Institutionalisation of Collective Action

Community Led Local Development in the context of the European Funds for Regional Development.

The Case of Scheveningen.

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Abbreviations

B&W	Mayor & Aldermen Municipality
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
EC	European Community
EFRO	European Funds for Regional Development
FARNET	Fisheries Areas Network
FLAG	Fisheries Local Action Group
KvW	Kansen voor West
SIOS	Stichting Initiatief op Scheveningen

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Introduction

Community Led Local Development (CLLD) in the context of the European Funds for Regional Development (EFRO) is defined as an approach that turns traditional European "top down" development policy on its head. *CLLD is focused on specific sub-regional areas; led by local action groups (LAGs) composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, in which at the decision making level neither public authorities, as defined in accordance with national rules, nor any single interest group represents more than 49% of the voting rights; carried out through integrated and multi-sectoral area-based local development strategies; designed taking into consideration local needs and potential; including innovative features in the local context, networking and - where appropriate - cooperation*. (EC, 2018: 6)

Under CLLD, local people take the reins and form local partnerships that design and implement specific development strategies. Such strategies are designed to build on the community's social, environmental and economic strengths or "assets". Being aware of the EFRO supported forthcoming FARNET - CLLD – LAG approach (FARNET, 2014), in 2014 the Municipality of The Hague chose Scheveningen to be a pilot to have a fishery related local action group (FLAG) governing a local development process to be funded jointly by EFRO, the Municipality and project owners concerned. During 2014/16, CLLD – FLAG is 'translated' by the 'Stichting Initiatief op Scheveningen' (SIOS) in an approach, where the community is enabled to start development interventions that aim to counteract societal dichotomy and to develop the local economy (SIOS, 2016). The community here is defined as groups of people from various backgrounds living and/or working together in a specific geographical area. The development interventions concerned incorporate interaction between learning and working, between young and old people, between civil society and private sector, and/or between different types of associations and/or foundations working together to achieve such objectives in a specific spatial area, being a village or part of town. External support is made available to enhance such local initiatives. Interaction among stakeholders in this type of development intervention is 'new' and needs to be institutionalised 'afresh' in an 'existing institutional world'. The interaction between such endogenous and exogenous forces at community level are key in local economic development processes, though these processes are also dependent on the development of local human capital to establish local institutions to enhance such local economic development. Therefore, the introduction of such a CLLD at community level needs to be preceded by a process of analysis of the existing institutional setting to support CLLD in line with a process of local capacity building of those stakeholders that have to meet the institutional requirements concerned. Current research focuses on the challenges that SIOS and the individual development interventions face in the CLLD environment of Scheveningen.

Institutionalisation of Collective Action

The institutionalisation of collective action is defined bottom-up as a process of and between collective action initiatives in regard to the external world. It concerns the rules and regulations agreed upon, determining the basis on which participating organisations interact among themselves and with other organisations. It concerns consensus on and description of objectives, membership, responsibilities, representation, decision-making processes, sources of income, accountability, financial control,

enforcement of certain behaviour, and what needs to be done when the collective action may come to an end (Van Dijk, 2019: 280). Top-down the institutionalisation of collective action enables the *community to operate* as a strategy to coordinate and facilitate the efforts of community and neighbourhood organisations to initiate, plan and implement their own activities according to the principles of self-determination, self-organisation and self-management' (Helmsing, 2002: 322).

Arnstein's (1969) participation ladder, as elaborated by Van Dijk (2019), refers CLLD as to '*Local initiatives',* being the 'highest' level of participation. The population concerned takes the initiative, acting independently of external organisations or institutions. Although they may call on external bodies for support, the initiatives are conceived and run by the community. Although the initiatives are implemented by the community, one accounts for its achievements to all stakeholders concerned. *Taking initiative, owning the local development process and managing service delivery require local capacity. Also required is local capacity to understand the institutional requirements of supporting institutions, which may be exogenous or endogenous. Community leaders need the capacity to use and develop the available resources and mobilise supporting institutions*. (Van Dijk, 2019: 42).

In Scheveningen, collective action - within the context of CLLD / SIOS – is defined as joint action among various types of organisations. The governance of such development interventions is in the hands of a governing body that for each intervention separately is formed by representatives of various types of organisations, which may include e.g. governing councils of primary education, secondary education, or different types of vocational training in combination with those of sport clubs, cultural-, civil society-, service- or welfare organisations, either or not linked to private sector organisations. Such governing body is responsible for the project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It is responsible for the budgeting, finance application, financing and accounting for all income and expenditure. It is accountable to all its stakeholders in line with stakeholders' regulations. This means that besides the internal accounting procedures that every organisation defines internally by itself, every project organisation that applies for a donation from the funds supported by European Commission / 'Kansen voor West' (EC / KvW) needs to account for its expenditure along the European accountancy rules (B&W The Hague, 2014; EFRO, 2014; EFRO, 2016; KvW, 2016). The governing of all these is to be institutionalised and understood by all stakeholders, which consequently requires the necessary capacity building beforehand of both the project's governing body as of the collaborating stakeholders concerned. Early 2017, the Municipality of The Hague seconded a financial controller to SIOS to safeguard a professional accounting of EFRO-related funds.

CLLD – Scheveningen – SIOS

SIOS Scheveningen is one of the 303 CLLD related Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) in 21 EU countries (EU, 2018: 12) intending to add value to fisheries products, diversification, environmental and social improvements and improving the links between fishermen and other local actors and/or among local actors themselves. Being aware of the forthcoming CLLD – FLAG support, representatives of citizen associations, private sector associations, youth-, sports- and cultural organisations founded SIOS (the Stichting Initiatief op Scheveningen) and worked together to develop an area-based development strategy for the coastal area of Scheveningen (SIOS, 2016). Consequently, SIOS-board decided arbitrarily to have a project round twice a year for a total of maximum € 150,000 per round and of a maximum of € 30,000 per project. In this way it could have six 'calls' for projects. Through its strategy, SIOS intends to improve educational attainment, to grasp employment opportunities and to enhance social inclusion of disadvantaged groups in order to counteract societal dichotomy and to develop the local economy. SIOS is bound locally including specific postal code areas along the coast. People are invited to present development interventions in the coastal area collectively. Specific

project owners, representing various organisations present their proposals to the SIOS-board which assesses technically whether the proposals meet the assessment criteria in reference to:

Figure 1: Project Election Process SIOS
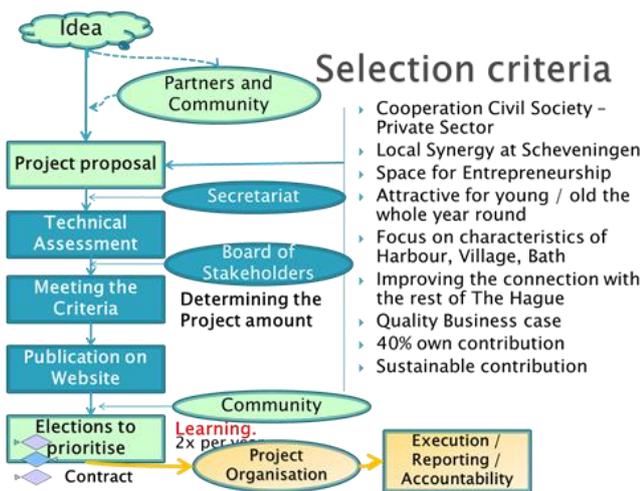
- Local Synergy at Scheveningen
- Focus on characteristics of Harbour, Village and Bath of Scheveningen
- Cooperation Civil Society – Private Sector
- Learning → Working: Space for Entrepreneurship
- Attractive for young / old the whole year round
- Improving the connection with the rest of The Hague
- Quality Business case
- 40% own contribution
- Sustainable contribution to Local Socio-Economic Development

This technical assessment includes the presented project budget, after which the SIOS-board determines the amount to be donated. This technical assessment includes the assessment of the 'own contribution' by the project-owner as well, which could be expressed by its own financial contribution, a contribution by other sources, or a contribution 'in kind' through e.g. people's own labour investment. After this technical assessment all selected project owners are challenged to describe their proposal in maximum 150 words, which are used for publication in the local newspapers and on the website. All people in the coastal area are invited to select the proposals in order of priority. The actual election of the proposals is done by the population in the indicated postal code area along the coast. Early 2017 during the first round, every adult above the age of 18 years got a personal invitation to go for voting, covering about 29,000 individuals. The distribution of these voting-passes has been supported by the Local Administration, as within the current 'EU privacy legislation', organisations like SIOS are not entitled to have access to the particulars of these 29,000 individuals. Every voting-pass has a unique 'voting code'.

During the second and following rounds the Local Administration did not support this kind of distribution any longer and the SIOS-board decided to distribute the voting passes door-to-door to about 13,000 home addresses. In the Netherlands people indicate on their mailbox whether they allow to have door-to-door correspondence (local newspapers, advertisements, etc.) in their mailbox or not. If not, the voting passes could not be distributed in such a mailbox. So, the actual number of people to be reached in the other rounds is much lower than the official 13,000 home addresses in the postal code area concerned. The turn-out of the elections as the consequence of receiving a personal invitation or a 'door-to-door' invitation has been very different as shown in the Figure 2 below.
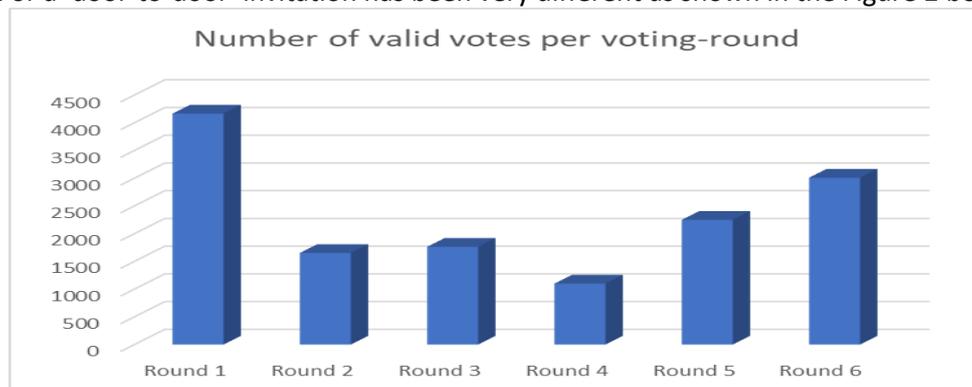

Figure 2: Number of valid votes per voting round

Another setback in the number of votes relates to the number of projects that have been proposed. In all rounds, except round four, six or seven projects have been selected to compete. In round four there were four projects only with the consequence that the number of people directly linked or attracted by the project interventions has been less and consequently the number of voters were less too. Otherwise there has been a gradual rise of the number of voters, while in the sixth round an additional voting mechanism has been introduced. Through the website or facebook, people out of the indicated postal code area concerned could register themselves to get a unique voting code. The consequence has been that more people came to vote. However, although one got a unique voting code, in case the voter registered him/herself 'wrongly' as living in the postal code area, while actually s/he is living somewhere else, registration could not be prevented. In other words, the website / facebook voting system cannot prevent 'double voting' or voting from outside of the postal code area. So, malpractice cannot be prevented.

Projects

According to agreement (KvW, 2016), SIOS is challenged to have 27 projects under implementation. During the six rounds 52 project interventions have been handed in. Another 25 project proposals have been discussed with SIOS representatives, but have not been handed in officially. Out of the 52 proposals that have been handed in officially, 36 have been elected as 'meeting the selection criteria', while the other 16 proposals have not been selected as they did not (yet) meet the criteria. Some of them were revised and selected in another round.

The majority of the project proposals intends to link learning to working in relation to harbour-, coastal- and/or sea-related issues. Quite a number of them relate to promote the wealth of the North Sea potential, a potential that has been exploited for ages, but that has been undervalued by current society for quite some time. Through primary education end extension activities, the potential of the North Sea is made visible, for the long run to make employment in that sector for the local youngsters attractive again.

- The restauration of an old fishing vessel got a major support, not only because of the physical and additional financial support of the traditional fishing population, but as well because vocational training students were taught traditional carpentry skills by the old (retired) craftsmen.
- The training of a group of 16 youngsters to be 'employed' as voluntary crew on the Scheveningen lifeboat or as voluntary lifeguards on the beach got major support as well. The youngsters got trained in all basic skills to survive and rescue those in need at sea.
- More generally a number of projects intended to educate primary school pupils and others concerning the potential of the sea, concerning the processing or preparation of sea products for human consumption, or concerning the way of living of all those that make their living from the sea.

In the second and third round the learning was still related to working but in addition some project proposals were directed to the biological vegetable supply towards the catering industry by people with a distance to the labour market, and to bicycle repair activities by the underemployed, both of them generating long-term employment as result. Both projects scored highest in their specific round.

- The Municipality tendered the exploitation of a neglected part of one of their parcs among undertakers with an innovative approach. The tender was won by a catering industry that operated commercially, but whose own biological garden - that is ran by people with a distance to the labour market – supplied the vegetables to the kitchen.

- One of the social welfare organisations made space available for a bicycle repair workshop, which was supplied with 'orphanage bicycles' out of town that – after being repaired - were offered to visitors of the 'food bank' for little money. Experienced professionals in the bicycle repair branch trained the underemployed youngsters to repair the 'orphanage bicycles' free of charge.

Within the sports sector, connectivity between young and old, or between unexperienced and experienced sports(wo)men has been stimulated. Experienced members of a sports club trained or educated young members of the same sports club in particular trades or skills.

Within the cultural sector there have been a number of interventions where the experienced artists assist, train or challenge youngsters to express their feelings in any kind of artefact. The construction of a replica of Simon Stevin's sailing car by a group of vocational training students has been a special artefact, as it helped to attract the public to attend events like 200 years of 'Scheveningen bath', the 'sea sailing championships', the traditional 'flags day' and the 'Volvo Ocean race', finally exposed at Muzee. In a similar way the construction of a 'humpback whale' out of litter attracted the public as well, both in the Muzee as on the beach.

The project 'Save the Earth' initiated by the Lions Scheveningen, initially got little votes. However, in the end it has been an example that really led to the connectivity between all kind of different actors. The vision of the astronaut Wubbo Ockels, which sailing boat laid in the harbour of Scheveningen, challenged the Lions together with some musicians to make a musical to be presented in the Zuiderstrandtheater at Scheveningen. The décor of this musical – a space shuttle – was fabricated by youngsters of a judicial vocational training centre in the harbour. The message 'save the earth' was translated by Lions and Leo's (the young Lions) into primary school curricula and - with support of the environmental organisation TrashUreHunt and the pupils of the local primary schools - implemented in order to collect 'litter' from the beaches. The musical itself has been enacted with support of other Lions' organisations in many other theatres all over the Netherlands.
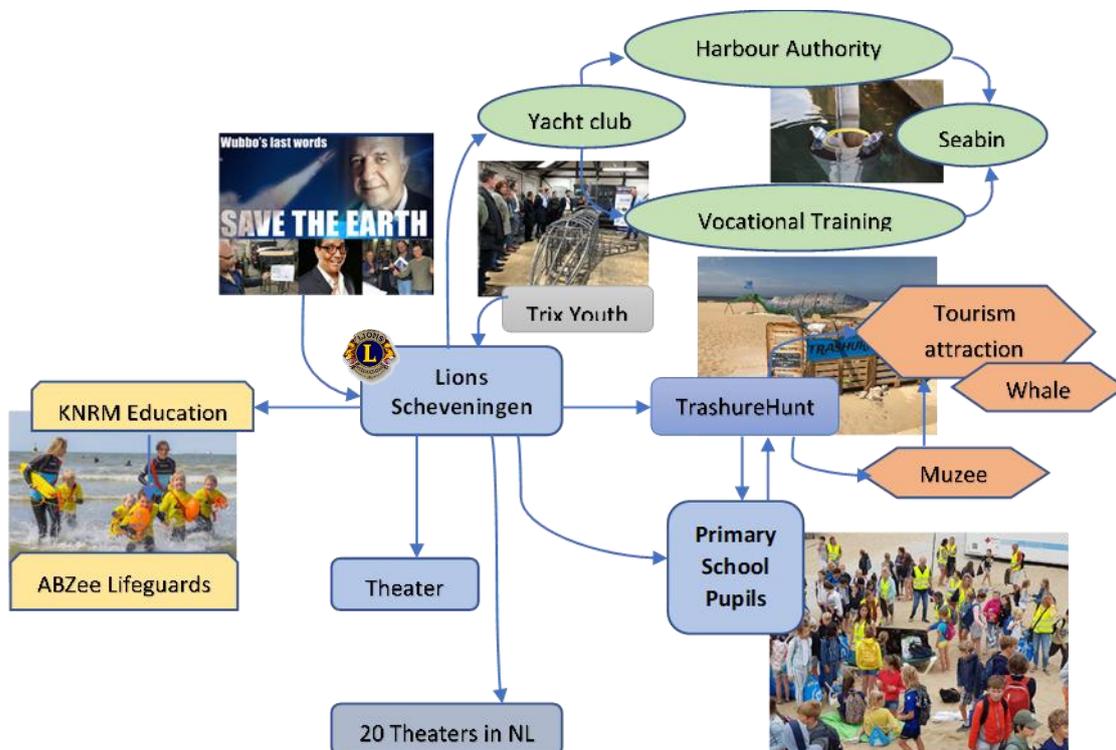

Figure 3: Learning, working, connectivity

Additional volunteer Lions' actions resulted among others in 'lifeguards training' at the beach, and in environmental litter collection in the harbour, while in addition with the TrashureHunt collection of

litter a whale as tourism attraction on the beach has been fabricated in conjunction with Muzee Scheveningen. All together an example of collective action among different actors including those related to learning and working that led to connectivity that had not been there before. An example where volunteers – the Lions – grasped the SIOS funding opportunity to develop prevailing potential locally.

The group of 25 projects that requested support informally, but – after some consultation - did not hand in their proposal formally, did so mainly because of reasons like:

- I have an idea, but cannot get others 'on board'.
- I have an idea, but my board sees too many complications and work.
- I have an idea for somebody else to implement, but the other one thinks differently.
- I have an idea for you to implement.
- I have an idea, but do not know how to implement.
- I have an idea, but cannot explain what it means.
- I have an idea, but no organisational set-up to implement.
- I have an idea for me to implement, but no supporting organisation.
- I want to restore my 'traditional' sailing boat which now is done in Rotterdam. If I do it in Scheveningen can I get SIOS support?
- I have ideas for my students to implement. Can I get support?
- As professional I have an idea to help me to get some income.
- We have ideas, but do not work it out in activities and budget.
- We have an idea, but the amount of money required is far too much, so that we cannot start with the limited amount we may get from SIOS.
- We have ideas, but do not oversee the financial consequences.
- We ask support for an existing event.
- We need space to implement our activity. Can you help us?
- We, as Municipality, cannot address this proposal. You may?
- We have good ideas and were able to implement them without external support.

The question here is whether the ideas mentioned are just not implementable; or whether the ideas mentioned are socially and/or economically sound, but the idea-owners just do not have the capacity to oversee the consequences of their project development, and do not have an adequate sounding board to make the implementation of their ideas socially or economically feasible. In this latter case one may conclude that the SIOS-organisation did not equip themselves or has not been challenged sufficiently to operate as a sounding board effectively, as it did not foresee such requests. Or, it could be concluded, that the EFRO – KvW organisation did not foresee the inclusion of the necessary capacity development of a SIOS kind of organisation and its eventual financial consequences in the programme approach.

Institutional Challenges for Collective Action

Institutionalised collective action may facilitate stakeholders' capacities to understand, implement and enforce the rules agreed upon. Parallel to ongoing institutionalisation, stakeholders must develop the capacity to facilitate and enforce administrative, technical and financial checks and balances to achieve the quality standards agreed. Endogenously introduced institutionalisation is based on endogenous capacity (Van Dijk, 2019).

In reference to the ongoing CLLD – FLAG – SIOS approach, citizens with innovative ideas have to find an association or foundation through which they may get their ideas funded to be able to implement

them. It means that such associations or foundations need to discuss whether such innovative ideas fit their constitution. The first challenge is to have an adequate sounding board institutionalised or to have adequate capacity building (FARNET, 2014) institutionalised through which project idea owners and related forms of collective action are facilitated to present their proposals for implementation in a socio-economically feasible way.

A second institutional challenge is to have an organisation like SIOS accessing its constituency, while the European privacy legislation does not allow SIOS to have access to the addresses of their individual citizens. During the first voting round the Municipality – that have access to these data – facilitated the sending of the voting forms. But in the second and following rounds it did not cooperate and left SIOS to find its own way through door-to-door distribution of voting forms with accompanying information through local newspapers and social media. Although the Municipality did not facilitate the distribution of SIOS' voting forms any longer, it started using this mechanism itself for the distribution of voting forms for their own area-based related (social) development interventions.

A third institutional challenge to have CLLD – (F)LAGs functioning and accounting for its functioning is to have the 'EFRO – Kansen voor West' top-down initiated accounting procedures applicable for 'ordinary volunteer organisations'. So far, 'Kansen voor West' supports predominantly professional organisations that employ professional accountants, being able to adhere to 'complicated' EFRO – KvW accounting procedures (B&W, 2014; EFRO, 2014; EFRO, 2016; KvW, 2016). For CLLD-related volunteer organisations, the challenge is caused partly by the inflexible attitude of the 'supporting' bureaucracy not being able to accommodate the 'flexible' volunteer spirit operating when volunteers work together. In addition, the challenge is caused by voluntary forms of collective action requesting 'minor – but crucial - amounts of financial support' that require complex procedures to account for the expenditure, which require 'volunteers' time' to deal with satisfactorily.

Another institutional challenge is to have different types of organisations functioning together on basis of trust for short project related periods to achieve indicated development objectives, which necessary action needs to be accounted for through 'unusual' complex procedures, one is not acquainted with. Part of these complexity is caused by e.g. the EFRO-KvW demand to show declaration of VAT exemption, as otherwise you cannot hand in accounting documents that include VAT to be disbursed.

CLLD – FLAG – SIOS is a pilot approach to challenge local communities to counteract societal dichotomy and to develop the local economy. The ongoing institutionalisation of related collective action is to be analysed to learn from. Insight is gained through endogenous learning from past experiences, by capacity development and in the timely creation of complementary institutions to steer local economic development (Helmsing, 2013). Pilots are meant to learn from its doing. Besides above-mentioned institutionalisation of planning, since early 2016 SIOS intended to institutionalise its monitoring and evaluation process as well. However, the initial SIOS budget did not have adequate space for such research. Consequently, the managing authority of KvW took the initiative to tender among various research institutions and chooses one in consultation with the Municipality of The Hague. It actually means that the intended SIOS institutionalisation of its own monitoring and evaluation process has been taken over by external partners from their perspective, only partly considering the SIOS perspective.

Conclusions

Current SIOS approach enabled citizens to organise themselves collectively accessing public funds through a participatory decision-making process. It has proven that such collective action facilitates innovative development interventions to emerge, linking learning to working, old to young, and civil

society to the private sector. Simultaneously, European privacy legislation and consequently local authorities' incapacity (or unwillingness) complicated to enable an organisation like SIOS to address and/or reach the individual citizen having them participating in the election process of such interventions on equal terms. The key challenge for a local authority to facilitate such a process still needs to be followed up.

SIOS itself has been confronted with ongoing unclarities in the EFRO – KvW implementation process. Top-down unclarity about tender procedures to follow, or whether VAT-included invoices could be declared to be refunded or not, confused both SIOS and its project-owners. The long-lasting process to have a research institute established to monitor and evaluate the SIOS-implementation process made GovernEUR to start monitoring about one year after SIOS' start. Top-down unclarity about the actual EFRO disbursement of project expenditure made SIOS to apply for an additional advance to the Municipality of The Hague, as otherwise SIOS had to stop the programme 'half-way'.

Starting from the project ideas that did not succeed to be worked out in proposals by the 'idea owner' concerned, it is concluded that the CLLD – FLAG – SIOS organisation lacks adequate capacity to assist, capacitate or facilitate such 'idea owners' to translate their ideas into implementable project proposals. Top-down, no such capacity building support has been included in the programme development process and consequently no financial space has been generated to give such capacity building support.

A minor number of project proposals that initially did not meet the assessment criteria, were supported by individual members of the SIOS-board and took a second chance to be admitted. Such kind of support was given by the board members, being volunteers and not capacitated specifically for that job, but doing it on basis of their own experience or capacity, being a representative of their constituency.

Being admitted - to get a donation to implement the projects as proposed - the project owner concerned is challenged to account for the implementation costs according to the EFRO – KvW regulations, which the project owners assess as being cumbersome (SIOS, 2018). Except the reference to the EFRO Handbook (EFRO, 2014) and the Accountants Protocol (EFRO, 2016) no capacity building took place to educate the project owners beforehand. At the time of handing in the accounting documents, a number of projects were confronted with a 'non-acceptance' of the documentation handed in. Alternatives had to be found, which by itself has been cumbersome and gave liquidity stress to the project owners concerned.

Top-down monitoring during the initial phases did not take place in a way that the programme implementation process has been described in specific milestones to be achieved over time. After some bottom-up initiatives to institutionalise monitoring and evaluation research, top-down support was given and governed the implementation externally, excluding bottom-up governance.
The top-down initiated secondment of a financial controller to SIOS intended to ensure a professional approach to have all expenditure accounted for according to the EFRO – KvW regulations.

The EFRO – KvW bureaucracy needs to realise that in case a next CLLD phase is proposed, the EFRO accounting procedures should be adjusted to the volunteer capacity of the target group beforehand, as the EFRO - KvW bureaucracy seems inflexible to adjust itself in an 'ongoing process'.
At the other hand, the SIOS approach by itself - as implemented – has resulted in an enormous amount of initiatives among all kind of different parts of local society. It brought groups of people working together, which – before – were hardly aware of each other. It facilitated innovative initiatives to have youngsters learning from others, preparing them for being employed. It means that even though SIOS faced a number of challenges, the SIOS approach by itself has been evaluated a success (GovernEUR,

2020). Current SIOS approach shows that many initiatives are generated among a variety of different groups in society grasping / trying to grasp top-down opportunities.

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