



**MICROPOLIS**  
THE POWER OF STRONG LOCAL COMMUNITY



**Erasmus+**

## **MICROPOLIS CEO**

**Partner Meeting in Middelfart, Denmark  
9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2026**

### **Meeting Report**



Group photo of the Erasmus+ team in the yard at Brenderup Folk High School

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Editor: Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard, Interfolk

## Executive Summary

From 9 to 11 June 2026, partners of the MICROPOLIS CEO project gathered in Middelfart, Denmark, for the second international partner meeting following the project activities in Lund, Sweden. The meeting brought together three participants from Sweden, four participants from Poland and representatives from the Danish host organisations.

The purpose of the meeting was to deepen the partners' understanding of community development, co-creation, civic engagement and sustainable local initiatives. Through presentations, workshops and study visits, participants explored how local institutions, volunteers, social and cultural organisations and educational environments contribute to building resilient and inclusive communities.

The programme combined theoretical perspectives with practical examples. Participants learned about supporting volunteering and co-creation processes in Middelfart Municipality, explored community-based learning at Brenderup Folk High School, visited Humlemagasinet as an example of volunteer-driven cultural heritage work, and participated in creative workshops demonstrating participatory methods that can strengthen community engagement.

The meeting strengthened the partnership, provided inspiration for future project activities and generated valuable reflections related to the project's core themes: Community, Ecology and Organization.



Visit to a student exhibition at Brenderup Folk High School

## Meeting Report

### Participants

#### Team members

##### Poland:

Malgorzata Smoczynska, project coordinator, WCK

Marzenna Szymanska, founder of FotoFalenica, teacher of photography in WCK

Jan Rozacki, responsible filming and promotion (in WCK and in the project)

Milena Bajer, culture animator and manager in Alensandrow Branch of WCK

##### Sweden:

Angela Noël, CEO, Hemgården

Milad Mohammadi, Activity manager, Tamam Lund Malmö; Coordinator, Frizone in Genarp

Staffan Lindqvist, Board member, Hemgården; Former Secretary General, IFS

##### Denmark:

Susanne Juhl Paaske, General Manager, Middelfart Volunteer Center

Kamilla Krogh Uttrup, Team Coordinator Culture Island | Cultural Consultant, Municipality

Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard, Leader, Interfolk - Institut for Civilsamfund

#### Speakers and hosts

Maria Koch, PR and social media, Middelfart Volunteer Center

Elisabeth Tejlmand, Board, Vilde Middelfart; Member, Naturpark Lillebælt

Mads Dreyer project, coordinator at the Life Role Play associations, Freiburg LARP

Kristian Lindegaard Svendsen, /Volunteer Consultant, Middelfart Municipality

Lisbeth Junker Mathiassen, Chair, Creative Basement

Karin Schultz Ottosen, Psychologist, Project Manager and Teacher, Brenderup Højskole

Peder Pedersen, founder and general manager, Humlemagasinet



The international team enjoy the concluding dinner at Kitzchen

## Introduction

MICROPOLIS CEO investigates how local communities can be strengthened through participation, cooperation and sustainable organisational practices. The Middelfart meeting focused particularly on the role of co-creation and civic engagement in creating vibrant and resilient communities.

The Danish programme was designed to provide participants with opportunities to meet practitioners, researchers, volunteers and cultural actors who actively work with community development in different settings. By combining presentations, discussions, study visits and practical activities, the meeting aimed to create both professional learning and mutual inspiration among the project partners.



After dinner the first evening, Polish representatives enjoy the sunset at waterfront.

## June 9, afternoon – Co-Creation and Community Development

The meeting began at KulturØen in Middelfart, an important cultural and community centre situated on the waterfront of the town. Participants were welcomed by the Danish coordinator, Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard, chief executive at Interfolk.

The session focused on the results of the need surveys conducted since first partner meeting in Lund in each partner country among the participants and stakeholders of the associations.

Angela Noël presented the Swedish survey. Marzenna Szymanska, Founder of FotoFalenica and Teacher of photography in WCK presented the Polish Survey. Susanne Juhl Paaske, General Manager at Middelfart Volunteer Center presented the Danish Survey.



Presentation of the Polish survey



Presentation of the Swedish survey

The presentations provided valuable insights into current perceptions of community engagement, local participation and organisational development within the partner countries. The findings served as a common point of reference for further discussions during the meeting, and the lively exchange of experiences gave new inspiration to the succeeding pilot work until the third meeting in Warsaw, November 2026.

The day concluded with a joint dinner with traditional Danish dishes at the old inn, Holms Restaurant from 1584, providing opportunities for informal discussions, networking and exchange of experiences between the Swedish, Polish and Danish participants.



A well-deserved dinner the first evening for the project teams at Holms Restaurant

## June 10, morning – Volunteering and Sustainable Development

The morning session took place at Middelfart Volunteer Centre, where more than 80 social NGO's use the centre. The session included four presentations about the extensive NGO volunteering and the goals and main activities of the civil society activities in local communities.



Introduction to Middelfart Volunteer Center by the General Manager, Susanne Juhl Paaske

Maria Koch, PR and social media at the Volunteer Center presented the social compass as a tool for NGOs and other organisations to find volunteers.

Susanne Juhl Paaske, General Manager at the Volunteer Centre presented the goals and main activities of the centre and how it promoted local community and sustainable development.

Elisabeth Tejlmand, from the board of [Vilde Middelfart](#) presented the NGO's combined environmental and social sustainable activities.

Mads V. Dreyer, coordinator at the Life Role Play association, Freiburg LARP presented the transformative learning and added community values of the activities.



A life role play scene during the national Krigslife



The Climate Elephant sparks curiosity among children

## June 10, afternoon - Lifelong Learning and Sustainable Communities

### Lunch at BrenderupHus

The afternoon started with a green lunch at BrenderupHus, which is a wonderful mix of organic groceries, specialties, health food, dietary supplements and natural medicine. The place is passionate about organic and biodynamic foods, and believe in quality, sustainability and a healthier lifestyle.



Lunch at BrenderupHus before visiting Brenderup Folk High School and Humlemagasinet

### Visit to Brenderup Folk High School

First, we visited Brenderup Folk High School, one of Denmark's many folk high schools inspired by the educational philosophy of N.F.S. Grundtvig. Karin Schultz Ottosen, Psychologist, Project Manager and Teacher were our host and guide.

We were introduced to the history of the folk high school movement and its role in Danish democracy, civic education and community life. The visit highlighted how learning can take place outside formal educational systems and how green goals, collective living, dialogue and creativity can strengthen personal development and engage active citizenship and environmental sustainability.

The group explored various creative workshops and learning environments. Participants learned how artistic and practical activities are integrated into everyday life at the school and how creativity is used as a tool for personal expression, cooperation and community building.

Particularly interest was generated by the school's work with sustainability and ecological awareness. During guided tours of the facilities, participants observed examples of environmentally conscious practices and discussed how educational institutions can contribute to sustainable lifestyles and stronger local communities.



Guided tour at Brenderup Folk High School and its sustainable and creative activities by Karin Schultz Ottosen

## Visit to Humlemagasinet

The second visit was to Humlemagasinet a unique cultural institution combining gardens, exhibitions and historical collections. Participants learned about the museum's development and the important role played by volunteers in maintaining and developing the institution.



Introduction to Humlemagasinet and the engagement of volunteers by Peder Pedersen, founder and manager

The visit illustrated how cultural heritage can become a resource for community development. Through voluntary engagement, local knowledge and collective responsibility, cultural institutions can create meaningful meeting places and strengthen local identity.

Throughout the day, discussions repeatedly returned to the relationship between learning, sustainability and democracy. Participants reflected on how similar approaches might be adapted and implemented within their own organisations and local contexts.



Introduction to the Hops Museum



Introduction to the Royal part of the museum

The day demonstrated how educational and cultural institutions can function not only as places of learning but also as community hubs where people develop skills, relationships and a sense of belonging.



Group photo in a part of the lovely and impressive gardens at Humlemagasinet

### **June 11, morning – Cultural Heritage and Local Engagement**

The final day focused on examples of community engagement rooted in cultural heritage, creativity and volunteer work.

The morning session took place at the Culture Island that include the Main Library of the Municipality, Tourist information, Cinema, Restaurant and meetings rooms for associations.

First Kamilla Krogh Uttrup, Team coordinator and Culture Consultant gave a guided tour and introduction to KulturØen and its role as a shared cultural platform bringing together different institutions, user groups and community activities under one roof.

The tour provided a practical example of how physical spaces can facilitate cooperation and participation across sectors.



Introduction to the activities at the Culture Island by Kamilla Krogh Uttrup

After the tour we had three presentations at Middelfart Salen with varied focus on the innovative possibilities of co-creative cooperation

Kamilla Krogh Uttrup had also a presentation about "Good practice and co-creative cultural activities in Middelfart Municipality" with focus on how co-creation with various civic groups and associations are essential for many of the activities.

Kristian Lindegaard Svendsen, special consultant, volunteer consultant, Middelfart Municipality had a presentation about "Co-creation Between Municipal Authorities and Associations" that demonstrated how local authorities increasingly move from traditional top-down governance towards collaborative approaches involving citizens, associations and local stakeholders.



Presentation of co-creative activities in Middelfart Municipality by Kristian Lindegaard Svendsen

Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard, chief executive, Interfolk, talked about "The Nordic model, civil society and differences between social and culture NGOs". The successes of the Nordic model refer to the high level of trust and social capital that are based on historic traditions for a strong and free civil society. The development of co-creation the last decades are based on a respect of these traditions.

Participants discussed how successful co-creation requires trust, long-term commitment and a willingness to share responsibility. It was emphasised that co-creation is not always easy, fair or efficient in the short term, but that it can create stronger and more sustainable outcomes because solutions are developed together with the people affected by them.

### June 11, afternoon – creativity and wrap-up

We had a green lunch at MIND, the new museum about mental illness and well-being. The Museum has 600 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibitions in a patient building at the former mental asylum in Midelfart.

After lunch the team had a creative workshop, facilitated by Lisbeth Junker Mathiassen, chairperson for the association, The Creative Basement. The fun and creative activity demonstrated how artistic activities can create dialogue, support personal expression and bring together people.



Lisbeth Junker Mathiassen facilitated an inspiring workshop where we all should try to express the personal learning outcome of the 3-day meeting – with many surprising and creative results.

### Wrap-up

The creative workshop also made a fine scene for the meeting's short wrap-up, which our project coordinator, Malgorzata Smoczynska moderated.

The participants discussed how similar approaches could be transferred to their own national and local contexts. Particular attention was paid to the importance of local ownership, transparent communication and long-term commitment when developing collaborative initiatives.

The final session provided an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned during the three days and to identify potential areas for future cooperation within the MICROPOLIS CEO project.



Malgorzata Smoczynska moderated the concluding evaluation and wrap-up

## Main Learning Outcomes

### Community

The meeting demonstrated that strong communities are built through participation, trust and shared responsibility. Across all visits and presentations, participants encountered examples of citizens actively contributing to the development of local initiatives and institutions.

The Danish examples showed that community development is most successful when local people are treated as active partners rather than passive recipients of services.

### Ecology

The visits highlighted the close relationship between environmental sustainability and community resilience. Sustainable practices were not presented as isolated environmental measures but as integrated elements of everyday community life.

The participants observed how ecological awareness can be embedded in educational programmes, local projects and organisational practices, thereby contributing to both environmental and social sustainability.

## Organization

A recurring theme throughout the meeting was the importance of organisational structures that support collaboration and participation.

Examples from Middelfart Municipality, KulturØen, Brenderup Folk High School and Humlemagasinet illustrated different organisational models based on partnership, volunteer involvement and shared ownership.

Participants gained valuable insights into how organisations can balance professional management with citizen participation and community engagement.

## Conclusions and Next Steps

The Middelfart meeting provided a rich combination of theoretical perspectives and practical examples related to community development, co-creation and civic participation.

Through study visits, presentations and workshops, participants gained a deeper understanding of how local institutions, volunteers, educational environments and cultural organisations contribute to stronger communities. The Danish examples demonstrated that sustainable community development depends on long-term relationships, active participation and a willingness to collaborate across organisational boundaries.

The meeting strengthened the partnership between the participating organisations and generated inspiration for future project activities in Sweden, Poland and Denmark.

The knowledge and experiences gathered during the meeting will contribute to the further development of the MICROPOLIS CEO project and support the partners in exploring new approaches to community building, ecological awareness and organisational innovation.



Happy Polish and Swedish team members enjoy bridging during the first evening at the waterfront