VIRTUAL AND COLLABORATIVE LABS

FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INTERNSHIP ACCESS
AND POSTGRADUATE PROFESSIONAL EMPOWERMENT

UNIVERSITÀ DI PADOVA
Dipartimento
di Scienze Storiche, Geografiche
e dell'Antichità - DiSSGeA

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21 SOLUTIONS

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1

INTRODUCTION

The training entitled “Local Development Practitioners’ Virtual Training” is designed for students and professionals who wish to strengthen their practical engagement with local development. Anyone who has studied, or is studying, local development is familiar with a recurring question: “What does local development actually mean?” It is a question that does not have a simple answer. The Master in Local Development at the University of Padua approaches it as the entanglement of organisational, economic, territorial, and institutional dynamics aimed at advancing sustainability processes rooted in communities.

From the very first semester, local development is presented as a field shaped by intersections rather than boundaries, drawing together perspectives on social and spatial dynamics and forms of critical thinking applied to circular economy, transformative learning, project planning, microfinance, and local democracy and governance, among other topics. These perspectives are not introduced as separate domains, but as interconnected ways of interpreting how local change is negotiated, contested, and enacted in practice.

Within this context, the training distills what the programme offers most directly in terms of applied knowledge and technical competencies, responding to skills that are increasingly sought in the contemporary job market.

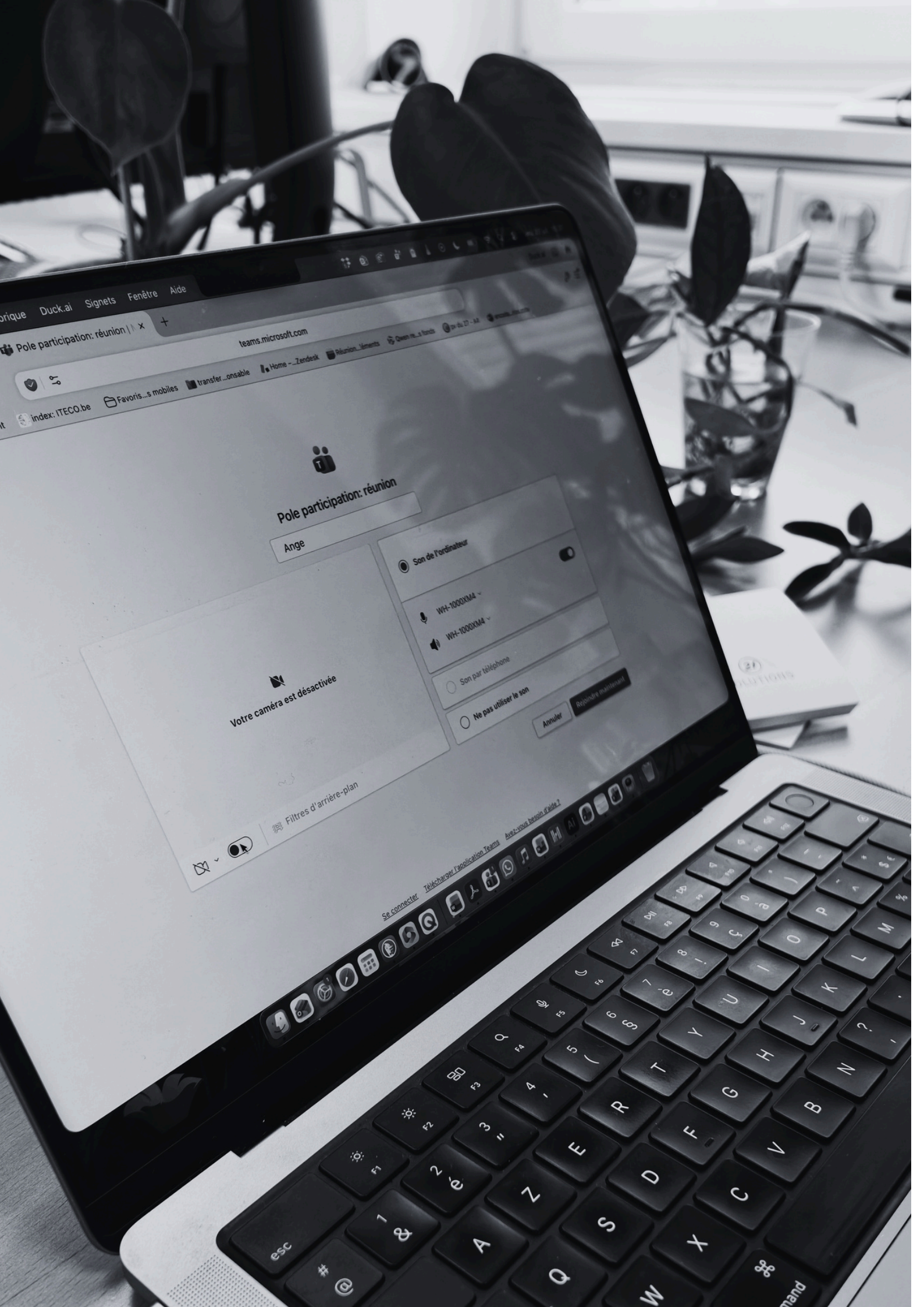
Developed in collaboration with local development practitioners working alongside the Master programme, the virtual training includes a workshop series aimed at moving beyond abstract definitions. Instead, it engages with what local development means in practice and what acting as a practitioner entails when navigating complex local realities.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Local Development Practitioners’ Virtual Training supports the transition from academic training to professional practice in local development. Through collaborative virtual workshops co-designed with practitioners, the training strengthens applied skills, methodological awareness, and readiness for internships and early professional roles within development organisations.

PROJECT PARTNERS

This first series of skills training was designed and delivered by the Master’s degree faculty in collaboration with 21 Solutions, with the participation of 21 Solutions, Angoli di Mondo social cooperative, and ADSB Consulting as trainer partners.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Ange
Son de l'ordinateur
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WH-1000XM4
Son par téléphone
Ne pas utiliser le son
Annuler
Votre caméra est désactivée
Filtres d'arrière-plan
Se connecter
Télécharger l'application Teams
Avez-vous besoin d'aide ?

PROJECT PARTNERS

21 SOLUTIONS

21 Solutions is a Brussels-based organisation that **drives social and ecological transformation**. 21 Solutions works with businesses, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and citizens, any organization that wants to make a difference without getting lost in grand statements.

In other words, 21 Solutions helps organizations develop roadmaps and take action to adopt practices that are **more sustainable, more inclusive, and more humane.**
Assessment, strategy, training, tools, evaluation, citizen participation process design and facilitation... 21 Solutions mobilised the right resources and the right people at the right time to ensure that ecological and social transformation is real and sustainable—not just something that looks good on slides.

PROJECT PARTNERS

ANGOLI DI MONDO

Angoli di Mondo is a Padua-based social cooperative that **promotes fair trade, social inclusion, responsible consumption, circular economy and reuse.** It works together with the nonprofit association from which it was born. Since its foundation, the organisation has worked to build a fairer, more sustainable and inclusive community through practical projects rooted in solidarity, environmental awareness and respect for diversity.
Through its fair-trade shops, second-hand markets, educational activities and work-inclusion projects, Angoli di Mondo **supports ethical supply chains, gives new life to used goods, and creates opportunities for people experiencing social, physical or psychological difficulties**. Its activities combine commercial, educational and social objectives, offering citizens concrete ways to participate in a more responsible economy.
The organisation also develops initiatives for schools, young people, institutions and the wider community, focusing on themes such as human rights, interculture, migration, biodiversity, active citizenship and sustainable development. With a strong network of volunteers, workers and local partners, Angoli di Mondo has developed solid expertise in fair trade, reuse, community engagement and social cooperation in the Padua area.

PROJECT PARTNERS

ADSB
Consulenza | Finanziamenti | Progettazione

ADSB Consulenze is a consultancy company based in Sandrigo, in the province of Vicenza, specialising in access to public funds, European project design, project management and financial reporting. Founded in 2020, the **company supports mainly third-sector organisations and local public authorities in accessing national and international funding opportunities**. Its work focuses on turning ideas into concrete, well-structured projects through tailored guidance, technical expertise and a strong professional network. Through its services in call **monitoring, project development, proposal writing, financial reporting, project management, monitoring and evaluation**, ADSB Consulenze assists clients throughout the full project cycle — from identifying relevant funding opportunities and developing high-quality proposals to coordinating funded projects and ensuring accurate, transparent reporting.

Grounded in professionalism, collaboration and innovation, the company works closely with clients to understand their needs and provide practical, customised support at every stage. With more than 20 successful collaborations and over 20 funded projects, ADSB Consulenze has developed solid expertise in turning strategic objectives into effective, fundable and well-managed initiatives.

2

LEARNINGS

This part presents the various workshops organised as part of the project. Each workshop is detailed in a descriptive sheet including the objectives, content, teaching methods, and results.

Title : Let’s Search Together
Date : 27/03/2026
Time :2 hour workshop

https://unipd.link/ld-skills-workshop-1

Educational objectives

- *experiencing collaboration*
- *understanding the importance of collaboration in policy making*

Introduction to the Tool

Let’s Search Together is one of Thiagi's Frame Game. It is a game that encourages collaboration to solve problems.

Thiagi's Frame Game
Who is Thiagi? Sivasailam "Thiagi" Thiagarajan — Indian-born, US-based expert, globally recognised for games-based learning in education & business.
What is a Frame Game? A reusable game structure — fixed rules, flexible content. Think of it like a puzzle frame: the frame (rules) stays the same, the picture (content) changes.
The same frame game can be used in a primary school class and a management training session.

What is it used for?

- Teamwork & collaboration
- Brainstorming & meetings
- Training & facilitation
- Policy making
- Solve complex problems

What is the added value?

- The structure is reusable — the same game frame can be adapted to any content or context (from a primary school class to a management training session)
- It makes learning active and engaging rather than passive
- It encourages participants to experience collaboration rather than just talk about it
- It is flexible — fixed rules, but the content can change to fit any topic or audience

What skills are involved?

- Collaboration & teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Communication
- Knowledge sharing & peer learning
- Active listening
- Strategic thinking (searching together for solutions)

Title : Social Reporting: From Obligation to Strategic Opportunity for Storytelling and Engagement

Date : 29/04/2026

Time :2 hour workshop

https://unipd.link/ld-skills-workshop-2

Educational objectives

- *Understand social reporting as a strategic tool, not only an obligation*
- *Learn how to use indicators to make values and impact visible*
- *Use data for storytelling, internal awareness and project proposals*

Introduction to the Tool

Social reporting is a document that presents an organisation's responsibilities, behaviours and social, environmental and economic results. It helps the organisation communicate what it does, why it does it, and what impact it creates. For Angoli di Mondo, the social report is used not only to provide transparency, but also to tell the organisation's story, clarify its values and strengthen trust with stakeholders.

- Vision and Mission
- Website
- 2024 Social Report
- Indicators
- Group work and discussion

What is it used for?

- To measure and communicate impact
- To make abstract values concrete
- To support transparency and accountability
- To improve internal and external communication

What is the added value?

- Turns a formal obligation into a storytelling tool
- Strengthens trust and reputation
- Helps define clear goals
- Supports collaboration and funding opportunities

What skills are involved?

- Data analysis
- Impact communication
- Storytelling
- Teamwork
- Strategic thinking
- Stakeholder engagement

Title : Pretend to be a Financial Manager
Date : 27/05/2026 and 15/06/2026
Time : 4 hour workshop

ADSB
Consulenza | Finanziamenti | Progettazione

PART1*

PART 2*

Educational objectives

- *Understand the role of a financial manager in a funded project*
- *Learn how to work with project budgets and financial reporting planning*
- *Apply financial management to a real project case*

Introduction to the Tool

The workshop is based on a practical financial reporting exercise. Participants work on a real project and act as financial managers.

- Real project case study
- Budget and financial documents
- Group work and discussion
- Practical financial management exercise
- Feedback and guidance for practicing form-filling

What is it used for?

- To understand how project budget is managed
- To plan and monitor project resources and expenses
- To connect activities, costs and funding rules
- To support project implementation

PART1* https://unipd.link/ld-skills-workshop-3-pt1

PART 2* https://unipd.link/ld-skills-workshop-3-pt2

What is the added value?

- Gives practical experience with financial project reporting
- Helps participants understand real project responsibilities
- Makes financial planning more concrete and accessible
- Develops skills useful for working in the field of financial project reporting

What skills are involved?

- Financial planning
- Budget analysis
- Project management
- Problem-solving
- Attention to detail
- Teamwork

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mediaspace.unipd.it/me

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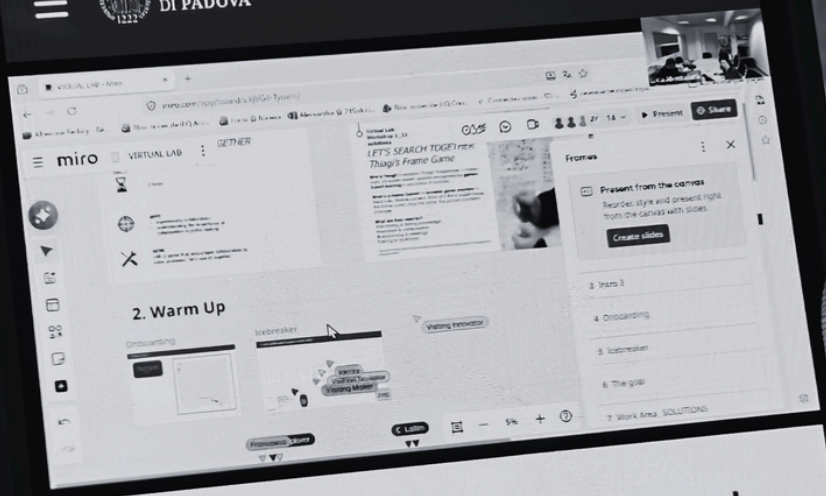


LD Practitioners' Skills Virtual Training | Workshop 1

By Chiara Rabbiosi • March 27th, 2026 • 25 Views • 14 Plays

Share

Local Development (LM-81)
Visit channel

Zoom Recording ID: 82227397389 UUID: 8jTNmmE8Ta+eg2H0uqusvQ== Meeting Time: 2026-03-27T14:14:26ZGMT

Appears in Local Development (LM-81)

1 Attachment

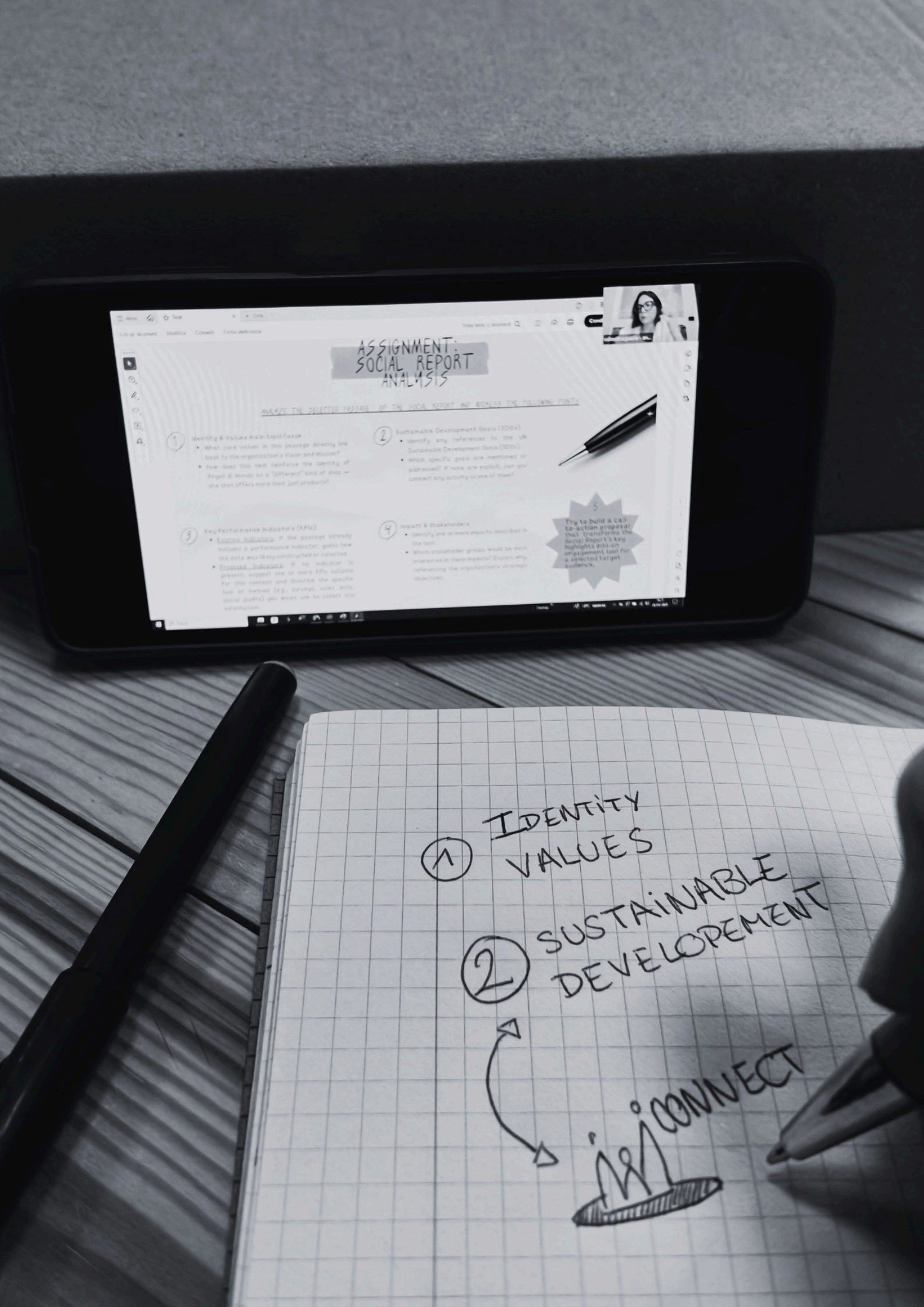
3

WONDER NOTEBOOK

This part presents the feedback from participating students collected through evaluation surveys completed at the end of each workshop. It provides insight into their perception of the project, what they learned, the difficulties they encountered, and what engaged them most.

DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

At the end of each workshop, participants were invited to fill in a short evaluation survey via Google Forms. The questionnaire included seven open-ended questions, asking them to reflect on what they learned, what surprised or disappointed them, what excited them, and how they might use it in their professional lives. In total, 16 responses were collected across the three workshops (8, 6, and 2 respectively). Rather than going through the results workshop by workshop, the findings are presented here thematically, grouping what came up most across sessions, and letting participants speak for themselves through selected quotes, reproduced as written, without any modification.


ASSIGNMENT:
SOCIAL REPORT
ANALYSIS
ANALYZE THE SELECTED PASSAGE OF THE SOCIAL REPORT AND ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING POINTS:
1 Identity & Values main topic/issue
2 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
3 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
4 Impact & Stakeholders
5
Try to build a call to-action proposal that transforms the Social Report's key highlights into an engagement tool for a selected target audience.
1 IDENTITY VALUES
2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPEMENT
CONNECT

Learning through doing: the value of practical grounding

Across all three workshops, participants consistently highlighted the value of working with real tools, real cases, and real practitioners. The contact with concrete situations whether a cooperative's actual social report, a real funded project, or a game-based facilitation method was a recurring source of engagement and learning.

"I learnt what a social report is, what sections it is composed of, what data should go into it, and how to make it potentially more effective given the stakeholders and audiences involved."

"I learnt what it means to be a financial manager and what role this professional plays in the project cycle."

"Some new methods and tools to collectively work. It will be useful to keep this in mind to then implement them while working."

Surprise and discovery: the unexpected depth of familiar topics

Several participants expressed genuine surprise at the depth hidden behind apparently simple or well-known topics. The format consistently surfaced dimensions they had not anticipated.

"The difference between collaboration and participation. I would normally use them as synonyms. But it makes sense that they have different scopes."

"I was surprised by how much data and how many activities we tend to take for granted when we consider third sector organisations, and by how important it is to curate the aspect of communication and external engagement."

"I was particularly surprised by the insight that the financial manager is normally not involved in the project planning phase and that there is usually little communication between this professional and the project manager."

Engagement and excitement: what sparked energy

Participants were energised by the collaborative dynamic, the presence of peers from the same field, and the contact with practitioners sharing genuine hands-on experience.

"I was very excited to see people I know and being able to work together. I love the fact that we had a safe space because we have common understandings."

"It was very nice to work on a social report that talks about real situations and projects."
"I was struck by how well gamification can go with facilitation."

"It's always a pleasure to see people working in these fields sharing their actual real hands-on knowledge with students."

"The thing that will surely stick with me is the great insight that Sonia gave, not only on the topic of the presentation but on many aspects of project planning."

Transfer: bringing it back to professional life

The anticipation of concrete professional use was one of the most striking features of participants' feedback. Across all workshops, nearly every respondent connected what they had learned to specific future applications, including thesis work, NGO management, project reporting, and facilitation.

"I will definitely look into the frame games and try to apply them in my work context."

"I'm going to use the framework and the tools for my thesis! I will integrate it as I think it is super interesting."

"I am sure I will definitely remember the theoretical and practical aspects of social reporting we addressed in any LD-related job I might be able to find."

"Creating the Excel file will be a great blueprint for any future job in project reporting."

4

CONCLUSIONS

SOLUTIONS
command
option

CONCLUSIONS

The "Local Development Practitioners' Virtual Training" demonstrates the viability of a co-designed, practice-centred approach to bridging academic training and professional reality in the field of local development. Across three workshops combining collaborative intelligence, social impact communication, and project financial management participants consistently engaged with the material in a spirit of curiosity, critical reflection, and genuine motivation for professional application.

The evaluation data collected through the Wonder Notebook confirms that the format resonates with participants: the combination of real cases, practitioner presence, and collaborative methods creates a learning environment that is both intellectually stimulating and practically grounded. The recurring requests for more time, more hands-on depth, and more structured debriefs suggest clear directions for iteration in future editions.

The programme's approach rooted in co-construction between academia and civil society organisations offers a replicable model for professional empowerment in the local development field. Future editions could build on this foundation by extending workshop duration, integrating participant-led documentation, and exploring hybrid or in-person formats for activities that participants found more challenging in a virtual setting.

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