



Burren and Cliff of Moher GeoparkLIFE

IMI Design & Innovation

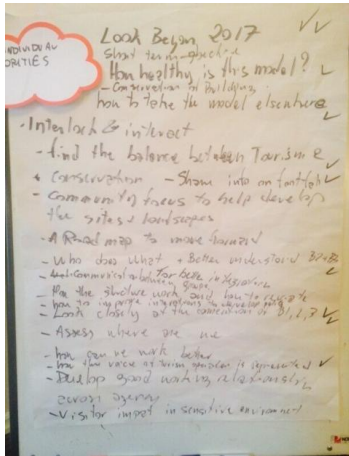
April 2015

Agenda

Introductions	Slide 3
How do you feel about the GeoparkLIFE project progress so far?	Slide 4
On the road to successfully complete this project where are we?	Slide 5
Positive impact of the project to date	Slide 6
What are the opportunities?	Slide 7
Specific opportunity items	Slide 8
Observations	Slide 9
Overcoming Barriers	Slide 10
Sustainable economy	Slide 11
On the ground work	Slide 12
Partnership	Slide 13
Conservation	Slide 14
Reflections	Slide 15
Conclusions	Slide 17

Introductions

Participants were asked to get to know each other's roles and key interests in the GeoparkLIFE project. This exercise generated some very useful dynamics:



Engage While the emotions about the progress of the project so far were somewhat mixed it is clear everyone is eager to remain engaged in it and find a way to succeed in achieving a common interest.

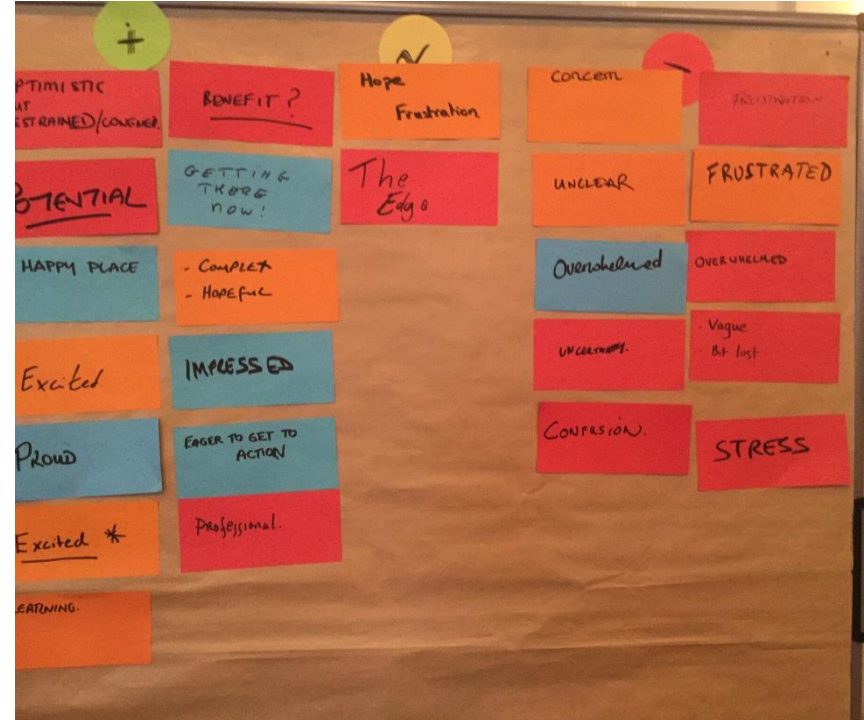
Energise The introduction of the various participants seem to have energised the group to know more about each others roles, their involvement in the project and learn from each others experiences in the project.

Collaborate It would appear there is a strong willingness to move the project forward and find new ways of collaborating and sharing perspectives to ensure future success.

How do you feel about the GeoparkLIFE project progress so far?

When asked about expressing their emotions participants responded as follows:

Positive	Mixed	Negative
Optimistic Potential Benefit Happy place Excited complex Hopeful Impressed Getting there Proud Eager to get action Professional Learning	Hope/ frustration The edge	Concern Unclear Frustrated Overwhelmed Uncertainty Confusion Vague A bit Lost Stress



On the road to successfully complete the GeoparkLIFE project where are we?

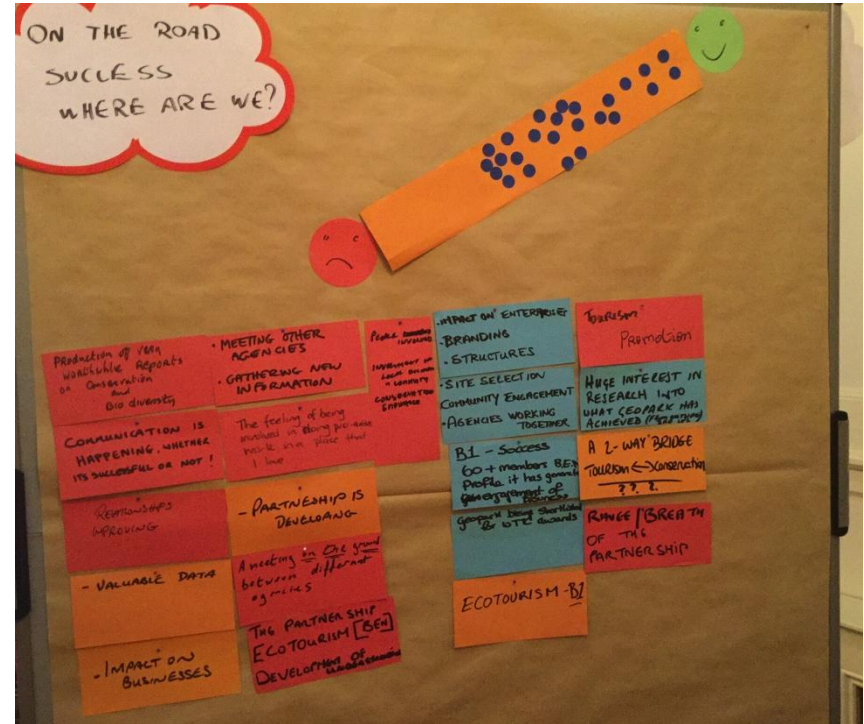
Opinions on this question were varied but consensus seems to be the project has been successful so far and has delivered some very positive outcomes:

Production of worthwhile reports on conservation and bio diversity and other valuable data.

The opportunity to meet other agencies and build mutually fulfilling and collaborative relationships.

Development of structures, branding and support of eco-tourism enterprises.

Community engagement working together with agencies and conservation.



Positive Impact of the GeoparkLIFE Project to date

Production of very workable reports on conservation and bio diversity	Positive impact on business	Partnership is developing	Involvement of local community	Impact on enterprises	60+ members BEN profile it has generated engagement	A 2-way bridge between tourism and conservation
Communication is happening	Meeting other agencies	A meeting in the ground between different agencies	Conservation example	branding	Geopark being shortlisted for IOTC awards	Range and breath of the partnership
Relationships are improving	Gathering new information	The partnership Ecotourism (BEN development	Agencies working together	structures	Ecotourism – B1	
Valuable data have been produced	The feeling of being involved in doing pro-active work in a place I love	People get involved	B1 Success	Site selection	Huge interest in research into what geopark has achieved	

What are the Opportunities?

The participants worked in smaller groups composed of representative from various agencies and community to identify opportunities and ranked them as follow

Opportunity	Votes	Rank
Sustainable economy	29	1
On the ground work	26	2
Continuing the partnership	19	3
Conservation	19	3
Communication	16	5
Transferability (creating a Model)	10	6
Knowledge Base	6	7



Specific opportunities items

Sustainable economy	On the ground work	Continuing the partnership	Conservation	Communication	Transferability (creating a Model)	Knowledge Base
Generate social Cohesion	Working relationships (land owner, communities, agencies)	The network to be sustained	Recommendation for policy when needed	On going conversations	Best practice guidelines for visitor management	Better Tourism
Jobs and business creation	Recognising Value of volunteer participation	Accessible network for communication	Identify balance between top down and bottom up approach		Develop process by which "best practice" is achieved and can be transferable	Research projects
Financial benefits for local communities	Opportunity for wider Community engagement	Continued communication for partnership	Best practice for conservation		A model to be applied more widely	Data and information
Establish model for sustainable tourism	Template for agency and community engagement	Continuing interaction/ work between agencies	Leveraging funding for high quality conservation		Realisation of infrastructural projects	
Better spread of tourism across the Burren	Guide to legislation process	Utilization of resources to achieve common goals			Guidelines for funding	
Strong profile for the destination	Community led	Enduring agency/business relationship			A new tradition, holistic, all inclusive, self sufficient	
Quality tourism Base	Access to officialdom	To give BEN the chance to stand alone				

Observations

Observing the group during the process of categorizing opportunity ideas it became evident that:

- There is an intrinsic symbiosis between, conservation, tourism, local economy and community.
- While trying to separating the opportunities into logical groups it became clear that a unseparable link exist between all the involved stakeholders.
- The group has come to realise the value of close partnership and collaboration as the best approach to succesfully deliver the GeoparkLIFE project.
- There seems to be a strong desire to share and communicate across all the stakeholder involved in the partnership about succesful outcomes from operating sub groups (B1, B2, B3).

Overcoming Barriers

Following the top 4 priorities

The participants were divided into subgroups to evaluate each to the top opportunity areas, identify potential barrier to success and identify potential solutions to overcome such barriers

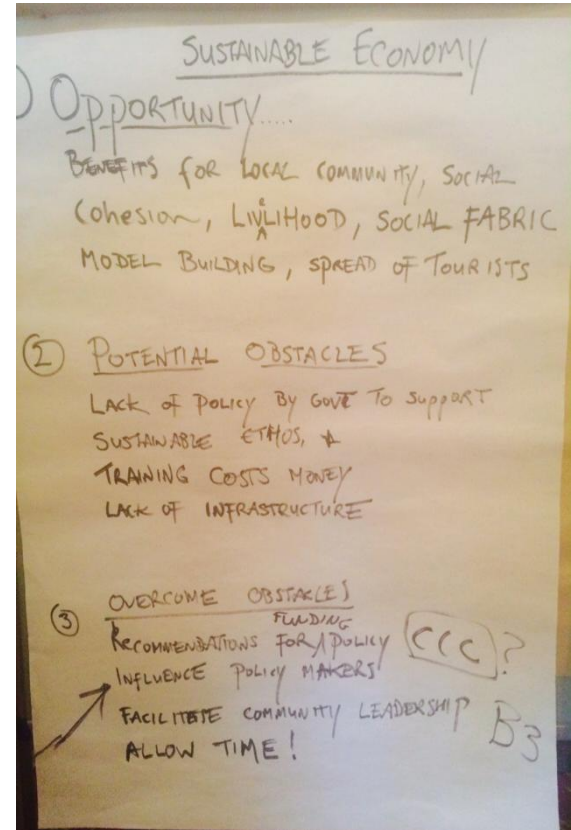
Many ideas were shared and some of the ideas generated some good discussion. Asked to define specific actions and owners the group realised some of the ideas were outside of the GeoparkLIFE project scope while other ideas will require a more careful consideration to be progressed.

The following 4 opportunity were explored

1. Sustainable economy will benefit the local community to bring cohesion, develop the social fabric, support tourism and livelihood.
2. On the ground work developing the necessary resource across the board.
3. Sustain GeoparkLIFE Partnership by way of clearer communication of a shared purpose.
4. Develop a sound conservation strategy in collaboration with the community, the agencies and local enterprises.

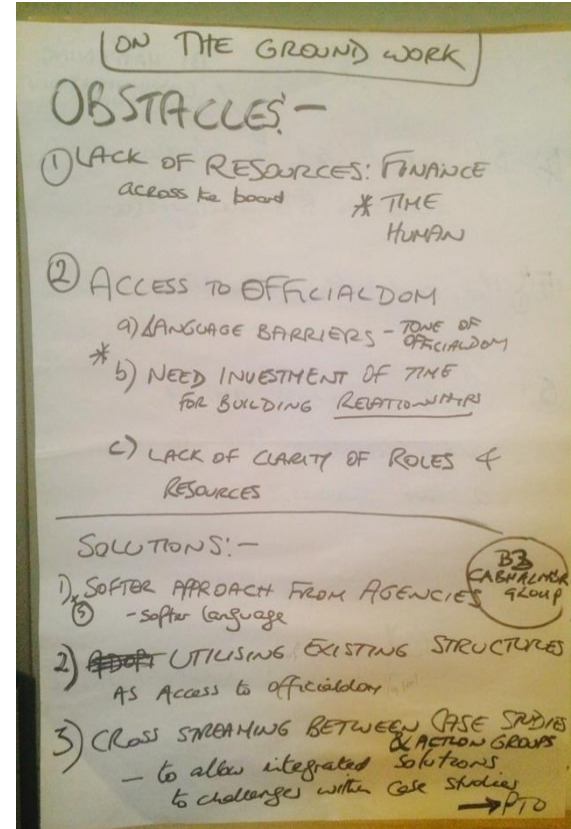
Sustainable economy

Obstacles	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lack of policy by Government to support sustainable ethos2. Cost of training3. Lack of infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide recommendations for funding policy (CCC)2. Influence policy makers3. Facilitate community leadership (B3)4. Allow Time



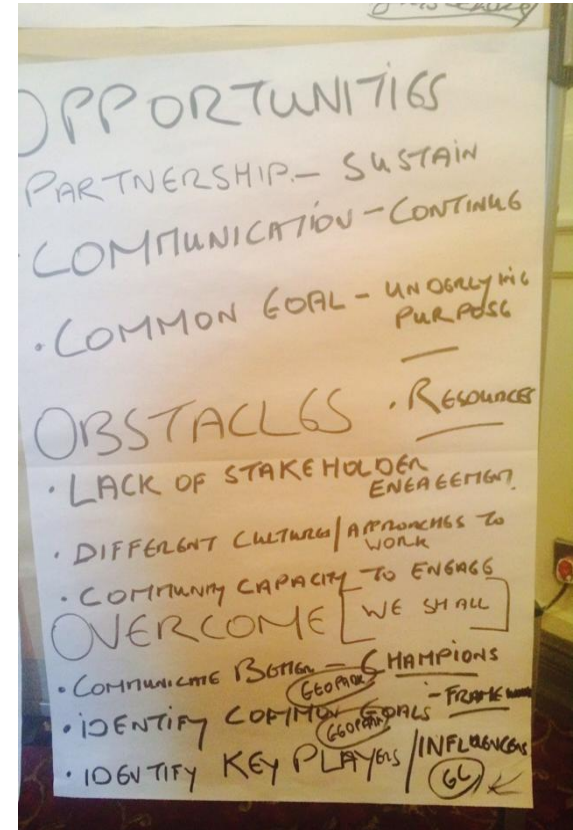
On the ground work

Obstacles	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of resources across the board (finance, time, human) 2. Access to officialdom <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language barriers, tone of officialdom 2. Need investment of time for building relationships 3. Lack of clarity of roles for resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Softer approach from agencies – softer language (B3) 2. Utilizing existing structures as access to officialdom 3. Cross streaming between case studies and actions groups to allow integrated solutions to challenges within case studies 4. B1 network used to develop actions in B3 – Integration 5. More round table discussions 6. Create awareness around spending/ investing time to achieve success.

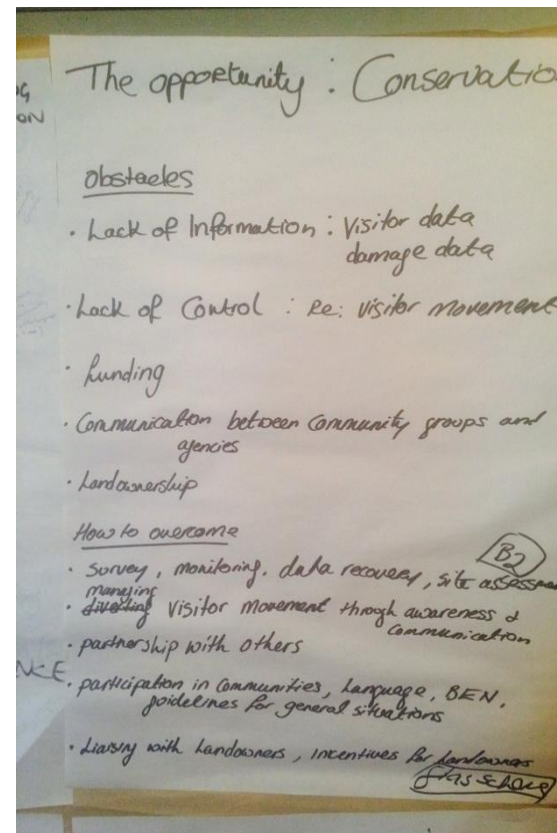


Partnership

Obstacles	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lack of stakeholder engagement2. Different cultures and approaches to work3. Community capacity to engage	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Communicate better - establish champions2. Identify common goals3. Identify key players and influences



Obstacles	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lack of information – Visitor data / Damage data2. Lack of control over visitor movements3. Funding4. Communication between community groups and agencies5. Land ownership	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Survey, Monitoring, data recovery, site assessment (B2)2. Managing visitors movements through awareness of communication3. Partnership with others4. Participation in communities, Language, BEN, guidelines for general situations5. Liaising with landowner and incentives



Reflections

The process of defining obstacles and solutions felt somewhat challenging:

1. In retrospect the time allocated to fully explore the brief for the facilitated event was too short.

- *During the morning the group reached a momentum when everyone recognised the value of the GeoparkLIFE partnership.*
- *Building upon such momentum and define how best to evolve the partnership would have provided the group with the opportunity to clarify and consolidate relationships and set the tone towards a successful completion of the GeoparkLIFE project*
- *It is recommended that more time should be dedicated in further exploring how the GeoparkLIFE stakeholders could effectively evolve an already successful partnership to bring the project to a successful conclusion*

Reflections

2. When asked to define specific approaches to capitalise on existing opportunities, participants focus tended to shift on situations outside of their direct control. In doing so a feeling of reduced empowerment began to set in. Once the partnership has been fully evolved and consolidated it is recommended that:
 - Each of the identified opportunities should be further developed through appropriate follow up.
 - The focus of all stakeholders should remain on what they have direct control over to capitalise on results and extend influence by demonstrating positive outcomes.
 - It is imperative for the working groups to establish specific action plans with individual owners attached to every task to ensure follow up and accountability.

3. A strong bond seems to have formed between the workshop participants that can be built upon to further develop effective working relationship between stakeholders across the project working groups it would be critical to consolidate such bond as soon as possible.

Conclusions

Having worked with this varied group of stakeholders:

It would appear that the diversity of stakeholders in the Geopark project seems to provide a unique opportunity to create very dynamic and mutually beneficial relationships between the local community, enterprises, conservation agencies and tourism.

It became evident the need for continued and reinforced exchange of experiences and successes between the stake holder to support and sustain the already existing enthusiasm and engagement.

The project is certainly generating valuable success for all the parties involved and it has become clear how the link between conservation, tourism, economy and the social fabric is inextricable and should form the foundation for the project to thrive and develop to sustainability levels.

BURREN AND
CLIFFS OF MOHER

GEO 
PARK   

PEOPLE. PLACE.
LEARNING. LIVELIHOOD.



IMI

Irish Management Institute