

## ASTRA PROJECT

### Deliverable 5.1 (D23) Report of joint training events during the M7-12

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University of Ljubljana, Faculty of social work (hereafter ULFSD) coordinates WP5 Training. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there were some delays in recruitment of ESRs what had a minor effect on some of the training activities and changes were approved by the funding agency.

Key components of the training are:

1. **Fifteen individual research projects;**
2. **Six-month secondments** at beneficiaries and participating organisation, with each ESR spending at least one secondment outside of university at CIRIEC, LUKE or POs in the practice of sustainability transition;
3. **Network-wide training events**, summer schools, workshops, on-line courses and final conference and



4. Active participation in the on-going scientific communication of the **ASTRA network community** through its digital training platform in TEAMS, and communication tools.

#### 5. **Local doctoral training**

We are reporting on the point 4. Network-wide training events. Astra training consists of on-site and on-line activities.

##### On-site activities are:

- **Summer schools (10 ECTS each):**
  - UL, Ljubljana, Slovenia – 10 days, June 2021
  - ISCTE, Lisbon, Portugal – 10 days – June 2022
  - UNIBZ, Bolzano, Italy – 10 days, June 2023
- **3 times 3 days Research thematic workshops (5 ECTS - ESRs participate just to the workshops in their own WP, but can join others)**
  - WP2, LUKE – September 2021, August 2022, July 2023
  - WP3, CIRIEC – November 2021, September 2022, August 2023
  - WP 4, JYU – September 2021, October 2022, September 2023
- **Final conference JYU**

##### On-line training events are:

- **Webinar course on the Sustainability Transition in SW (5 ECTS):** JYU January to April 2022.
- **10 x half-day webinars on individual research methods:** DUR+UL, August 2021 to April 2022.

The subjects of this report are training events that were held in months 7 to 12, that is from June 2021 till the end of October 2021. We are reporting on three sets of the Astra training. In June 2021 the first summer school was organised in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Unfortunately, it was held on-line as the pandemic was still spreading and due to the measures to combat the disease there were strict restrictions of the cross-border migrations. It was not possible for ESRs to travel, to find accommodation and to enter the Faculty of social work in Ljubljana due to closure. All teaching activities in Slovene education moved to on-line forms of study process.

The second training events were two Research thematic workshops, that were held in September in Oulu and Jyväskylä, Finland (the third one will be in Liège, Belgium in November 2021).



And the third training event is on-line webinar on individual research methods. It consists of 10 webinars and 3 webinars were already completed.

## 1. SUMMER SCHOOL (hereafter SuS1)

Summer school was the first event that brought together early-stage researchers, beneficiaries, and partner organisations of the Astra. Two of the ESR's were recruited but not yet employed and they still had commitments in their old jobs, but they participated as much as possible. All other ESRs were present across the whole SuS1.

The title of the SuS1 was ***Major drivers of ecological, economic and social challenges of sustainability transition***. It was organized by the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of social work in close collaboration with the consortium and leading University of Jyväskylä. Dates of the even were **14th - 25th June 2021** (online – ZOOM).

The main objective of the SuS1 was to achieve a joint knowledge base about the interconnectivity between the major drivers of ecological, economic, and social challenges of sustainability transition. For the second, the Summer School essentially supported the processing of the doctoral research plans of the ESRs. As third objective, transferable skills in communication and strategic work was achieved.

Vesna Leskošek from the ULFSD, was leading the SuS1. All supervisors of the ESRs were involved in the workshops, lecturing and joint discussions. Especially the leaders of the scientific WPs 2 Anne Tolvanen, 3 Barbara Sak and 4 Kati Närhi as coordinators of the corresponding Thematic Groups of ASTRA were involved in planning, executing and evaluating the event. The process was supervised by the academic principle prof. Dr. Aila Leena-Matthies and administrative support and expertise was provided by the project manager Anu Kettunen.

Summer school consisted of three main pillars of the training:

- Major interconnected drivers of ecological, economic, and social challenges of sustainability transition (5 days):
  - a) climate change, food, biosphere protection,
  - b) global economic structures, changes impacting local economy,
  - c) social inequality and marginalisation.
- Advanced communication skills regarding field research environment, mobility, media, and various stakeholders (2 days).
- Thematic workshop on research for 5 related ESRs of WP2, WP3, WP4 (3 days).



SuS consisted of individual learning, lectures, presentations, visual material, joint debates, and thematic workshops. Across 10 days there were:

- 13 interactive lectures delivered by beneficiary organisations
- 7 interactive lectures from partner organisations and other stakeholders (Terra, Zero, Leuven2030, Umanotera, Feantsa, SEE, ENSIE)
- 4 joint workshops, including Ethical issues in research, delivered by Astra Ethics mentor
- 3-day thematic workshops in which ESRs were developing their research plan and discussed on the topics raised in lectures. Thematic workshops were divided by the three scientific work packages of ASTRA. Each ESR is assigned to a particular WP:
  - to WP2 (Environmental Sustainability Transition, led by LUKE) ESR8, 9, 10, 14, 15;
  - to WP3 (Economic Sustainability Transition, led by CIRIEC) ESR2, 6, 11, 12, 13 and
  - to WP4 (Social Sustainability Transition, led by JYU) ESR1, 3, 4, 5, 7

Very important part of the SuS1 were non-academic partner organisations of ASTRA, that is FEANTSA, ZERO, Leuven2030 and TERRA that provide training in their area of expertise. In addition to these partners the organisation UMANOTERA provided a lecture in the SuS.

For the participation and written assignment, 10 ECTS was granted by the main supervisor of each ESR in cooperation with WP leaders. The ECTS will count as part of the ESRs' doctoral study performance. The recognition of ECTS is in the domain of the home university, where ESRs are enrolled as doctoral students.

The study assignment of the Summer School consisted of:

- Reading of three articles as preparation for the Summer School
- Active participation
- Learning Diary that was submitted until 15th of August

Further, the first drafts of the individual doctoral research designs of each ESRs were produced during the thematic workshops. Research designs were delivered by August 15<sup>th</sup>.

The course assignments were assessed by the main supervisor of each ESR, in collaboration with the corresponding Leader of the WPs 2, 3 or 4, according to the scale used at the home university, where the study assignments will be registered.



## Evaluation of the SuS1

We have evaluated the event with the questionnaire that was available immediately after the SUS1 ended using an online program Webropol. The questionnaire was anonymous and completed by all 15 ESRs. They have marked answers on the scale of 5 point (1 not satisfied at all – 5 very satisfied) The assessment showed quite high satisfaction (more than average 4) in following parameters of the SuS1:

Well structured, comprehensive lectures rich in variety, content well illustrated with examples, field research examples included. The atmosphere during lectures was encouraging, lecturers were respectful and empowering, ESRs felt heard.

ESR were slightly less satisfied with (average 3,5 to 3,8):

The didactic use of digital tools, cross-links between lectures, not enough time for comments and questions and not enough time for the debate

Overall satisfaction was quite high, on the average of 4,3 out of 5. We have learned that on-line teaching differs from face to face and the online didactic is specific skill that is not yet mastered, as for example the use of break-out rooms or the use of visual material. Some of the open answers pointed also to the “zoom” fatigue, more breaks are needed in online events. Regarding the content, stronger link to social work should be made.

The information gathered with the questionnaire are very important and will be considered in the organisation of the future events.

## 2. WEBINARS ON INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH METHODS

This activity is a shared responsibility of the University of Durham and the University of Ljubljana. Research methods were first discussed during the summer school and online questionnaire was created to collect ideas and needs for specific research approaches, methods and tools. The program was tailored according to the collected responses.

Till the end of October 3 out of 10 webinars are completed, 2 were in August and 1 in October.

The programme includes a range of topics: Project Planning and Management, Search for and Appraising Online Resources, Systematic and Other Forms of Literature Review, Social Work Practice Research, Participatory Methods, Quantitative and Mixed Methods, Researching Complexity, Ethnography, Case Studies, Grounded Theory Methodology, Comparative Studies, and Innovative Qualitative Methods. Each session is 3-hour long and delivered by academics who are experts of the particular methods.

The attendance was 100% in the method training session so far. ESRs in the ASTRA project appeared engaged, and many found them very helpful and suitable for their stage of PhD



development. ESRs particularly appreciated the discussion around how to manage supervisor-supervisee relationships in the session on Project Management. Specifically, about the session on Systematic Review, of the 11 survey responses obtained, 11 agreed or strongly agreed that the instructor communicated ideas and concepts clearly, 10 agreed or strongly agreed the session was well organised, 11 agreed or strongly agreed the instructor used time efficiently and 9 agreed or strongly agreed the instructor's feedback was helpful. 10 agreed or strongly agreed they were happy with the overall delivery of the session. The training sessions have also encouraged a few initiatives among ESRs to take on a systematic review connected to their own projects.

### 3. RESEARCH THEMATIC WORKSHOPS

There were two thematic workshops, the first from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> September in Oulu and the second from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> September in Jyväskylä, both Finland.

The thematic workshop in Oulu was organised as part of the WP2 on environmental sustainability. WP2 workshop in Oulu was kept under Covid-19 restrictions, which meant demands for using masks, disinfection of hands and certain distances instructed by authorities. Despite of these demands, all ESRs that were able to come participated the workshop. The number of ESRs was ten. This was the first time they met face-to-face.

Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) was responsible for organising the workshop. The organising team members were Anne Tolvanen (PhD, Programme director, Professor), Katja Kangas (PhD, research scientist) and Oili Tarvainen (PhD, research scientist). The workshop was kept in one of the historical locations of the Oulu city (<https://visitoulu.fi/en/tuote/hupisaaret-2/>). This location made it possible to use nearby green areas for practical rehearsals of the workshop.

Learning goals were to:

1. Discuss the theoretical-conceptual framework of the WP2
2. Recognise the linkage between the framework and the ESR projects
3. Familiarise with well-being impacts of nature and nature relatedness and participatory methods

The first day of the workshop was meant to get to know each other and the projects of the ESRs of the WP2. Oili Tarvainen presented the goal and the programme for the workshop. Next each participant introduced themselves and their backgrounds. Anne Tolvanen gave a short presentation that covered the lecture themes of the summer school. She reminded that the lectures were still available for the ESRs in the Teams project folder. After introduction the turn was given to the ESRs.



All five WP2 ESRs were participating the workshop. However, only three of them were present in person: ESR10 Miroslav Budimir, ESR14 James Obeng and ESR15 Shailendra Rai. ESR8 Mattia Mansueto had not yet begun to work officially, but he was able to join via Teams link. ESR9 Amy Shackelford had begun her contract just a week before. Due to the visa restrictions, she was not able to come to Oulu in person. She presented her project via Teams link. After each presentation all participants were able to comment the plan. Luke team was responsible for leading the discussion and asked about the environmental aspects of the projects. Also, Ingo Stamm (MSW, PhD) participated the workshop, and he provided the social work scientific aspects. Stamm is a Postdoctoral researcher at the University of Jyväskylä, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius. The discussions opened the connections between the topics of ASTRA project.

The second day was targeted to get to know and understand what is meant by “nature relatedness” and how it can be determined and studied. Ann Ojala (DSocSc, Senior Scientist) from Luke introduced the topic. Discussion on the topic was vivid. After lunch Marja Uusitalo (PhD, Senior Scientist) from Luke presented the methods how relation to the nature can be studied. For example, the participants filled a questionnaire that had been used in the Polut project (<https://www.luke.fi/en/projektit/polut/>). The discussion about the methods was fruitful. Uusitalo also presented a template that could be used to plan nature-based interventions. The template will be available for the ESRs in Teams folder for the future use. Finally, the second day ended with Viola Hakkarainen who told her experiences about being ERS and how the project has proceeded during Covid-19 pandemic.

After a short break the ESRs met in front of the Lasaretti hotel. The aim of the walking workshop method was to find out how the nature elements can be experienced. Tarvainen had chosen six locations in the Hupisaaret. The participants filled a simple document by choosing a feeling, senses and wording, and there was time for discussion. Also, after the final stop there was a discussion about the method and the stops. During the dinner the discussion about the environmental aspects experienced continued.

The final day started with presenting the organisation behind the WP2. Next, we discussed about what the ESRs had learnt during the previous days. The discussion was continued during a walk to specify different nature elements. After lunch we continued the discussion about the ESRs thoughts how they could find the environmental aspects for their projects. Finally, we started to plan the next WP2 workshop for the next year. The aim of the planning was to get first ideas for the content of the workshop and to find out how the lessons has impacted to the ESRs opinion about the methods to use environment in social work.





The thematic workshop in Jyväskylä was organised as part of the WP4 on social sustainability.

Learning goals of the workshop were:

1. To gain knowledge concerning its specific institutional field of transition, theories and research reviews;
2. To transform the knowledge into own research; and,
3. To integrate the added value of the specific transition perspective in the TSTR context.

The first Astra workshop in Jyväskylä, which was intended specifically for the five ESRs of WP4 (social sustainability), was held on 13-15 September 2021. The workshop was also attended by 7 ESR students from other work packages. There was a total of 12 ESR participants in Jyväskylä workshop. The workshop took place according to the planned programme. All five WP4 ESRs presented their research plans in a joint seminar on the first day of the workshop. In addition, the workshop included lectures on the concepts of social sustainability, and ESRs getting to know each other, and the teachers, supervisors and researchers present in Jyväskylä.

On the second day of the workshop, Ingo Stamm lectured and discussed with the students under the title: Human rights and social Sustainability as an ethical basis for social work? On the same day, the ESRs were offered the opportunity to consult on research designs from the perspective of research ethics with ASTRA ethics mentor Petteri Niemi. Simultaneously, there was an opportunity to consult project manager Anu Kettunen on administrative matters related to Astra. Photographs were also taken of the participants for website purposes.

The third day of the workshop addressed the concepts of social sustainability through the following two themes: Is sustainable forced Migration possible? with Kati Turtiainen and What is ecosocial work? with Kati Närhi and Aila-Leena Matthies. In the last session of the workshop, Aila-Leena Matthies summarised the workshop's ideas on social sustainability and its relations to other sustainability dimensions and on sustainability research and discussed it together with the ESRs. The workshop ended with a joint dinner.

