



HEMGÅRDEN

SURVEY: Supporting Grassroots Activities – How Can We Help Local Communities Grow and Thrive?

Overview

Number of responses: 24

The survey gathered responses from representatives of NGOs, cultural institutions, municipalities, community centers, youth organizations, informal groups, and grassroots initiatives working to strengthen local communities and civic engagement.

1. Target Groups

The target groups of your projects/activities are (select all that apply):

Target Group	Response	%
Youth (13–30 years)	23	100%
Women	16	69.6%
LGBTQIA+ people	16	69.6%
Men	15	65.2%
People with a migration background	15	65.2%
People with disabilities	14	60.9%
Seniors	13	56.5%

Children (up to 12 years)	8	34.8%
Other vulnerable groups	2	8.7%

Areas of Activity Supporting Local Communities

Does your organization:

Activity	Response	%
Hold regular meetings for groups united by a shared interest, goal, passion, or experience	22	95.7%
Organize activities where participants can co-organize events	20	87.0%
Collaborate with public organizations/municipalities	19	82.6%
Engage volunteers in projects	19	82.6%
Collaborate with NGOs	15	65.2%
Provide facilities and infrastructure for self-organization	12	52.2%
Analyze participant needs and interests	12	52.2%
Maintain a permanent volunteer program	11	47.8%
Organize activities involving exchange of services or goods	9	39.1%
Collaborate with businesses	7	30.4%

Organizational Types Represented

Organization Type	Response	%
NGO	14	60.9%
Leisure/Recreation Organization	13	56.5%

Cultural Institution	11	47.8%
Municipality	6	26.1%
Informal Group	5	21.7%
School	4	17.4%
Senior Club	4	17.4%
Individual Actor	1	4.3%

2. Main Challenges in Working with Local Communities

Respondents identified several recurring challenges:

- Community building requires a long-term perspective; it often takes considerable time to establish and sustain groups.
 - Reaching the right people and effectively communicating opportunities.
 - Ensuring broad participation and inclusion.
 - Recruiting and retaining participants and volunteers.
 - Maintaining continuity in engagement and attendance.
 - Limited time and resources for staff and volunteers.
 - Lack of experience or organizational capacity.
 - Difficulty creating sustainable activities that serve broader communities beyond existing members.
 - Insufficient investment and support from municipalities.
 - Lack of clear structures for collaboration between organizations and local authorities.
 - Raising awareness among target groups, especially women, transgender people, and other underrepresented communities.
 - Building long-term trust and ensuring participation leads to lasting involvement rather than one-time engagement.
 - Understanding what activities already exist and creating permanent structures for networking and collaboration.
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3. Skills and Competencies Organizations Want to Develop

Which competencies would you or your organization like to strengthen?

Competency	Response	%
Retaining participants so they return to future activities	13	56.5%
Creating and promoting volunteer opportunities	11	47.8%
Training and developing new community leaders	11	47.8%
Supporting participants to initiate their own projects	11	47.8%
Understanding target group needs and adapting activities accordingly	10	43.5%
Attracting new participants and generating curiosity and engagement	10	43.5%
Maintaining relationships over time	10	43.5%
Managing relationships within groups to create lasting bonds	9	39.1%
Sustaining volunteer engagement over time	9	39.1%
Creating groups that meet regularly	9	39.1%
Building long-term relationships between different groups	8	34.8%
Providing resources such as facilities and equipment for self-organized initiatives	7	30.4%

4. Good Practice Examples

Have you successfully created or permanently supported a local community or informal action group?

- Yes: 20 responses (87%)
- Maybe: 2 responses (8.7%)
- No: 1 response (4.3%)

Examples of successful local communities:

Respondents highlighted a wide variety of local communities and grassroots initiatives, including:

- Folk music groups, choirs, art groups, and dance groups
- Youth groups and recurring youth activities
- GRÄBBA, an intersectional feminist association with working groups and regular meetings
- Informal music collectives and acoustic groups
- Sports clubs, including a basketball club with approximately 1,500 members
- Environmental organizations
- Twelve-step support groups
- LGBTQIA+ meeting spaces
- International student networks
- Cultural associations
- Youth networking and support initiatives
- Jam sessions for women and transgender people
- Women's swimming groups
- Danish language cafés
- Community groups for Ukrainian refugees and local residents
- Craft groups that meet regularly for creative activities and socializing
- Volunteer-driven community centers and meeting places

These examples demonstrate a diverse ecosystem of formal and informal communities that foster inclusion, belonging, cultural exchange, creativity, mutual support, and civic participation.

Key Findings

1. Local communities are primarily sustained through regular gatherings, volunteer engagement, and participant-led activities.
2. The greatest challenges involve outreach, long-term engagement, continuity, and sustainable support structures.
3. Organizations express a strong need for training in participant retention, volunteer management, leadership development, and community-building methods.
4. Most respondents have successfully supported grassroots communities, demonstrating significant local capacity and experience.
5. There is a clear demand for stronger collaboration structures, increased municipal support, and long-term investment in community-building efforts.

Conclusion

The survey reveals a vibrant and diverse community ecosystem with substantial experience in fostering local engagement. However, organizations face persistent challenges related to sustainability, outreach, volunteer retention, and institutional support. Future initiatives should focus on strengthening local leadership, building long-term engagement strategies, improving collaboration across sectors, and providing practical resources that enable grassroots communities to flourish.

Collected and summarized by

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