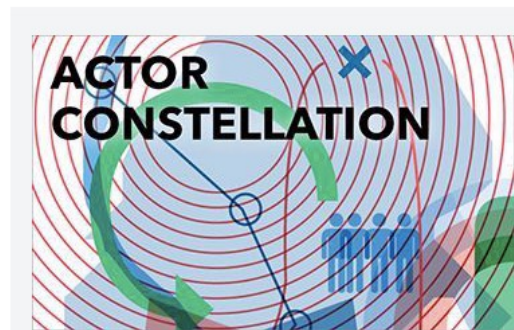Bammer, G. (2019): Frameworks for transdiscplinary research

Pearce, B. (2020): Design Thinking

TASK 1C: **MATERIALS -** USEFUL TOOLS

- The td-net toolbox offers a variety of tools and methods that you can apply in your TD project

TASK 1C: **MATERIALS –** AN EXAMPLARY TD METHOD

What is design thinking?	Design thinking is a collaborative problem-solving strategy. Design thinking: a) connects the needs of people involved in the problem to researchers'/experts' observations of the problem; b) focuses on creating innovative ways of looking at the problem; c) embraces visualization, storytelling, and experimentation through building and testing prototypes.
Why should it be applied?	In the context of research, design thinking is for: (1) co-designing research designs with stakeholders, and (2) co-designing implementation strategies of research outcomes. The approach is based on the assumption that framing problems in new ways can lead to more implementable and innovative solutions. In the context of education, design thinking can be used to build collaborative skills of students to tackle complex problems in interdisciplinary settings. (Pearce 2020)

TASK 2

TASK 2: PRESENTATION OF YOUR TD PROJECT

Prepare a **presentation of your project proposal** for the second session of the course.

The presentation should be **10-15 minutes** long, followed by 5 minutes room for questions and discussion. The **format of your presentation is free**. Choose a format that is interesting for others and that expresses your project well.

Include the following information in your presentation:

- What is your **schedule**?
- How did you **integrate your focus topics**?
- How did you **integrate your primary contact stakeholder**?
- In which **research phases** did you use which **methods** and why?
- How can you ensure the **success of your project**?
- What are the **scientific and societal impacts** of your project?

QUESTIONS?