



RECOMS

Deliverable 2.1

Training Event 2: Action Learning Training Project I - Agroecology and Food Sovereignty Event Report



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RECOMS Training 2 – Action Learning Training Project I – Agroecology and food sovereignty - 1st– 13th February 2019, Coventry, Brussels

Event Report

RECOMS Training 2: ‘Action Learning Training Project I - Agroecology and Food Sovereignty’ and the RECOMS Mid-Term Review Meeting took place in Coventry, UK (1st-10th February 2019) and Brussels, Belgium (11th -13th February 2019). During the Coventry stage of the training, 14 fellows participated with 5 supervisors; during the Brussels session and Mid-Term Review Meeting, 14 fellows and all Beneficiaries’ representatives participated (please see annex 1 for participants lists).

The topics of the training included: transdisciplinary knowledge; action learning and participatory action research; community empowerment; agroecology; food sovereignty and restorative practice; community enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurialism; grassroots empowerment; inclusive growth and facilitation of community environmental action; and open access science. The objectives of the training were to: develop expertise in the integration of knowledge and practice; learn to run collaborative research projects with local experts and in a participatory manner; develop research ethics capabilities and clarify research ethics questions; learn to communicate research to a range of stakeholders; understand visual tools for research and learn to deliver impacts with research and visual tools. To achieve these objectives, in addition to the live action-learning projects, in both the Coventry and Brussels training sessions numerous invited lecturers and experts provided presentations or trainings to the fellows (please see the agenda and intended learning outcomes in annex 2).

The event started with a non-formal gathering and dinner in Coventry on the day of arrival (1st February). The fellows and the project management team gathered for a welcome dinner and to get to know a local refugee initiative - the Arabian Bites - that provides food services while employing refugees and providing some community services.

On 2nd February the fellows explored Coventry by a guided tour with the help of a representative from the Rose Community Centre. The representative showed the Fellows the city from an environmental, economic and social perspective, drawing attention to the local challenges related to food poverty and inequality. Later on, the fellows had a chance not only to get more familiar with the Men’s Shed initiative (run out of the Rose Community Centre, which provides community services and joint programs to men with addiction problems) inclusive of a short movie and discussion, but also immersing themselves in food sovereignty by way of cooking together based on Men’s Shed recipes. As well as helping the fellows understand better



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the local difficulties about food and sustainability, the joint cooking session also strengthened the fellows' coordination and team work skills.

To continue exploring further Coventry's entrepreneur and local community initiative side, the fellows finished the day in the Coventry Tin Music and Arts, which is a charitable organization helping local artists and creative initiatives.



Prior to arriving in Coventry an overview of the rationale and foci of the action-learning component of the training event, together with the three sub-projects had been circulated amongst the fellows via the Moodle platform. The fellows had been asked to select their preferred sub-project in accordance with their research interests and training needs (please see further details in annex 3). On 3rd February at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR), Coventry University, Shared Assets, RECOMS partner and the facilitator of the Coventry live action-learning activity presented the outline of the week for this component of the training. Here, the fellows had a more detailed introduction to the Action Learning Training and the three projects. The idea was that the fellows would not only work on real life examples in groups with their ESR peers, but also, in accordance with the transdisciplinary science rationale of RECOMS, jointly work on them with key stakeholders. The aim here was to facilitate deeper learning of transdisciplinary research



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practice and at the same time also trigger some impacts with their projects. The fellows were informed that the outcomes were to be presented to the key stakeholders' panel on Friday, 8th February at the City Council.

In general, the week was structured such that the fellows could receive relevant theoretical training through the morning sessions in order to draw on and apply that knowledge in to their action-learning group work during the afternoon sessions.

The three live action-learning projects were:

- **Project 1 - Land based social enterprise.** “Food procurement” is one of the most powerful tools - within food systems reorganisation - in the hands of local organisations, to provide direct benefits to local communities. While changes in food procurement are often used merely as ways to fix the problems of the food system rather than changing the system itself, there are ways to radicalise and to extend its political and transformative power. In Coventry, work carried in this realm looks to encourage the existing university caterer to enlarge the amount of food sourced locally, and promote the creation of one or more urban and peri- urban land-based social enterprises, inspired by the principles of agroecology. *This project is focussed on:* designing an effective outreach strategy to build a working group across local food growers and other stakeholders to start a new social enterprise that -while it will begin with supplying food to Sodexo, Coventry University’s caterer - will nonetheless be based on transformative views and possibility to re-politicize the food system.
- **Project 2 - Public land use.** Farmers around the world striving for food sovereignty have understood that land is a fundamental resource not only for the production of food, but for reproducing ecological and social ecosystems. This awareness is however, not always obvious in urban contexts, where land is little more than purely a realm of real estate speculation and value accumulation. Work in Coventry in this context is trying to shed light on the important role that rethinking public (and private) land use can have for the reshaping of food systems and the accessibility of free fresh fruit for everyone. Preliminary explorations in this area have shown both land availability and political will for experimenting with urban agroecological pilots. *The project is focussed on:* writing a funding application for a small bid within the funding opportunities made available in relation to the Coventry Capital of Culture initiative. The project should interweave agroecological use of urban public land, health of vulnerable communities, and culture, in the perspective of urban political agroecology, and include a range of elements such as further research, piloting, cultural/ performing initiatives.



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- **Project 3 - Coventry Food Charter.** Conceptualised as a tool for political lobbying work to steer social change (and usually as a preliminary step towards the development of a more articulated food strategy), the Coventry Food Charter was developed over the period June 2016 to May 2017 through a series of events that included a workshop with local stakeholders, a conference, a working group meeting regularly over a few months and a number of internal consultations with council departments. The Charter has five principles and a number of suggestions for translating the endorsement of those principles into concrete actions for change. Building narratives for media communication, sharing stories of empowerment, helping to visualise and conceptualise actions for change are all possible pathways to contribute to the political use of the Charter. *The project is focussed on:* designing a public campaign and a strategy to help boost the impact of this existing policy change instrument, aiming to contribute to the general ambition of re-politicising discussions and policies around food and food poverty.

On 4th February, Alex Franklin and Moya Kneafsey, Coventry University formally opened the training event and welcomed the attending fellows and Mentors. They briefly presented on where RECOMS stands now and what had happened since Vaasa (Training 1). They summarized the outcomes of the Vaasa training and explained what would be covered during the Coventry training event, inclusive of intended learning outcomes. After the reflections on Training 1, Prof. Michel Pimbert, Director of CAWR from Coventry University welcomed the fellows and provided an introductory presentation on agroecology. This was followed by Dr Chiara Tornaghi, who provided insights about food sovereignty and urban agroecology. These presentations helped the fellows to have a theoretical and conceptual context for their action learning projects, as well as understanding their societal thematic relevance at both a national and global scale. During the afternoon session, Prof. Moya Kneafsey and Dr Chiara Tornaghi provided a detailed overview of the local context and relevance of the three action learning projects. They also introduced the local specialist practitioners who the fellows would be collaborating with during the week. Fellows had the opportunity to raise their initial questions and discuss their basic strategy with the team. During the evening of February 4th fellows had the option of meeting individually (or collectively) with Alex Franklin, other attending RECOMS mentors, and/ or other fellows, should they have any issues which they wished to discuss in connection with the week, with RECOMS as a whole and/ or their individual progress and role within the consortium.

On 5th February, the fellows could use the morning for group work to plan the basics of their project and related presentation deliverable. The project preparation ses-



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sion was followed by Jyoti Fernandes from the Landworker's Alliance and Via Campesina, who delivered an inspirational talk about setting up food related campaigns and communications to different stakeholders. In her presentations, Jyoti shed light on the general process of sustainable food campaigns, showed examples on working with various stakeholders from farmers through the head of agricultural policy in the UK, and provided illustrations of communication tools and methods (e.g. policy briefs; stakeholder reports; networking events) to support impact.

The afternoon of 5th February was reserved for the fellows, in their sub-groups, to further sharpen their project's focus and clarify additional questions and issues, and to share the tasks among the project team members. They were supported in doing so by the facilitation of Shared Assets; Moya Kneafsey and Chiara Tornaghi were also available to respond to any context-specific questions. By the end of the afternoon the fellows needed to have formulated their ideas and finalised their project plans, inclusive of research ethics applications where applicable, as the following day the project groups were set to meet the key stakeholders.

During the evening of February 5th, a social strike game (interactive group game with different scenarios) was organized by one of the local fellows as an optional program. The majority of the fellows attended, with the game serving the purpose to show a creative method for storytelling, scenario building and stakeholder's involvement in resourceful community practice, along with creative and team skills development. After the social strike game fellows had the option of meeting individually (or collectively) with Alex Franklin and/ or other fellows, should they have any issues which they wished to discuss in connection with the week, with RECOMS as a whole and/ or with their individual progress and role within the consortium.

On 6th February, Dr Chris Maughan from CAWR, Coventry University provided an interactive introduction session about transdisciplinary and participatory research and methods. This session was followed by the fellows having meetings with the local specialist practitioner stakeholders in their respective action-learning project sub-groups. Accordingly, Project 1 team met with Becca Stevenson, a local organic farmer working on a community-supported agriculture initiative; Project 2 team met with Carole Longden, who leads agroforestry projects such as creating public orchards; while, Project 3 team met with Selina Fletcher, Coventry University's Sustainability Officer. The purpose of the meetings was that each group could clarify their main questions, present some preliminary ideas and find out further needs to address. During the evening the fellows had the option of meeting individually (or collectively) with Alex Franklin, Agnes Zolyomi, other attending consortium mentors, and/ or other fellows, should they have any issues which they wished to discuss



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in connection with the week, with RECOMS as a whole and/ or with their individual progress and role within the consortium.



On 7th February, the fellows received training on academic writing from Dr. Dimitar Angelov from Coventry University's Centre for Academic Writing. Through this session they could learn about the basics of structure and language of a PhD thesis, including for instance composing literature review, synthesis matrix and abstracts. This training was followed by a presentation from Michelle Mayer of Coventry University library team. Michelle presented on open access and creative commons, which was especially valuable for the fellows due to their current tasks of ethics and data management plan compilations. After the presentations, interactive workshop on visual minuting and basic usage of design in communication was led by Reka Livits, a professional visual minuter. Reka demonstrated how very simple symbols can be formed for communication purposes. During this session the fellows had a chance to practice visual representation of ideas, including through the task of designing posters for set topics in small groups.



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During the afternoon of 7th February, the fellows gathered again in their sub-groups to work on their presentations for the following day. Shared Assets were available through-out this time for drop in sessions, in accordance with the needs of the sub-groups and/ or individual fellows. During the evening fellows had the option of meeting individually (or collectively) with Alex Franklin, Moya Kneafsey, Agnes Zolyomi, other attending RECOMS mentors, and/ or other fellows, should they have any issues which they wished to discuss in connection with the week, with RECOMS as a whole and/ or with their individual progress and role within the consortium.



On 8th February, the fellows presented the outcomes of their action-learning projects at Coventry City Council. The audience included a stakeholders' panel, their peers and attending mentors, and members of CAWR. The stakeholders' panel was comprised of: Selina Fletcher, Sustainability Officer, Coventry University; James Harrison, Coventry City Council, Council Officer, working on Homelessness, Trustee of the Charity "Feeding Coventry"; Carole Longden, Forest of Hearts; and Michael Ricketts, Assistant Director of Estate, Catering and Retail, at Coventry University. The fellows' presentations were documented in videos and visual minuting, which captured the main ideas in a creative way.

The fellows' presentations techniques and methods, as well as the actual content and ideas presented were creative and at a high standard; this was further evidenced in the panel's feedbacks. In general, the panel was very pleased with the fellows'



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action-learning project outputs and presentations. They were commented that they were very impressed with the quality of output that the fellows had achieved. The panel noted that a number of the ideas seemed to have considerable potential and that they would be considered further in their work.

The presentations session was followed by internal reflections on the outcomes, group work and on the training in general. This session was again facilitated by Shard Assets. Then, after lunch, two more presentations were held within the first “open mic” session, which was organized by the fellows. The session began with Liliane Binego presenting about food sovereignty examples and edible insect cases from Africa. In follow on, Nina Turull then showed how cartoons can be used as a creative method to convey messages. The latter included an interactive group exercise during which the fellows had an opportunity themselves to work with cartoons as a medium for expressing issues of environmental concern.

The week’s official program was closed with a brief celebration of the Coventry fellows that assisted greatly in organizing the training and social programmes in the city. The weekend was reserved for optional programs and for compiling the reflective assessments to be submitted after the training. Fellows were also reminded that, should they wish to do so, there would be opportunity to meet individually (or collectively) with Alex Franklin and Agnes Zolyomi for discussion of any arising issues.





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On the afternoon of 11th February, after the travel from the UK to Brussels, Alex Franklin began the session with an overview of the schedule for the remaining three days of training event 2. The fellows were then asked to sit together according to their action-learning project groups from the previous week. They were tasked with collectively reflecting about their group project work, and as an outcome of this, providing stakeholder recommendations to be fed back to the Coventry stakeholders. After a short break the fellows were then asked to sit together in their allocated RECOMS thematic groups (Unlocking and Empowering; Connecting and Collaborating; Adapting and Transforming). Following a short presentation by Alex Franklin on the visual and creative methods edited book consortium Deliverable, the fellows were given time to discuss and reflect in their groups on potential visual methods of research and communication which they were anticipating incorporating into their individual ESR doctoral projects. The session ended with each group feeding back to the room on key points from their discussions.

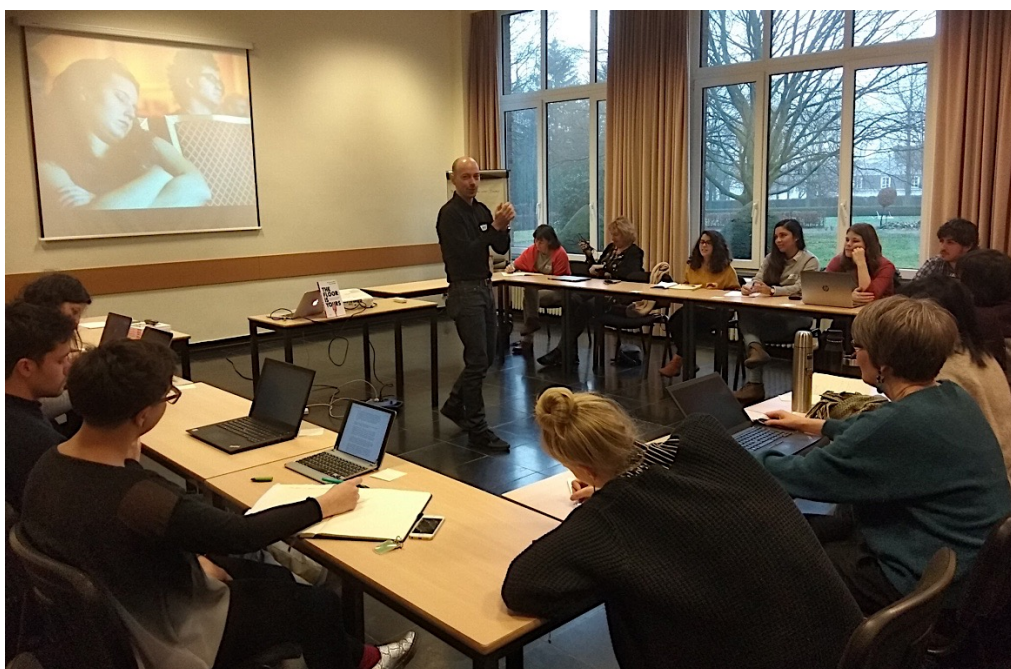
During the evening of 11th February, the fellows had the option of practicing presenting the poster they had prepared for the mid-term review meeting to the mentors and other fellows. This created an opportunity for the fellows to gain further familiarity with the research plans and foci of their peers, as well as also engaging peer review and practicing the delivery of constructive feedback.

On 12th February, the fellows had two communication trainings. One, delivered by communication experts 'Floor is Yours', was focused on conveying scientific messages in an easily understandable way; the other, delivered by Prof. Ika Darnhofer was on social media. During the presentation skills training, fellows were provided with information on how to build a presentation and what elements should be used to make the messages clear for various audiences. They also had the chance to practice delivering a 1-minute pitch, and then subsequently in the session, having received feedback from the external expert and their peers, as well as further instruction in the art of presenting with impact, have a second attempt at delivering a 1-minute pitch, which was filmed for them for future preparations.

During the social media training session, a range of social media platforms were presented and discussed, as well as their basic use. Working in sub-groups of their own choosing, fellows were then asked to actively participate in RECOMS communication by setting up a simple action plan for the social media platform they are most keen on to use.



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In drawing the afternoon training sessions to a close, Alex Franklin then presented to the fellows the Reflective Practice assignment, which they would need to complete and submit for inclusion in their Learning Portfolio. The focus of this second reflective practice assignment was on their pedagogical experience of participating in the live action-learning project during the Coventry stage of training event 2.

The fellows were asked to provide feedback on the training received during the RECOMS training event 2 and also any recommendations for the upcoming consortium trainings. Based on the open feedback suggestions, the fellows would like to see more:

- Well-being time
- Trainings on visual creative methods, visual presentation, public speaking skills
- Customized info about publishing papers and open access
- Time for the fellows to exchange ideas or talk about issues
- Less packed programs
- More involvement in real projects
- Good and healthy food (as reference to the sandwich lunches in the UK)

Based on the anonymous feedback forms:



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- All fellows found the presentations and training quality excellent (7) or good (7)
- All fellows found the training programme extremely (4), very useful (8) or fairly (2) useful, for their development
- In describing the event in one sentence, fellows wrote:
 - “Wonderful, better than expected”
 - “Well-organized, informative and engaging”
 - “The training created wonderful and interesting moments of self-reflections”
 - “Enlightening as it has changed my views on food and consumer behaviour”
 - “It was fun, tiring and educational”
 - “Exhausting, but educative, enlightening and empowering”

All their suggestions will be taken into account during the next training events.

In the afternoon, both the ESR Committee and the Steering Committee meetings were held. The ESR Committee also channelled its messages to the Steering Committee.

On 13th February, the RECOMS team had its Mid-Term Review Meeting (please see the agenda in annex 4) with Laurence Marrama-Rakotoarivony, the European Commission project officer. The meeting started with a tour de table introduction of attendees, followed by Laurence Marrama-Rakotoarivony presentation about the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Networks. Moya Kneafsey and Alex Franklin, Coventry University then provided a state-of-play presentation about RECOMS, which included the progress, deliverables, milestones completed, further timeline and achieved results. Next, all fellows gave poster presentations on their individual ESR doctoral research projects. After each presentation there was a brief Question-&-Answer discussion.

A private discussion between the project officer and the fellows followed the poster presentations, the main outcomes of which were then recounted in an open plenary. It was recommended that the fellows further strengthen their internal networking activities; that possibilities on future career and funding opportunities are shared and discussed with the fellows by the mentors; that the fellows’ salaries structure and RECOMS budget are shown and explained to the fellows; and that further language courses are facilitated to enable integration to the host countries. Moya Kneafsey and Alex Franklin closed the event by congratulating the fellows on all the efforts and great results. They gave thanks to Laurence Marrama-Rakotoarivony for



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conducting the mid-term review, including advanced thanks for the detailed feedback that she would be providing in written form in follow on. They also thanked everyone in attendance for their active participation in the mid-term review and consortium training event.



Photo: Joost Dessein

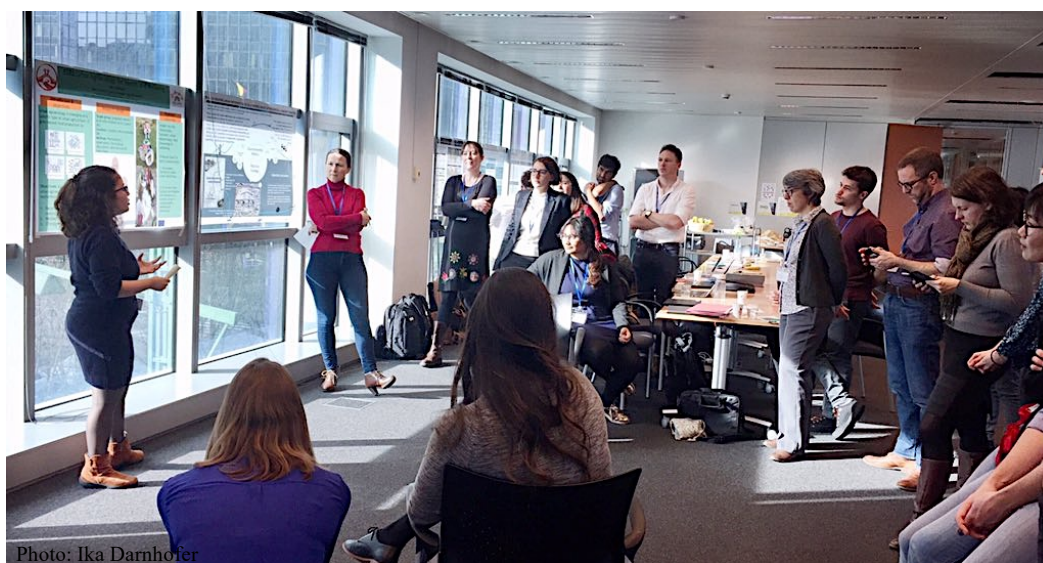


Photo: Ika Darnhofer



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	1 st February, Friday, Arrival	2 nd February, Saturday, exploring Coventry, Community enterprise	3 rd February, Sunday, exploring Coventry, Community and Grassroot empowerment	4 th February, Monday, Reflections, objective settings, intro to agroecology and food sovereignty, campaigning and communications, action learning	5 th February, Tuesday, Transdisciplinarity, participatory action research, planning, action learning	6 th February, Wednesday, Transdisciplinarity, action learning
Morning 9:00-13:00		Visiting and cooking session at <u>Rose Community Centre</u> in Coventry	Explore Coventry	<p>Welcome to CAWR, Coventry and introducing the importance of agroecology and transdisciplinarity - <i>Michel Pimbert, CAWR</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Reflecting back and looking forward- <i>Alex Franklin, CAWR</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Introducing food sovereignty and urban agroecology - <i>Chiara Tornaghi, CAWR</i></p> <p><i>(Swan Room - Elm Bank, Coventry University)</i></p>	<p>Self-directed Action Learning Project I/b - understanding collaborative visioning - needs, setting objectives, defining roles</p> <p>Training on setting up campaigns and communications to different stakeholders - <i>Jyoti Fernandes Landworkers Alliance/Via Campesina</i></p> <p>Discussion</p> <p><i>(Swan Room - Elm Bank, Coventry University)</i></p>	<p>Introduction to transdisciplinary research and methods - <i>Chris Maughan, CAWR</i></p> <p><i>(Room ABG20, Alan Berry Building, Coventry University)</i></p>
		Joint lunch	12:00 <u>Sunday Roast</u>	Lunch	Lunch	12:00 -13:00 Lunch
Afternoon 14:00 - 17:30		Movie screening and discussion at <u>Rose Community Centre</u> in Coventry	<p>Welcome - Moya Kneafsey, Alex Franklin - CAWR</p> <p>Introducing to Action Learning Projects - Kate Swade and Mark Walton, Shared Assets</p> <p><i>(CAWR, Ryton 1-2)</i></p>	<p>Self-directed Action Learning Project I/a - understanding collaborative visioning - needs, setting objectives, defining roles - <i>Moya Kneafsey, Chiara Tornaghi, CAWR</i></p> <p><i>(Swan Room - Elm Bank, Coventry University)</i> Facilitated by Shared Assets</p>	<p>Self-directed Action Learning Project II - planning activities</p> <p><i>(Swan Room - Elm Bank, Coventry University)</i> Facilitated by Shared Assets</p>	<p>Self-directed Action Learning Project III - MEETING STAKEHOLDERS (by phone or face to face meetings in CAWR, Ryton or on campus)</p> <p><i>(Room 101, 102, 201, Alison Gingell building, CAWR, Ryton 1-2)</i> Facilitated by Shared Assets</p>
Evening 19:00	Welcome dinner - <u>Arabian bites</u>	Visit <u>Tin Music and Arts</u>	Drinks at <u>Twisted Barrel</u>	Free program/Optional - Catch up with the RECOMS coordination team at <u>Cosy Club</u>	Optional: Plan C and social strike game OR catch up with the RECOMS coordination team at the Botanist	Optional: Catch up with the RECOMS coordination team



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	7 th February, Thursday, Academic writing, open access, visual tools,	8 th February, Friday, Presentations reflections, open mic sessions	9 th -10 th February, Saturday-Sunday Free program	11 th February, Monday, Traveling to Brussels and reflections	12 th February, Tuesday, Communicating research workshop, social media	13 th February, Wednesday, Mid-term Review Meeting with European Commission, presenting ESR projects
Morning 9:00-13:00	<p>Academic writing - <i>Dimitar Angelov, Coventry University</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Open access and creative commons - <i>Michelle Mayer, Coventry University</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Introduction to visual minuting - <i>Reka Livits, visual minuter (JAG29, Jaguar Building, Coventry University)</i></p>	<p>Presentations to local stakeholders and discussion</p> <p>9:00 - 11:00</p> <p>Debriefing 11:30 - 13:00</p> <p>(<i>Council House Room 3</i>)</p> <p>Facilitated by Shared Assets</p>	Free program	TRAVEL	<p>Communicating research workshop - “floor is yours” communication experts</p> <p>(<i>Maison du chant d’oiseau Monastery, Brussels</i>)</p>	<p>Mid-term Review Meeting with European Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing project’s state of play and - Presentation of Fellows’ posters <p>(<i>ILVO, Ellips - B - 2.111</i>)</p>
	13:30 - 14:00 Lunch	12:15-13:00 Lunch			Lunch	Lunch
After-noon 14:00 - 17:30	<p>Self-directed Action Learning Project IV - finalizations</p> <p>(<i>Room 101, 102, 201, Alison Ginnell building</i>)</p> <p>Facilitated by Shared Assets</p>	<p>13:00 - 16:00 Open Mic Sessions</p> <p>(<i>Council House Room 3</i>)</p> <p>Facilitated by Fellows</p>	Free program/ optional drop-in sessions with Project coordinator (e.g. writing, ethics, other)	<p>15:30 Reflections and discussions on transdisciplinary science in thematic groups</p> <p>(<i>Maison du chant d’oiseau Monastery, Brussels</i>)</p>	<p>Communicating research workshop - “floor is yours” communication experts</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Social Media session - <i>Ika Darnhofer, BOKU; RECOMS team</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Steering Committee Meeting for Mentors/ESR Committee</p> <p>(<i>Maison du chant d’oiseau Monastery, Brussels</i>)</p>	<p>Mid-term Review Meeting with European Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of Fellows’ posters, - Private Fellow-European Commission Meeting - Feedbacks <p>(<i>ILVO, Ellips - B - 2.111</i>)</p>
Evening 19:00	Free program/Chat with the Visual Minuter	Free program/ Catch up with RECOMS team	Free program	Dinner at accommodation	Joint dinner	Farewell and travel home