

SEPTEMBER 11, 2019



Erasmus+

E-BOOKLET ON RURAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
RURAL RULES!

VšĮ „INTEGRACIJOS CENTRAS“
Pilviškiai, Vilkaviškio raj., Lithuania

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Inspiration

Many of the European Union's rural areas face a common challenge, as their capacity to create high-quality, sustainable jobs has fallen behind that of urban areas. Generally, incomes are lower in rural regions than in towns or cities and there are fewer job opportunities. Marginalized youth living in rural areas have a problem getting good jobs and continued education to get ahead in life and contribute to society. They're facing unemployment and they don't know how to get out of their situation. One of the obvious solutions for them is to move to the city and try to get a job there. Even if they do manage to get one, it is usually a low-paying one. They would still be struggling in life, not advancing in terms of personal development and not contributing much to society. These marginalized youth possess one asset, which isn't being explored by anyone to its fullest potential - their familiarity with the rural area that they live

in. Starting a business in rural areas would be a great vehicle for capitalizing on this asset that they already have. In general, rural areas account only to 15.3% of GDP on average in the EU, which is not too much when we take into account the fact that more people across EU live in rural areas than in urban areas.

ABOUT

Project title: Rural Rules!

Website:

<http://refugees.lt/rural-rules/>

Framework: Erasmus+ youth exchange

Participating countries: Lithuania, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Croatia, Cyprus.

Number of participants: 36 (6 per country)

Venue: Dalios Sodyba, Stasiunai village

Date (duration): 11-19 February, 2016

Goals and objectives

This project was aiming to raise awareness of their existing asset, provide them with the skills on how to identify the business opportunities that exist in rural areas & develop the idea. They can provide for themselves & their families without accepting a lower-paying job. They can help provide & contribute with what the local communities have been needing the most. One of the biggest impacts from this is that they can also create jobs for other people in rural areas and especially youth with fewer opportunities. Apart from that, they can also help inspire other marginalized youth to create other businesses in the rural areas.



Participants of the Project During the Activities

One of the best ways marginalized youth & youth with lesser opportunities can use to be self-sustaining and self-reliant is by starting businesses. Since starting businesses in urban areas can be expensive and highly competitive, starting businesses in rural areas is a feasible alternative for them. This alternative is highlighted because they can capitalize the existing asset of their own familiarity of their hometowns, while fulfilling the demands that are not being met in rural areas.

In order to reach this goal, the following objectives were set: (1) introduce youth to the essentials of entrepreneurship in rural areas & how to share the knowledge with others; (2) inspire marginalized youth to create businesses in rural areas, as well as provide the key skills needed for that; (3) generate new business ideas that will work well in rural areas of participating countries & show examples of successful businesses in rural areas to inspire them; (4) Create businesses that include the unemployed/underprivileged communities living in rural areas, thus decreasing rural unemployment & building accountability for the community; (5) create a spill-over effect by inspiring other communities and partner countries to contribute to the established rural businesses or to create new businesses in rural areas themselves.

METHODOLOGY

E-booklet was filled by 36 participants of Erasmus+ Project “Rural Rules!”, which took place in Stasiunai Village, Lithuania on 11-19 September, 2016. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 30, with median age being 22,9.

The booklet was filled in the last days of the actions during specially designed activities. This allowed the participants to use all their previous experience, as well as things learned throughout the workshops. The setting of the activity was as following:

- Participants were randomly divided into 6 groups with gender and nationality balance;
- They were given up to 1.5 hours for the task. It has asked each team to fill-in a pre-made form;
- The organisers did not interfere with the work of the participants and only collected the completed forms.
- The forms did not use any names and also were shuffled after the collection. This was done to keep the anonymity of the authors of certain ideas.

Business Idea Contest

Throughout the project participants were introduced to many different and unconventional rural-area businesses, such as:

- Restaurant in the Corn field (Guest lecture from the representative of the business);
- Visit to a Lithuanian folk museum in Rumsiskes;
- Go-Karts in rural area close to Stasiunai Village;
- Other national, folk forms of businesses, coming from rural areas (e.g. beer and bread making, beekeeping etc.)

After that, the participants were divided into 6 groups, prepared business plans for rural enterprises based on their own ideas. They had to analyze the market, prepare SWOT analysis, marketing strategy, budgeting: expenses and balance, key partners, key activities, key resources, value propositions, customer relationships, customer segments, channels, cost structure, revenue streams.

All of the ideas were evaluated by the participants themselves and the best ones were chosen and nominated.

Below you will find the drafts of three different plans that were proposed by the participants. They were chosen as the best ones.

Plan for Rural Enterprise (RE)

Short description of the idea (in 1 sentence): TV-show: Rural Love

Where would you want to run your RE (region/country, etc.): Lithuanian rural area

Mission (e.g. to produce healthy carrots for a young generation) - Connect the lonely souls & make money from it.

Vision (e.g. to become the leading carrot producer in the region) - go international (even different continents)



and feel alright

Product / service

What product/service are you going to sell/provide:

people in rural areas have not so many opportunities to meet many people in their daily live. So we bring them together to see, who match with each other.

How it will help the local community (if applicable)?

Changing the demographic structure of Lithuanian rural population map - Expand it!!

Market analysis. For this task you can carry out some research online (google) or through other channels. Firstly, try to find (or think of) an existing rural businesses in the region or around the world, which offers similar services/products.

How do they differentiate their produce/services? What makes them unique? _____

They were villagers too. So they knew how the rural works

How will your business differ from them? What sets you apart? _____

We took the ideas of plenty programmes around the world improved it

Plan for Rural Enterprise (RE)

Short description of the idea (in 1 sentence) GROWING (CULTIVATING) ECOLOGICAL
POTATOES

Where would you want to run your RE (region/country, etc.) STAGIUNAI LITHUANIA

Mission (e.g. to produce healthy carrots for a young generation) - To make the nation Europe
healthier via ecological potatoes

Vision (e.g. to become the leading carrot producer in the region) - To become largest
potato producer in eastern Europe

Slogan - Healthy potatoes for everyone. Be bio!



Product / service

What product/service are you going to sell/provide:

packaged ecological potatoes

How it will help the local community (if applicable)?

We will hire local people and buy fertiliser
(cow shit) from local ~~other~~ farmers.

Market analysis. For this task you can carry out some research online (google) or through other channels. Firstly, try to find (or think of) an existing rural businesses in the region or around the world, which offers similar services/products.

How do they differentiate their produce/services? What makes them unique? They grow
potatoes ecologically and market them as
healthier.

How will your business differ from them? What sets you apart? We will use more
marketing and sell potatoe eating experience

ROWTURE

Plan for Rural Enterprise (RE)

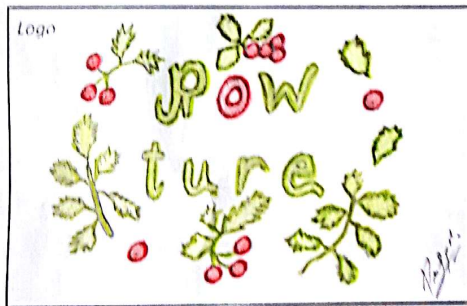
Short description of the idea (in 1 sentence): customers can adopt rowan, see how it grows and we'll prepare in an ecologic way products like: medicines (bio and folk), wine, liqueur, cake, tea, jewellery.

Where would you want to run your RE (region/country, etc.): rural area, Lithuania

Mission (e.g. to produce healthy carrots for a young generation) - to produce healthy and bio products from rowan and sell it in online shop

Vision (e.g. to become the leading carrot producer in the region) - To have few customers but permanent and connect them with us

Slogan - Adopt a tree, adopt nature.



Product / service

What product/service are you going to sell/provide:

Stream video; medicines, wine, liqueur, cake, tea, jewellery, decoration

How it will help the local community (if applicable)?

By hiring local farmers and gardeners and also provide rowan fruit for the community.

Market analysis: For this task you can carry out some research online (google) or through other channels. Firstly, try to find (or think of) an existing rural businesses in the region or around the world, which offers similar services/products.

How do they differentiate their produce/services? What makes them unique? Small scale, artisanal producers that bring high quality, speciality food to a wider audience. This helps to keep traditional farming practices alive and protects the countryside

How will your business differ from them? What sets you apart? Typical from Lithuania and there is no rowan farm existing yet and we will do video (live streaming) showing the whole process (how tree is growing, how the farmers are picking up berries etc.)

Participants' ideas and solutions

Participants also created e-booklets with summaries of their ideas.

E-Booklet: Rural Rules!

One of the main objectives of this project was to create tangible results and disseminate those to relevant wider audiences. Therefore, we are going to make an e-booklet, which will be shared via various online sources to youth, youth workers and other relevant parties. This booklet is going to include: your created rural business plans.

Firstly, please send your idea business pitch challenge videos to the organisers (info@refugees.it; subject field: RR video + name of the idea). Teams, who have done that already can go ahead with the task:

What is the name of your business idea? One World Village

What is the slogan: United in Differences

In what region/country could it operate? Botswana, Gaborone District

Please shortly describe it (up to 3 sentences), so that other can understand what it is: Bar/restaurant in the forest serving the whole world's cuisine at one place. It helps to discover and respect all cultures, it's a place for socializing, dining, relaxing and partying.

Briefly describe how it would be different from other comparable businesses (in the same industry): provides unique cultural experience in a ~~quite~~ quiet forest area and serves all five continent's cuisine.

Would your business contribute to the local community? If so, how? Providing jobs for locals and buying supplies (foods) from local farmers

What is your marketing plan for the idea? Mostly online advertising (social media, food blogs, application), later on - word of mouth

How would you sell your services/products (e.g. online)? phone reservations, reservations via smartphone application, buying on spot

How much money would you need to start up such idea? € 600 000

What are possible outside funding opportunities (if applicable)? Private investors, EU funding

Are there any real life examples of similar businesses? Camden Town, but it is in London, not in a rural area

Anything else you would like to add: ♡♡♡♡♡

Once done, please give this sheet back to the organisers.

One of their tasks was to find an innovative entrepreneurial solution to one of the following problems in rural areas:

- Youth is massively leaving for urban areas or migrating abroad;
- Alcohol consumption is skyrocketing;
- There are lots of unused dangerous buildings;
- Elderly people are too far from necessary social services;
- The local infrastructure is in a terrible condition;
- There is a lack of cultural, sport and social activities.

After that they prepared posters and presented their ideas to each other.

The dominating idea was that there is no supply of jobs, cultural events, career and social counseling in rural areas. Therefore such problems arise. However, most of the solutions came down to the fact that if people that are really familiar with rural areas could employ their knowledge, they would be able to contribute to the well-being in suburban areas substantially.



Participants racing in Go-Karts

Videos

After creation of rural enterprises, participants were asked about preparing video advertisement for their business ideas. Below are links to videos that they have created:

- Litmilk:
- 1worldvillage:
- Rowture:
- Rural Love:
- Be Bio:
- Ethnic:

Visiting Rumsiskes

As briefly mentioned before, during the project participants had an excursion in the Open Air Museum Rumsiskes. Entire buildings and artifacts from towns, villages and farmsteads from all over Lithuania have been brought to this place and reassembled. They date from the second half of the 18th to the first half of the 20th century. The museum's collection consists of 80 000 exponents. There are buildings, furniture, household articles, iconography materials, fences, wells, beehives, orchards, flower gardens and other artifacts, which illustrate the way of life, work and traditions of the peasants and townspeople of these regions.

Visiting Rumsiskes helped them understand Lithuanian background and history. It was a very precious experience in terms of knowing Lithuanian culture & folk businesses.



Visiting Rumsiskes

Results of knowledge assessment

Before the project, participants were asked to fill in the knowledge assessment. Below are presented the most popular answers they gave.

Could you list the top 3 countries which have the biggest youth unemployment rate in the rural areas (EU countries)?

1. Romania
2. Greece
3. Bulgaria

What are, in your opinion, the main obstacles in developing rural areas?

- Bad infrastructure
- Transporting
- Low profits
- Lack of investment for transportation
- Limited exportation

Do you know any initiatives/programs carried out by the EU to help rural areas?

- Youth activities
- PAC
- Tax advantages

Could you mention 3 (could be more) most important issues for developing rural areas in your country (e.g. better infrastructure, comfortable transport):

- Good connections/better transport
- Subsidies
- More Money
- Better education
- Infrastructure
- Less beaurocracy
- Transfer of water
- Better job opportunities

At the beginning of the project, on average, participants graded themselves for 5.1. On the last day, they were similarly asked to give a grade to their then knowledge. These assessments have shown **an increase of +3.4 grade points** (from 5.1 to 8.5) on average in the knowledge of entrepreneurship in rural areas, its challenges, problems, etc.

Additionally, the last day's assessment asked to evaluate the project, when considering the gained knowledge, fun, interest, etc. A **final grade of 9.1** (scale from 1 to 10) were given (36 anonymous votes). Such evaluation was achieved with the help of experienced trainers, clear concept and effective and coherent activities & unique setting of the project.

Inspiration & Further Work

Even though the youth exchange of the project has ended, the result dissemination continues. The press-release both in Lithuanian and English have been already sent to numerous sources.

Various videos and other material on rural entrepreneurship, related issues & viable solutions to those, produced during the youth exchange will be continuously posted on the website of the project: <http://www.refugees.lt/refugees-europes-missed-opportunity>

However, the biggest impact of the project is felt on the participants and partner organisations: 1) Project photos created are shared or used as their profile pictures on social networks (some using the official hashtags of the project: **#RR** or **#RuralRules**); 2) blog posts and testimonials on their experience are being made by the participants; 3) Facebook chat and **group** created during the action is still alive and full of ideas for further work. To show that the project was inspirational and incentivised the youth to work for its goals, selected quotes of the participants are provided below:

“Before coming to this project I knew very little about rural entrepreneurship. But now, having had many different, eye-opening workshops and practical experience with many rural businesses operating in Lithuania, I believe that there is a lot of potential in taking up entrepreneurship in the suburbs”, - Ugur Keskin, Turkey.

“This project was awesome. I especially loved the creative guest lecture from the Restaurant in the Corn Field. And all of the people were amazing here”, - Elina Zoric, Croatia.

“I myself come from a countryside, therefore “Rural Rules” contributed to my motivation a lot. I expanded my knowledge on the topic, developed my entrepreneurial mindset and business-making skills and, last but not least, made a lot of new friends”, - Juozas Rimgaila, Lithuania.

For more info, check out the official website of the project:

www.refugees.lt/rural-rules

