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YOUth Roots

Nurturing Rural Entrepreneurship



Nurturing Rural Entrepreneurship

Handbook for Youth Workers

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Introduction

Overview of the Project

The **YOUth Roots: Nurturing Rural Entrepreneurship Handbook** is a practical educational resource developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ Small Scale Partnership project “YOUth Roots: Nurturing Rural Entrepreneurship” (2024–2026). The handbook represents one of the key outcomes of the project and reflects the shared expertise, experiences, and collaborative work of the partner organisations from Cyprus, Lithuania, and Italy.

Designed primarily for youth workers, trainers, educators, NGOs, community facilitators, and young people interested in rural entrepreneurship, this handbook aims to support the development of entrepreneurial competences, sustainable thinking, and active community engagement in rural contexts. It serves both as a learning tool and as a practical guide for those working with young people or supporting youth-led initiatives in local communities.

Rural areas across Europe face important challenges, including youth unemployment, depopulation, limited economic opportunities, and restricted access to resources. At the same time, rural communities possess unique strengths, local knowledge, cultural heritage, and untapped entrepreneurial potential. This handbook seeks to empower young people and youth professionals to recognize these opportunities and transform local challenges into innovative, sustainable, and community-driven solutions.

Within this handbook, readers will find:

- **Six thematic learning modules** covering key areas of rural entrepreneurship
- **Practical tools, activities, and interactive exercises** ready to be used in training, workshops, and youth work settings
- **Case studies, examples, and good practices** from different countries and entrepreneurial contexts
- **Reflection and evaluation tools** supporting experiential and participatory learning
- **Additional resources, videos, and external materials** to deepen understanding and inspire action

The development of this handbook was grounded in non-formal education (NFE) methodologies, participatory learning approaches, and a co-design process involving project partners, trainers, and youth work perspectives. The content also builds upon the learning outcomes, exchanges, and collaborative experiences generated during the project activities, including the international training and knowledge-sharing process among partner organisations.





Rather than offering a purely theoretical approach, the handbook promotes learning by doing, critical reflection, creativity, peer exchange, and community-oriented entrepreneurship. It encourages readers to explore entrepreneurship not only as a business pathway, but also as a tool.

Through this handbook, the “YOUth Roots” partnership hopes to contribute to stronger rural communities, empowered youth workers, and more resilient young entrepreneurs capable of creating positive impact in their local realities.

Methodological Approach and International Learning Dimension

The development of this handbook was informed by the project’s international learning and collaboration process, bringing together partners, youth work professionals, and diverse organisational experiences from Cyprus, Lithuania, and Italy. The content was shaped through a co-design approach, encouraging collaborative input, knowledge exchange, and shared reflection throughout the project activities and international training process.

The handbook is grounded in Non-Formal Education (NFE) methodologies, emphasizing experiential learning, active participation, peer learning, reflection, and learning-by-doing. The methodologies, tools, and educational approaches presented in this resource draw inspiration from the project’s international course, collaborative workshops, practical exchanges, and the collective expertise of the consortium partners. This approach ensures that the handbook is not only theoretically relevant but also practical, adaptable, participatory, and directly applicable in youth work and educational settings.

Introduction to the Consortium

1. PlanBe, Plan it Be it (Cyprus)

PlanBe, Plan it Be it is a Cyprus-based non-governmental organisation dedicated to empowering young people and local communities through non-formal education, youth participation, entrepreneurship, and social innovation. The organisation actively promotes youth well-being, environmental sustainability, intercultural dialogue and active citizenship by designing educational workshops, training courses, community initiatives, and international mobility projects.

Through its work, PlanBe supports individuals in developing entrepreneurial mindsets, transferable skills, and sustainable approaches to personal and professional growth. The organisation has extensive experience in implementing Erasmus+ and European cooperation projects, fostering collaboration, inclusion, and lifelong learning opportunities across local and international contexts.





2. Asociacija “Lietuvos skeptiskas jaunimas” (Lithuania)

Asociacija “Lietuvos skeptiskas jaunimas” is a Lithuanian organisation committed to promoting critical thinking, scientific literacy, evidence-based reasoning, and democratic participation among young people and wider society. Through non-formal education methods, educational campaigns, workshops, and public engagement activities, the organisation encourages individuals to question misinformation, strengthen analytical thinking skills, and engage actively with social issues.

The organisation places strong emphasis on human rights, civic engagement, rational inquiry, and democratic values, supporting the development of informed, responsible, and socially aware communities. By combining educational innovation with participatory learning approaches, the organisation contributes to fostering resilient and critically engaged young citizens in both national and international settings.

3. MV International (Italy)

MV International is an Italian network of organisations working in the fields of social innovation, sustainable development, education, and international cooperation. The network supports NGOs, youth organisations, and communities through capacity building, project development, research, and collaborative initiatives aligned with European Union priorities and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With extensive experience in Erasmus+, youth work, entrepreneurship education, and international partnership building, MV International promotes innovative approaches to social impact, community empowerment, and global citizenship. Through its transnational activities, the organisation facilitates knowledge exchange, intercultural learning, and the development of sustainable solutions addressing contemporary social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Key Concepts

Rural entrepreneurship refers to the creation and development of innovative, economically viable, and sustainable business initiatives within rural contexts, drawing upon local resources, knowledge, cultural heritage, environmental assets, and community capacities. It plays a vital role in fostering economic diversification, social innovation, and community resilience, while generating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. By transforming local challenges into sustainable solutions, rural entrepreneurship contributes to the long-term development of rural areas and helps address issues such as youth unemployment, rural depopulation, and youth out-migration.





Concluding Remarks

This handbook is more than a project output, it is intended to be a living educational resource that can inspire action, dialogue, experimentation, and collaboration across rural communities. By combining entrepreneurial education, non-formal learning methodologies, international cooperation, and practical tools, the “YOUth Roots” partnership aims to strengthen the capacity of youth workers and young people to create meaningful, sustainable, and locally rooted initiatives.

Ultimately, the handbook seeks to contribute to a future in which rural youth are not only prepared to respond to challenges, but are also empowered to shape opportunities, drive innovation, and actively participate in building resilient and thriving communities.





Role Model Videos

Description

The [Role Model Videos](#) present inspiring stories of successful rural entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds and contexts. Through personal testimonies, professional experiences, and practical examples, the videos highlight entrepreneurial journeys, challenges encountered, lessons learned, and strategies for overcoming obstacles in rural environments. The video series showcases how individuals and communities can transform local resources, creativity, and innovative thinking into sustainable entrepreneurial initiatives. By presenting authentic experiences and relatable success stories, the videos complement the handbook's learning modules and provide participants with accessible, real-life examples of rural entrepreneurship in action.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Role Model Videos is to inspire, motivate, and provide practical learning opportunities for young people, youth workers, trainers, and aspiring entrepreneurs. By exposing learners to real-world entrepreneurial experiences, the videos encourage participants to explore entrepreneurial pathways, strengthen entrepreneurial mindsets, and identify opportunities within their own local contexts. Additionally, the videos aim to bridge theory and practice by demonstrating how concepts presented throughout the handbook, such as resilience, sustainability, innovation, community engagement, and problem-solving - can be applied in real entrepreneurial settings.

Readers are encouraged to explore the videos alongside the handbook modules to deepen their understanding, access additional examples, and enrich their learning experience through multimedia content.





Role Model Interview: Nicolas – Rural Entrepreneur in Cyprus

In this inspiring interview, Nicolas, a rural entrepreneur from Cyprus, shares his rural entrepreneurial journey and the story behind the creation of his start-up. He reflects on the challenges he faced, the opportunities he identified, and the key lessons he learned while building a sustainable business in a rural community.

As a role model, Nicolas offers valuable insights and practical advice for young people and aspiring entrepreneurs who are interested in turning innovative ideas into successful ventures while contributing to local development and rural resilience.





Role Model Interview: "Paliekys" Sauna House in a town of just 100 people

In this video, Dominykas, the manager of "Paliekys" Sauna House and the son of its founder, shares his family's inspiring journey of transforming his late great-grandmother's home into a thriving rural tourism business. With the support of EU funding, their family brought new life to a small village in Lekėčiai, Lithuania, where only around 100 people live.

Their story is a testament to how vision, perseverance, and community support can turn a cherished family legacy into a place that welcomes visitors from near and far. Discover how investing in rural areas can preserve traditions, create opportunities, and inspire future generations.





Rural to Urban Migration: The Youth Dilemma

For many young people in rural areas, the choice feels impossible: stay and try to build something at home, or move to the city in search of opportunities. But life in the city isn't always easy; higher costs, loneliness, and pressure to adapt can take their toll.

In this video, discover how the YOUth Roots project supports young people and youth workers with practical tools like the Entrepreneurship Handbook and Miro-based digital toolkit. These resources help rural youth create opportunities locally, stay connected to their communities, and find ways to grow without leaving everything behind. Youth Roots: empowering youth, reviving communities.





Youth Workers in Rural Areas

In many rural communities, youth workers are more than mentors, they're motivators and connectors. This video shows how the YOUth Roots project equips them with practical tools like the Entrepreneurship Handbook and a Miro-based digital toolkit to support young people in building local opportunities.

Learn how rural youth workers can foster entrepreneurship, keep talent in their communities, and inspire young people to see a future without leaving home.

Watch to see how YOUth Roots is giving youth workers the skills and resources to lead change.





Entrepreneurial Mindset

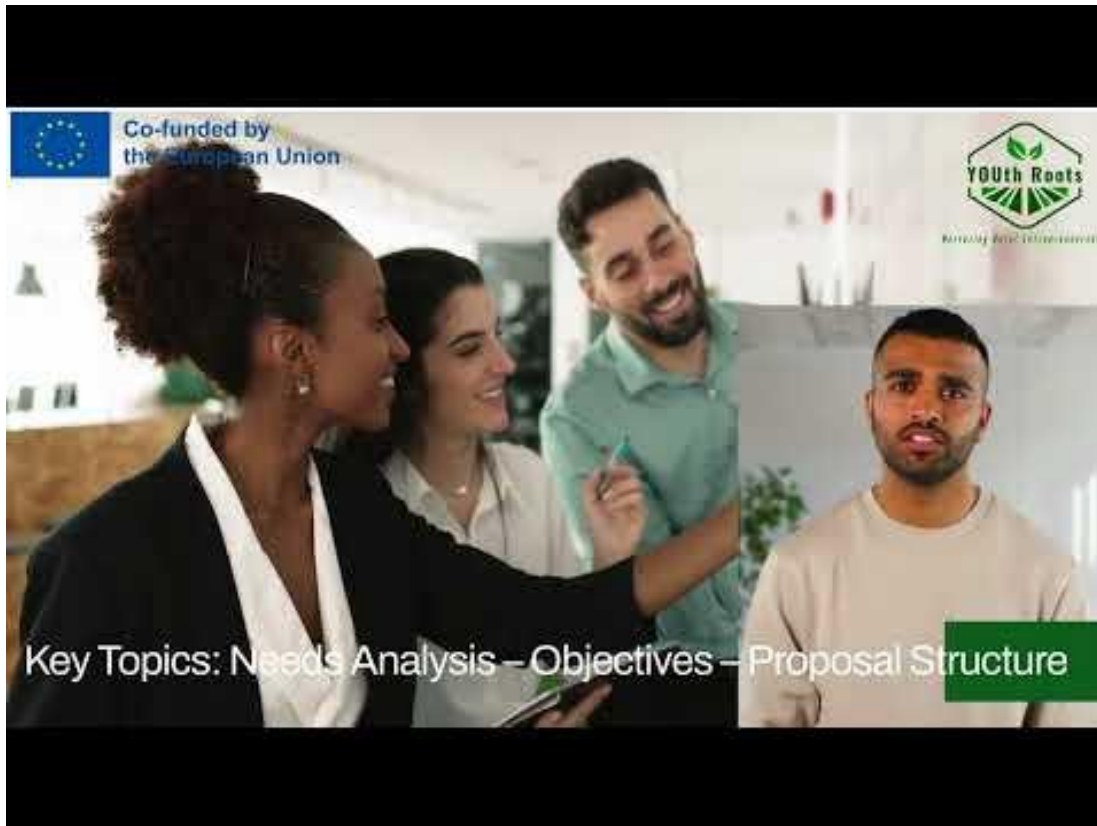
Discover how rural youth can turn bold ideas into reality. This video follows Sophia's journey into sustainable farming and shows how mindset, mentorship, and support networks help young people create meaningful impact in their communities.





Grant Writing and Fundraising

Learn the essentials of grant writing and fundraising with practical steps for building strong proposals, planning budgets, and exploring alternative funding sources. This module equips rural youth with the tools to secure support and bring their ideas to life.





MODULE 1: ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

Objective of the Module

The aim of this module is to empower youth workers with an understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset and equip them with tools to foster such a mindset among rural youth. This will promote creativity, resilience, and initiative, helping participants to explore opportunities and navigate challenges in rural entrepreneurship.

Key Topics

- Understanding the Entrepreneurial Mindset: What it is and why it matters.
- Traits of Successful Entrepreneurs: Creativity, resilience, adaptability, and problem-solving.
- Opportunity Recognition in Rural Areas: Leveraging local resources and addressing community needs.
- Overcoming Challenges in Rural Entrepreneurship: Strategies to combat barriers such as limited resources or infrastructure.
- Growth and Learning Orientation: The role of continuous learning and self-improvement.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will:

- Understand the core traits and characteristics of an entrepreneurial mindset.
- Recognize how local challenges can be turned into entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Develop skills to foster creativity and problem-solving in rural contexts.
- Gain techniques for encouraging resilience and adaptability in youth.
- Be equipped with practical exercises to nurture an entrepreneurial mindset in others.

Useful Presentation to go with this Module 1: [[LINK](#)]





Understanding the Entrepreneurial Mindset

An entrepreneurial mindset refers to a set of attitudes and behaviors that drive innovation, resourcefulness and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. It is a proactive approach to identifying opportunities, solving problems, and navigating challenges.

In rural areas, this mindset becomes particularly vital as it enables individuals to leverage unique local resources, overcome infrastructural barriers, and find innovative ways to address community needs. Entrepreneurs with this mindset view constraints not as obstacles but as starting points for creativity and solutions.

Key Traits of an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Creativity

Entrepreneurs thrive on creativity, often finding innovative ways to reimagine traditional methods or maximize limited resources. This trait is especially important in addressing unique challenges or tapping into untapped markets.

Example: In Sicily, a group of entrepreneurs transformed the traditional *Arancini* (rice balls) into a gourmet street food experience by introducing unique flavors like truffle and pistachio. This creative approach not only preserved a cultural tradition but also attracted tourists and boosted local businesses.

Resilience

Facing failures or setbacks with persistence is key. Entrepreneurs in rural areas might need to work through adverse conditions like erratic market demands or limited funding.

Example: A Lithuanian tech startup, *TransferGo*, faced initial struggles in securing funding and building trust in the competitive fintech market. However, the founders persisted, refined their business model, and eventually expanded to over 50 countries, becoming a leading player in international money transfers. (Team, 2025)

Adaptability

Adaptability is the willingness to learn, pivot, and adjust plans in response to changing circumstances. Entrepreneurs who embrace adaptability can thrive in dynamic environments and seize emerging opportunities.





Example: In Cyprus, many rural tourism businesses adapted to changing travel trends by integrating digital booking systems, social media marketing, and experiential tourism activities such as traditional cooking workshops and cultural heritage experiences. These adjustments allowed entrepreneurs to attract new customer segments and remain competitive in an evolving tourism market. (Digital Transformation and Rural Tourism: Rural SMTEs' Dynamics in Cyprus, 2025)

Problem-solving

The ability to analyze community issues and design practical solutions is essential. For instance, establishing a co-op to address high production costs.

Example: In Naples, a social enterprise called *Cantieri di Innovazione Sociale* addressed youth unemployment by creating a platform that connects young job seekers with local businesses. Their problem-solving approach has helped hundreds of young people find meaningful employment. (*Cantieri Di Innovazione Sociale*, n.d.)

Initiative

Taking proactive steps to develop ideas and seize opportunities reflects the drive inherent in entrepreneurial success.

Example: A Lithuanian entrepreneur, inspired by the growing demand for healthy snacks, founded *Žalieji Pokšiai*, a company that produces organic, gluten-free crisps from locally sourced ingredients. Her proactive approach helped the brand gain popularity both locally and internationally.





Case studies

Case Study 1: Umgibe Farming Organics and Training Institute

In South Africa, Nonhlanhla Joye founded the Umgibe Farming Organics and Training Institute after developing an innovative "plastic bag system" for farming during her recovery from cancer in 2014. This system empowers rural farmers with sustainable farming techniques and business management skills, significantly impacting food security and economic independence in her community. Her initiative has supported over 160 cooperatives and more than 3,600 individuals, focusing on ending hunger and restoring dignity through sustainable farming practices.



Source: (Umgibe, n.d.)





Case Study 2: Cyprus: Empowering Women through Digital and Entrepreneurship Skills

The "Mommypreneurs" project in Cyprus provides young inactive women, particularly those on maternity leave or caring for children, with training in digital and entrepreneurship skills. The goal is to improve their potential to re-enter the labor market or start their own businesses. This initiative not only empowers women but also contributes to the economic development of rural areas by fostering new entrepreneurial activities. (*MOMMYPRENEURS, CYPRUS, ITALY, LITHUANIA, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SPAIN | the Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool, n.d.*) (*Mommypreneurs.eu, 2021*)



Source: (Economyup, n.d.)





Turning Challenges into Opportunities

Rural areas often face unique challenges, including limited infrastructure, access to funding, or skilled labor. However, these can be transformed into opportunities with the right mindset:

- **Limited access to markets:** Develop online platforms or partner with urban distributors to sell products.
- **Scarce resources:** Innovate by recycling materials, utilizing renewable resources, or engaging in shared services.
- **Community-specific needs:** Entrepreneurs can design customized solutions, such as setting up transportation services in areas lacking connectivity.

For example, in Ghana, farmers are utilizing solar-powered cold storage to keep freshly harvested produce cool, reducing post-harvest losses and increasing income. (*Ghana Akofresh Solar Powered Cold Storage*, n.d.)



Source:(*Ghana Akofresh Solar Powered Cold Storage*, n.d.)





Interactive Exercises

1. Identify Opportunities in Your Community

- **Instructions:** Divide participants into groups and ask them to list at least five challenges their community faces. For each challenge, brainstorm one potential entrepreneurial solution.
- **Objective:** Encourage critical thinking and problem-solving.
- **Output:** A list of community-based entrepreneurial ideas.

2. Entrepreneurial Mindset Self-Reflection Worksheet

- **Prompt Questions:**
 1. What are my personal strengths that align with entrepreneurial traits?
 2. How do I typically respond to setbacks or failures?
 3. What opportunities in my community excite me the most?
 4. What steps can I take to develop resilience and adaptability?

3. "Resourcefulness Challenge" Game

- **Setup:** Provide each group with a set of random objects (e.g., string, cardboard, paperclips, plastic bottles) and a hypothetical rural problem. The challenge is to devise a solution using only the given materials.
- **Objective:** Foster creativity and teamwork by encouraging participants to think like entrepreneurs who must innovate with limited resources.
- **Example Scenario:** A rural village lacks an affordable way to transport fresh produce to the nearest market, causing food waste and financial losses for farmers. Using the materials provided, participants must design a basic prototype of a low-cost transportation or packaging solution to help preserve and move the produce efficiently.
- **Output:** Each group presents their idea, explaining how their solution addresses the problem and how it could be scaled up with additional resources.

By incorporating real-world constraints, this activity mirrors the ingenuity required in rural entrepreneurship and encourages participants to develop a problem-solving mindset.





Evaluation Questions

Reflective Self-Assessment (Drag-and-Drop & Ranking Questions)

1. Drag-and-Drop: Define an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Instructions: Drag the correct phrases into the definition box below to complete the sentence.

An entrepreneurial mindset is a set of (A) _____, _____, and _____ that help individuals identify and act on opportunities despite challenges.

Answer Choices:

- Resilience
- Risk-taking
- Creativity
- Passivity
- Fixed mindset

Correct Answers: Resilience, Risk-taking, Creativity

2. Ranking Question: Identifying Opportunities

Instructions: Rank the following rural business opportunities from most feasible to least feasible based on sustainability and impact.

- A mobile health clinic for remote areas
- Organic farming and direct-to-consumer delivery
- A fast-food chain in a low-population village
- An online platform for selling handmade crafts

Suggested Answer Order (from most to least feasible):

1. Organic farming and direct-to-consumer delivery
2. A mobile health clinic for remote areas
3. An online platform for selling handmade crafts
4. A fast-food chain in a low-population village





Knowledge Check (Multiple-Choice & Matching Exercises)

1. Multiple-Choice: Traits of an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Which of the following are key traits of an entrepreneurial mindset? (Select three correct answers.)

- Adaptability
- Problem-solving
- Fear of failure
- Preference for routine
- Creativity

Correct Answers: Adaptability, Problem-solving, Creativity

2. Multiple-Choice: Rural Business Idea

Which of the following is an example of a business that solves a rural challenge effectively?

- A luxury fashion boutique in a remote village
- A solar-powered cold storage facility for farmers
- A subscription-based coffee delivery service in an area without internet
- A high-end cinema in a small rural town

Correct Answer: A solar-powered cold storage facility for farmers

3. True/False: Adaptability in Entrepreneurship

Adaptability is one of the least important traits for a rural entrepreneur because rural environments remain stable and predictable.

- True
- False

Correct Answer: False





4. Matching Exercise: Traits & Their Application in Rural Entrepreneurship

Instructions: Match each entrepreneurial trait to how it applies to rural entrepreneurship.

Trait	Real-World Application
Resilience	A farmer develops alternative revenue streams after crop failure
Creativity	Turning unused barns into eco-tourism accommodations
Problem-Solving	Setting up a cooperative to share agricultural machinery
Adaptability	Transitioning from in-person sales to e-commerce during a crisis

By engaging with this quiz, participants will assess their understanding of entrepreneurial mindsets in a structured, interactive way. The multiple-choice, ranking, and matching formats ensure participants receive immediate feedback, making the learning process more dynamic.

Role Model Video

Learn from a Rural Entrepreneur

Watch the YOUth Roots Role Model video to discover how entrepreneurial mindset, creativity, resilience, and adaptability can be applied in a real rural business context.

The video presents the experience of a local entrepreneur, highlighting challenges faced, opportunities identified, and the key entrepreneurial competences developed throughout the journey.

Scan the QR code or access the video using the link below.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDzs3CNNuqw>





Digital activity: Miro Toolkit

The concepts introduced in this module can be further explored through [Session 1](#) of the YOUth Roots Miro Toolkit. This session presents inspiring examples of rural entrepreneurs and successful business initiatives, offering practical insights into how entrepreneurial mindsets can be applied in real-world contexts. Through case studies, visual materials, and reflection activities, the session supports the development of creativity, resilience, adaptability, and opportunity recognition.

Conclusion

Developing an entrepreneurial mindset is the first step towards creating successful and sustainable rural businesses. Qualities such as creativity, resilience, adaptability, initiative, and problem-solving enable entrepreneurs to recognise opportunities, overcome challenges, and generate positive impact within their communities. By strengthening these competences, young people can approach entrepreneurship with greater confidence and lay the foundation for transforming ideas into meaningful and sustainable ventures.

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MODULE 2: SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Objective of the Module

The aim of this module is to equip participants with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills to incorporate sustainability into rural entrepreneurship, ensuring that businesses not only survive but thrive while preserving the integrity of the environment and benefiting local communities.

Key Topics

- Principles of sustainability in rural entrepreneurship, including environmental, social, and economic facets
- Circular economy frameworks and their practical applications in rural contexts
- Sustainable resource management techniques, innovative green practices, and their impact on long-term viability

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will:

- Understand the significance of sustainability as a core component of effective business models in rural areas
- Apply circular economy principles effectively in rural enterprises to drive efficiency and reduce waste
- Identify and implement actionable sustainable strategies that minimize environmental impact and enhance community welfare

Useful Presentation to go with this Module 2: [[LINK](#)]

Understanding the Sustainable Practices

Sustainable practices are essential for nurturing resilient rural entrepreneurship, allowing businesses to flourish while ensuring the preservation of natural resources and ecosystems. This module is designed to weave sustainability into entrepreneurial ventures, emphasizing critical concepts such as the circular economy, responsible resource management, and the adoption of eco-friendly practices.





Example:

A notable example is the “Zero Food Waste Cyprus Initiative”, a grassroots movement led by enthusiastic young volunteers dedicated to combatting food waste. They proactively visit local fruit and vegetable markets across Cyprus to collect surplus produce that would otherwise be discarded, carefully redistributing it to community members and organizations committed to fostering a zero-waste and sustainable future.

This initiative not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions and food waste but also addresses inefficiencies in resource management, significantly contributing to a more sustainable and circular economy. The other case study is about the rose factory in Agros village in Cyprus. Nestled in the Troodos Mountains of Cyprus, the cultivation of Damask Roses has been a cherished tradition for over a century. Introduced to the region by local farmers, the rose blossomed into an essential part of Agros cultural and economic identity.

The Rose Factory, a family-run business established in the 20th century, preserves this legacy through sustainable practices. Using traditional distillation methods, the factory produces high-quality rose water, essential oils, cosmetics, and edible products. Committed to zero-waste production, every part of the rose is utilized, reflecting the community dedication to environmental sustainability. The Rose Festival, held annually in May, celebrates this vibrant heritage, attracting visitors from around the world to witness the blooming fields and learn about the sustainable cultivation of this iconic flower.





Case studies

Case Study 1: The Rose Factory – Agros, Cyprus

An exemplary model of sustainable rural entrepreneurship in Cyprus is the Rose Factory, located in the picturesque village of Agros, celebrated for its long-standing heritage in the cultivation of Damask roses. These roses, known for their captivating fragrance and high quality, are handpicked and transformed into a diverse array of eco-friendly products, including premium rose water, essential oils, organic cosmetics, and natural fragrances.





The Rose Factory employs sustainable practices in several impactful ways:

Zero Waste Production:

The factory utilizes every part of the rose plant—petals are processed for distillation into valuable oils, stems are composted to enrich the soil, and by-products are converted into organic fertilizers, exemplifying a commitment to waste reduction.

Local Sourcing & Community Support:

All raw materials are sourced from local farmers, bolstering the regional economy, supporting local agriculture, and minimizing carbon emissions associated with transportation logistics.

Eco-Friendly Packaging:

The factory prioritizes biodegradable and recyclable packaging solutions that align with circular economy principles, reducing the environmental footprint and encouraging responsible consumption.

Educational Tourism:

The Rose Factory opens its doors to visitors, offering workshops and tours that educate guests about the sustainable distillation process and the rich cultural heritage of rose cultivation. This initiative not only strengthens community bonds but also raises awareness about sustainable rural practices among tourists and locals alike:

The Rose Factory in Agros stands as a powerful testament to how rural entrepreneurship can prosper by blending time-honored traditions with innovative sustainable practices, ensuring both economic success and environmental stewardship.

Interactive exercises

1. Local Resource Mapping:

Participants will engage in identifying key local resources within their communities and explore strategies for sustainably integrating them into viable business models that benefit both the economy and the environment.

2. Circular Economy Brainstorm:

In collaborative groups, participants will develop a comprehensive circular economy strategy for a widely consumed rural product, focusing on minimizing waste and maximizing the reuse of materials throughout its lifecycle.

3. Zero Waste Challenge:

Participants will create a detailed plan aimed at reducing waste within their entrepreneurial concepts, drawing inspiration from the practices of the Zero Food Waste Cyprus Initiative, and presenting their proposals for feedback.





Evaluation Questions:

1. What are three specific sustainable practices you can incorporate into your business idea, and how would they make a difference?
2. How can embracing a circular economy approach positively impact rural communities economically and environmentally?
3. In what innovative ways does the Rose Factory in Agros integrate sustainable practices into its business operations?
4. Which local resource in your area do you believe holds the greatest potential for fostering sustainable business development, and why?





Case Study 2: The Zero Food Waste Cyprus Initiative

The Zero Food Waste Cyprus Initiative represents a passionate community-driven effort aimed at significantly reducing food waste while offering support to vulnerable groups within society. Young volunteers actively engage with local fruit and vegetable markets throughout Cyprus, meticulously collecting excess produce that would otherwise be discarded due to minor imperfections or surplus. This reclaimed food is then carefully sorted and redistributed to families in need, food banks, and community organizations, promoting sustainability, community solidarity, and social responsibility.





Key achievements of the initiative include:

Waste Reduction:

By collecting and redistributing food that would otherwise contribute to landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions, the initiative effectively prevents thousands of kilograms of food from going to waste each year, fostering a more sustainable food system.

Community Engagement:

The project cultivates community involvement and awareness around food waste and sustainability, encouraging individuals to rethink their consumption habits and embrace more sustainable practices.

Overall, the Zero Food Waste Cyprus Initiative exemplifies the powerful intersection of sustainability and community welfare, illustrating how collaborative efforts can drive meaningful change in rural settings.

Interactive Exercises

1. Food Waste Audit

Participants analyse their daily food consumption habits and identify areas where food waste occurs. They then propose practical actions to reduce waste at home, school, or within their community.

2. Community Action Mapping

In small groups, participants identify local stakeholders (markets, restaurants, schools, NGOs, farmers) that could collaborate on a food redistribution initiative. They create a simple stakeholder map and discuss possible partnerships.

3. Sustainable Solution Design

Participants design a small-scale initiative aimed at reducing food waste in their local area. The initiative should include objectives, target beneficiaries, key activities, and expected impact.





Evaluation Questions

1. Why is food waste considered both an environmental and a social issue?
2. How does the Zero Food Waste Cyprus Initiative contribute to sustainability and community well-being?
3. What stakeholders are important for the success of a food redistribution project?
4. What actions could you take in your community to reduce food waste and promote responsible consumption?

Digital activity: Miro Toolkit

The topics explored in this module are complemented by [Session 1](#) of the YOUth Roots Miro Toolkit. Through examples of successful rural enterprises and innovative business practices, the session demonstrates how sustainability principles can be integrated into entrepreneurial activities. The visual materials and case studies available in the toolkit provide additional inspiration for developing environmentally and socially responsible business ideas in rural communities.

Conclusion

Sustainability is not only an environmental responsibility but also a strategic opportunity for rural entrepreneurs. By adopting circular economy principles, engaging local communities, and making efficient use of available resources, rural businesses can generate long-term economic, social, and environmental value. The examples presented in this module demonstrate that sustainable entrepreneurship is both achievable and impactful, regardless of the size of the initiative.

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MODULE 3: BUSINESS PLANNING AND MODELING

Objective of the Module

The aim of this module is to provide participants with the knowledge and practical tools needed to transform a business idea into a structured and sustainable business model. Participants will learn how to define their value proposition, identify customers, plan key business activities, and develop the foundations of a viable rural enterprise.

Key Topics

- Introduction to Business Planning
- Business Model Canvas
- Value Proposition
- Customer Segments
- Revenue Streams and Cost Structure
- Setting Goals and Planning Business Activities

Learning Outcomes

- By the end of this module, participants will:
- Understand the purpose of business planning;
- Develop a basic Business Model Canvas;
- Identify customer segments and value propositions;
- Recognise key resources, partners and activities;
- Create the foundations of a sustainable rural business model.

Useful Presentation to go with this Module 3: [[LINK](#)]

Understanding the Business Planning and Modeling

Transforming a business idea into a successful and sustainable venture requires more than creativity and enthusiasm. It requires careful planning, strategic thinking, and a clear understanding of how value will be created, delivered, and sustained over time. Business planning provides a structured approach to organising ideas, identifying opportunities and challenges, allocating resources efficiently, and setting realistic goals for growth.



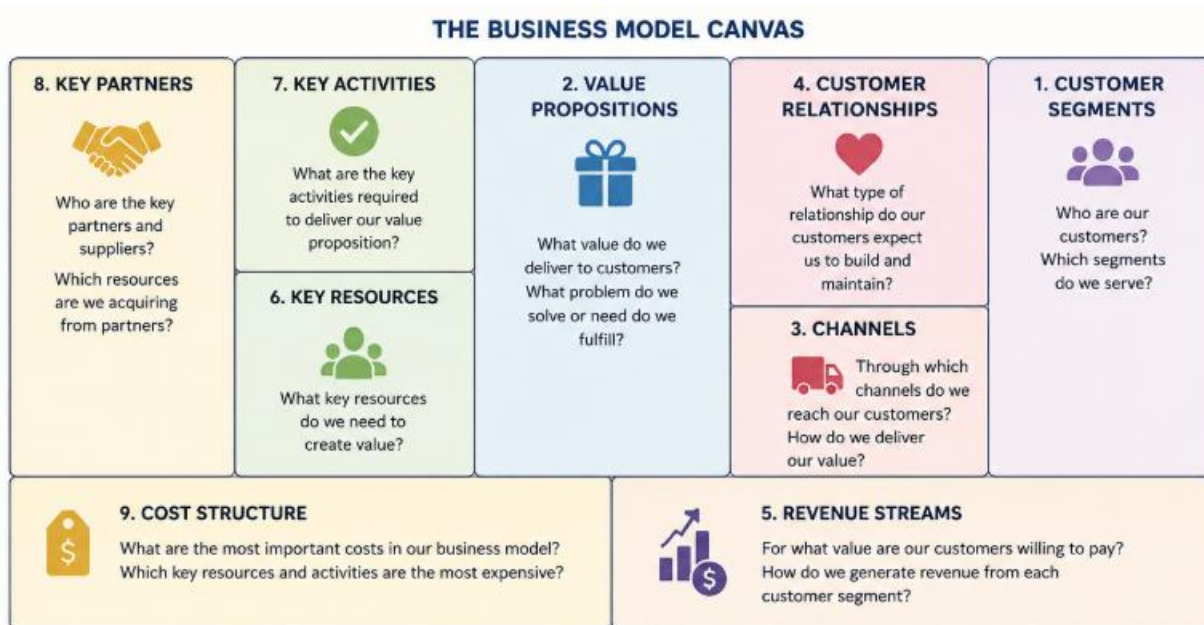


A business model explains how an organisation creates value for its customers while generating the resources needed to sustain its activities. It defines the essential components of a business, including the value proposition, customer segments, key activities, key resources, partnerships, revenue streams, and cost structure. One of the most widely used tools for developing a business model is the **Business Model Canvas**, a visual framework that helps organise and analyse these elements in a simple and structured way.

In rural contexts, business planning plays a particularly important role. Limited resources, smaller markets, and strong connections with local communities require careful decision-making and efficient use of available assets. A well-designed business model helps identify local opportunities, strengthen partnerships, manage resources responsibly, and build enterprises that generate long-term economic, social, and environmental value.

Business planning should be viewed as a continuous process rather than a one-time activity. As markets evolve, community needs change, and new opportunities emerge, business models should be regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience.

This module introduces the key principles of business planning and business modelling, providing practical guidance on developing a structured business model that can support the creation and growth of sustainable rural enterprises.





Case Study:

Terra Fyllida – Cyprus

Terra Fyllida is a Cypriot social enterprise that combines traditional craftsmanship, sustainable production, and local entrepreneurship. By working closely with rural communities and local artisans, the enterprise creates handmade products inspired by Cypriot cultural heritage while promoting environmental responsibility and social inclusion.

Its business model is built on several interconnected elements:

Value Proposition:

Offering authentic, handcrafted products that preserve local traditions while promoting sustainable production and responsible consumption.

Customer Segments:

Local consumers, tourists, and individuals interested in sustainable and ethically produced products.

Key Activities:

Product design, collaboration with local artisans, promotion of traditional crafts, online and offline sales, and participation in local markets and cultural events.

Key Resources:

Local craftsmanship, traditional knowledge, natural materials, community partnerships, and digital communication channels.

Key Partners:

Local artisans, community organisations, cultural institutions, and regional development initiatives.

Revenue Streams:

Sales of handmade products through physical stores, online platforms, and local events.

By combining local identity with sustainable business practices, Terra Fyllida demonstrates how a clear business model can create economic opportunities while preserving cultural heritage and supporting rural communities.





Interactive Exercises

1. Business Idea Mapping

Objective:

Transform an initial business idea into a structured business concept by identifying its purpose, target audience, value, and potential impact.

Materials Needed:

[Business Idea Worksheet](#)

Steps:

- Download or access the **Business Idea Worksheet** using the link provided.
- Complete each section of the worksheet by describing the business idea, the problem it addresses, the target customers, and the value it creates.
- Identify the local resources and opportunities that could support the business.
- Reflect on the potential economic, social, and environmental impact of the idea.

Facilitation Tip:

Encourage realistic and community-oriented ideas. The completed worksheet will serve as the starting point for developing the Business Model Canvas in the next exercise.

2. Business Model Canvas Development

Objective:

Develop a structured Business Model Canvas by organising the key components of a rural business idea.

Materials Needed:

[Business Model Canvas template](#), completed Business Idea Worksheet

Steps:

- Access the **Business Model Canvas template** using the link provided.
- Use the information gathered in the **Business Idea Worksheet** to complete the nine building blocks of the Business Model Canvas:
 - Customer Segments
 - Value Proposition
 - Channels
 - Customer Relationships





- Revenue Streams
- Key Resources
- Key Activities
- Key Partnerships
- Cost Structure
- Review the completed canvas and identify any areas that require further development or clarification.
- Share the Business Model Canvas with a peer or small group and discuss possible improvements.

Facilitation Tip:

There is no single "correct" Business Model Canvas. Encourage continuous refinement based on feedback, local opportunities, and changing community needs.

Evaluation Questions:

- Why is business planning important for the long-term success of a rural enterprise?
- What is the purpose of a Business Model Canvas, and how does it support business development?
- Which element of the Business Model Canvas do you consider the most important for your business idea, and why?
- How can understanding customer needs and value propositions contribute to building a sustainable business?
- How could a well-structured business model help address a local challenge or opportunity within your community?

Digital activity: Miro Toolkit

This module is supported by [Session 2](#) of the Miro Toolkit, which provides practical frameworks and templates for designing business models suitable for rural contexts. The session includes visual tools for identifying value propositions, customer segments, key activities, resources, and revenue streams, helping transform business ideas into structured plans.





Conclusion:

Branding and storytelling are not just for big companies. Youth entrepreneurs who express their values, tell their journey, and connect emotionally with their audience can stand out in the market, especially in tight-knit communities or rural settings. A great brand is *felt* before it is *understood*.

References and resources

Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y. (2010). *Business Model Generation*. Strategyzer.
<https://www.strategyzer.com/books/business-model-generation>

Strategyzer. *Business Model Canvas*.
<https://www.strategyzer.com/canvas/business-model-canvas>

European Commission. *SME Strategy for a Sustainable and Digital Europe*.
https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-strategy_en

EU4Business. *Supporting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises*.
<https://eu4business.eu>

Strategyzer – Business Model Canvas

Interactive tools and resources for designing, testing, and improving business models.
<https://www.strategyzer.com>

Canvanizer

A free online platform for creating and editing Business Model Canvas templates.
<https://canvanizer.com>

Business Model Analyst

Guides, templates, and practical resources for business planning and business model development.
<https://businessmodelanalyst.com>

SCORE Business Plan Template

Free business planning templates and practical guidance for entrepreneurs.
<https://www.score.org/resource/business-plan-template-startup-business>





MODULE 4: BASIC MARKETING SKILLS (SY)

Objective of the Module

The aim of this module is to empower participants to craft compelling brand identities and authentic brand narratives that communicate values, attract customers, and build trust. This module emphasizes storytelling as a strategic marketing tool tailored for youth entrepreneurs.

Key Topics

- What is a Brand? (Identity, Values & Voice)
- Storytelling as a Marketing Tool
- Building a Youth-Friendly Brand (Visual + Emotional Identity)
- Communicating Your Brand Across Channels (Offline + Digital)

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module, participants will:

- Define their brand's core values and mission
- Create a personal business story that connects with their target audience
- Design consistent visual and emotional brand elements
- Understand how storytelling increases customer trust and visibility

Useful Presentation to go with this Module 4: [[LINK](#)]

Understanding Basic Marketing Skills

Marketing is much more than promoting a product or service. It is the process of understanding customer needs, communicating value, and building lasting relationships with target audiences. For rural entrepreneurs, effective marketing plays a fundamental role in increasing visibility, attracting customers, and differentiating products or services in increasingly competitive markets.

At the heart of every successful marketing strategy is a strong brand. A brand is more than a logo or a name; it represents the identity, values, personality, and overall message of a business. It reflects how a business wants to be perceived and the experience it aims to create for its customers. A clear and consistent brand identity helps build recognition, trust, and long-term loyalty.





Storytelling is one of the most powerful marketing tools available to entrepreneurs. Rather than simply describing a product or service, storytelling communicates the purpose, inspiration, and values behind a business. Authentic stories create emotional connections with customers, helping businesses stand out while strengthening their credibility. In rural contexts, stories linked to local traditions, cultural heritage, sustainable practices, and community impact can become valuable elements of a brand's identity.

Building a successful brand also requires consistency. Every interaction with customers—whether through social media, websites, packaging, local markets, events, or personal communication—should reflect the same visual identity, tone of voice, and core values. Consistent communication makes a brand more recognisable and reinforces customer trust over time.

Basic marketing skills also include understanding the target audience and selecting the most appropriate communication channels. Digital platforms such as social media, websites, and online marketplaces can significantly expand the visibility of rural businesses, while participation in local markets, festivals, and community events helps strengthen relationships within the local territory. Combining digital and offline communication enables entrepreneurs to reach wider audiences while maintaining authentic connections with their communities.

This module introduces the fundamental principles of branding, storytelling, and marketing communication, providing practical guidance for creating a strong and authentic brand identity capable of supporting the long-term growth of rural enterprises.

Case study:

Loukoumania – Cyprus

Loukoumania is a Cypriot business that has successfully transformed a traditional local dessert into a modern and recognisable brand. Inspired by the well-known *loukoumades* (traditional honey doughnuts), the company combines authentic recipes with contemporary branding, creating a unique customer experience that appeals to both local residents and tourists.

One of the key strengths of Loukoumania is its consistent brand identity. From its logo and visual style to its packaging and social media presence, every element reflects a modern, vibrant, and welcoming image while maintaining a strong connection with Cypriot culture and tradition.





Storytelling also plays an important role in the company's communication strategy. Rather than simply promoting its products, Loukoumania highlights the experience of sharing traditional flavours, celebrating local heritage, and creating memorable moments for its customers. Through engaging visual content, community interaction, and a consistent tone of voice, the brand has built a loyal customer base and increased its visibility both online and offline.

This example demonstrates how even a small local business can strengthen its market position by developing a clear brand identity, communicating authentic values, and using storytelling as a strategic marketing tool.

Key Marketing Elements

- **Brand Identity:** A consistent visual style makes the business easily recognisable.
- **Storytelling:** Sharing the story behind the product creates emotional connections with customers.
- **Customer Experience:** Branding extends beyond the product to every interaction with the customer.
- **Digital Communication:** Social media helps increase visibility and strengthen customer engagement.
- **Authenticity:** Promoting local traditions and values differentiates the business from competitors.

Interactive Exercises

1. Brand Identity Board (Vision Mapping Activity)

Objective: Define your brand's personality and values.

Materials: Magazines, scissors, glue, mood board templates, markers

Steps:

- Create a mood board with words, images, textures, and symbols.
- Prompt: "If your business were a person, how would it speak, look, and act?"
- Share in small groups.

Facilitator Tip: Encourage creativity - poetry, slang, colors, mood, even memes!

2. Founder's Story Workshop: Hero's Journey

Objective: Craft a meaningful brand narrative

Materials: Story templates, pens, story cards





Structure:

Problem → Idea → Challenges → Breakthrough → Vision

Steps:

- Write your Founder's Story (150–200 words)
- Share with a peer
- Use the “Glow & Grow” feedback method

Facilitator Tip: Push for honesty - authentic stories are more powerful than polished ones.

3. Design Your Brand Identity (Visual + Emotional) – brandbook

Objective: Translate story + values into visuals

Activity Options:

- Design a logo, choose brand colors, and draft a tagline
- Use Canva.com or paper + art materials

Prompt Questions:

- What emotion should people feel when they see your brand?
- Is your look bold, soft, retro, futuristic?

4. Pitch Your Brand (Role-Play + Visuals)

Objective: Build confidence in communicating your brand clearly.

Materials: Flipcharts, slides, logo drafts, printed story snippets

Steps:

- Prepare a 1–2 minute pitch: Brand Name, Mission, Visual Style, Story
- Role-play a live product launch or mock Instagram Q&A
- Group feedback: “Was it clear, emotional, and consistent?”

Facilitator Tip: Make it fun - applause, photos, even a mock “brand award”!





Evaluation Questions:

- What are the three core values of your brand?
- How does your story make your business different?
- What emotion should customers feel when they see your brand?
- How will you share your brand on social media or at local events?
- Why is it important for a youth-led brand to have a consistent identity?

Conclusion:

“A great brand is *felt* before it is *understood*.” Youth entrepreneurs who express their values, share their journey, and connect emotionally with their audience will stand out—especially in local or tight-knit markets. Branding and storytelling aren’t for big businesses alone; they’re essential tools for authenticity, impact, and growth.

Digital activity: Miro Toolkit

Additional resources for branding, storytelling, customer engagement, and communication planning are available in [Session 3](#) of the Miro Toolkit. Visual templates and practical exercises support the development of marketing strategies that strengthen visibility, build trust, and communicate business values effectively.





References:

- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2021). *Principles of Marketing* (18th ed.). Pearson.
<https://www.pearson.com>
- StoryBrand. *Official Website*.
<https://www.storybrand.com>
- Canva Design School. *Branding and Design Resources*.
<https://www.canva.com/designschool/>
- HubSpot. *Marketing Blog*.
<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing>
- Loukoumania. *Official Website*.
<https://loukoumania.com>
- **Canva** – Free platform for creating logos, brand identities, social media content, and marketing materials.
<https://www.canva.com>
- **StoryBrand** – Resources and frameworks for developing authentic brand storytelling.
<https://www.storybrand.com>
- **Meta Blueprint** – Free online courses on social media marketing, digital communication, and audience engagement.
<https://www.facebook.com/business/learn>
- **Google Digital Garage** – Free courses on digital marketing, online communication, and business promotion.
<https://learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage>
- **Loukoumania – Social Media Inspiration**
Explore Loukoumania's social media channels to observe how a small local business builds a consistent brand identity through visual communication, storytelling, customer engagement, and content strategy. Consider how these elements could be adapted to promote a rural enterprise.
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/loukoumaniastores/>





MODULE 5: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND NETWORKING

Objective of the Module

The aim of this module is to empower participants to build strong community ties, engage stakeholders, and create collaborative partnerships that enhance the impact of rural enterprises. This module highlights the essential role that community support and networking play in the growth and sustainability of rural businesses.

Key Topics:

- Importance of Community Involvement in Rural Entrepreneurship
- Building Partnerships and Networks
- Strategies for Engaging Local Stakeholders

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this module, participants will:

- Understand the value of community support in business development.
- Develop strategies for effective stakeholder engagement.
- Build networks that enhance business growth and resilience.
- Leverage community assets to support sustainable entrepreneurial activities.

Useful Presentation to go with this Module 5: [[LINK](#)]

Understanding the Community Engagement and Networking

Community engagement is a fundamental element of sustainable rural entrepreneurship. Successful rural businesses do not operate in isolation; they grow by building strong relationships with local communities, collaborating with stakeholders, and creating shared value. In many rural areas, long-term success depends not only on the quality of a product or service but also on the ability to establish trust, encourage participation, and respond to local needs.

Community engagement begins with identifying the people, organisations, and resources that can contribute to the development of a business. These may include local authorities, farmers, artisans, cooperatives, schools, non-governmental organisations, cultural associations, regional development agencies, and community leaders. By working together, these actors can share knowledge, resources, and opportunities while strengthening the local economy and improving community well-being.





Networking is equally important for entrepreneurial growth. Strong networks provide access to new ideas, partnerships, funding opportunities, professional support, and wider markets. They also encourage collaboration between businesses and organisations with complementary skills and expertise, creating solutions that would be difficult to achieve individually.

Community assets play a central role in this process. Natural resources, local traditions, cultural heritage, community spaces, local events, and existing social networks can all become valuable resources for entrepreneurial initiatives. Identifying and effectively using these assets helps businesses create solutions that are rooted in the local context while generating positive social, economic, and environmental impact.

Digital communication tools can further strengthen community engagement by connecting local initiatives with wider audiences. Social media platforms, online communities, collaborative digital workspaces, and communication applications enable entrepreneurs to build relationships, promote their activities, exchange ideas, and develop partnerships beyond geographical boundaries while maintaining strong connections with their local communities.

This module explores practical strategies for identifying community assets, engaging local stakeholders, building collaborative partnerships, and developing networks that contribute to resilient, inclusive, and sustainable rural enterprises.

Case Studies:

1. **Gardens of the Future – Nicosia:** The 'Gardens of the Future' is an inspiring initiative located in Nicosia that promotes sustainable urban gardening and environmental education. Through community-driven projects, local volunteers cultivate organic vegetables and herbs, transforming neglected urban spaces into green, productive gardens. The project not only enhances local food security but also strengthens community bonds and educates the public on sustainable agriculture. Workshops are frequently held to teach composting, water-saving irrigation, and permaculture principles, making it a living example of how local engagement can drive sustainable change.
2. **Elate na Nekatothoumen – Nicosia:** 'Elate na Nekatothoumen' is a conceptual collective kitchen based in Nicosia, promoting the idea of free and inclusive community dining. The initiative is built on principles of solidarity, zero waste, and sustainable food sharing. It operates entirely on community contributions, where local producers, residents, and volunteers come together to cook and share meals for free. The project not only provides nourishment to those in need but also creates a space for cultural exchange and community building. Through workshops, open kitchen days, and educational events, *Elate na Nekatothoumen* demonstrates how collective action can address food insecurity while strengthening community bonds.





Key Principles of Community Engagement

The case studies presented in this module highlight several principles that contribute to successful community engagement and networking in rural entrepreneurship:

- **Collaboration:** Working with local organisations, businesses, and community members creates stronger and more sustainable initiatives.
- **Participation:** Involving the community in planning and decision-making increases ownership, trust, and long-term commitment.
- **Shared Value:** Successful partnerships generate benefits for both entrepreneurs and the wider community.
- **Networking:** Building relationships with stakeholders provides access to knowledge, resources, funding opportunities, and new markets.
- **Community Assets:** Local skills, traditions, cultural heritage, and natural resources can become valuable assets for sustainable business development.

Interactive Exercises:

The following activities are designed to help participants apply the lessons learned from both case studies and explore how community engagement and networking can support sustainable rural entrepreneurship.

1. Community Asset Mapping

Objective: Identify local resources, stakeholders, and potential collaborators within the community.

Materials Needed: Large maps, markers, sticky notes, flipcharts.

Steps:

- Participants mark local assets such as farms, artisans, NGOs, and community centers on a large map.
- Discuss how each asset can support rural entrepreneurship (e.g., sourcing materials, providing venues, sharing tools).
- Present findings, highlighting opportunities for collaboration.

Facilitation Tip: Encourage participants to think outside the box - assets can be skills, people, or even local knowledge.

2. Pitching Community Engagement Ideas (Role-Playing)

Objective: Practice presenting community-based business ideas to potential stakeholders.

Materials Needed: Flipcharts, markers, role cards (e.g., local mayor, community leader, farmer).





Steps:

- Participants are divided into small groups. Each group selects a business idea and a target stakeholder.
- Groups create a 5-minute pitch to present their idea, focusing on community benefits and sustainable growth.
- One member plays the role of a community stakeholder, asking questions and providing feedback.

Facilitation Tip: Focus on the clarity of the idea and its community impact. Encourage realistic and constructive feedback.

3. Networking Simulation – Building Local Partnerships

Objective: Understand the importance of strategic partnerships in rural business growth.

Materials Needed: Networking cards (representing different community actors), sticky notes.

Steps:

- Each participant is given a networking card (e.g., Mayor, Local Farmer, NGO Representative).
- They must network with other participants to form partnerships that support a sustainable business model.
- Groups present their partnership strategy, highlighting shared benefits and sustainability.

Facilitation Tip: Encourage participants to think about long-term collaborations and shared resources.

Evaluation Questions:

- How does Gardens of the Future demonstrate the importance of community participation in sustainable development?
- In what ways does Elate na Nekatothoumen promote social inclusion and community collaboration?
- Who are the key stakeholders in your rural community?
- How can local partnerships strengthen entrepreneurial initiatives?
- What digital tools can help extend community engagement beyond local borders?

Resource Directory:

- <https://www.instagram.com/elatenanekatothoumen/>
- <https://gardensofthefuture.com/>





Conclusion:

Community engagement and strategic networking are powerful tools for rural entrepreneurs. By building strong local ties, leveraging community assets, and collaborating with local and international stakeholders, rural businesses can thrive sustainably while enriching local communities

Digital activity: Miro Toolkit

Session 3 of the Miro Toolkit expands on the concepts explored in this module by providing practical tools for stakeholder mapping, partnership development, and community engagement planning. The resources help identify collaboration opportunities and strengthen relationships with local actors and support networks.

References and resources

European CAP Network. *Supporting Rural Development Across Europe.*

<https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu>

Rural Pact. *Building Stronger Rural Communities.*

<https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). *Rural Development.*

<https://www.fao.org/rural-development/en>

Gardens of the Future. *Official Website.*

<https://gardensofthefuture.com>

Elate na Nekatothoumen. *Official Instagram Page.*

<https://www.instagram.com/elatenanekatothoumen/>

Gardens of the Future – Explore how community gardening, environmental education, and local participation can contribute to sustainable community development.

Website: <https://gardensofthefuture.com>

Elate na Nekatothoumen – Explore the initiative's social media channels to discover how community engagement, volunteering, and collective action can promote social inclusion and sustainable food practices.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/elatenanekatothoumen/>

European CAP Network – Access resources, good practices, and networking opportunities supporting rural development and community-led initiatives across Europe.

<https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu>





MODULE 6: GRANT WRITING AND FUNDRAISING

Objective of the Module

The aim of this module is to equip youth with practical skills and knowledge to develop strong grant proposals and diversify funding sources.

The module emphasizes step-by-step grant application techniques and budget planning templates.

Key Topics

- Fundamentals of grant writing
- Structuring grant proposals: Background, needs analysis, concept, partnerships, logical framework and methodologies
- Budget planning and financial reporting
- Fundraising techniques beyond grants: Sponsorships, events, and crowdfunding
- Case studies and practical examples

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will:

- Grasp the foundational principles of grant writing and fundraising
- Learn to create compelling project narratives and align them with funding priorities
- Understand how to build complementary partnerships for projects
- Develop skills to prepare budgets using templates
- Explore alternative fundraising methods to sustain projects

Useful Presentation to go with this Module 6: [[LINK](#)]

Understanding the Grant Writing and Fundraising

Grant writing is the process of preparing applications to secure funding for specific projects, targeting institutions or organizations that provide grants. Key purposes include addressing societal needs, fostering innovation, and improving community welfare. Results are often published on official project platforms or websites.





It is widely utilized in various fields:

- Educational projects: Schools and universities develop or expand programs. A local NGO expands its language learning program with Erasmus+ funding.
- Research and technology: Funding scientific research and innovation. Horizon Europe-funded research on AI-driven healthcare solutions.
- Arts and culture projects: Supporting artists and cultural initiatives. The Stavros Niarchos Foundation funds community arts workshops.
- Community development: Projects targeting rural or underdeveloped communities. Cyprus Research Foundation funds rural sustainability programs.

Applications can be submitted to:

- European Union programmes: The EU provides large-scale funding opportunities through various programs aimed at promoting education, research, and innovation across member states. Examples include:
 - [Erasmus+](#): Supports education, training, youth, and sport projects.
 - [Horizon Europe](#): Aims to drive scientific and technological advancements, including health research and green innovations.
- National grants: Many countries provide funding for local initiatives to foster economic and social development. Examples include:
 - [Ministero della Cultura - Bandi e Finanziamenti](#) (Italian Ministry of Culture Grants): Supports cultural preservation and artistic projects.
 - [Ίδρυμα Έρευνας και Καινοτομίας](#) (Cyprus Research and Innovation Foundation Grants): Funds projects in technology and innovation.
- Private foundations: Private organizations offer grants to address specific societal challenges. Examples include:
 - [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#): Provides funding for global health and education projects.
 - [Stavros Niarchos Foundation](#): Funds arts, culture, and education initiatives globally.





A well-structured grant proposal includes the following components:

- Background and rationale: Explains the need for the project, provides data-driven reasons for the project.
 - Highlight regional unemployment rates to justify a job training program.
- Objectives: Clearly defined measurable goals addressing identified problems
 - Train 100 rural youth in digital skills within two years.
- Methodology: Detailed steps and activities planned to achieve the objectives
 - Conduct surveys, organize workshops, and create materials.
- Expected outcomes: The quantifiable impact of the project and its benefits
 - Increased employment by 20% in targeted areas.
- Budget plan: A transparent financial breakdown of financial needs and resource allocation
 - 10,000 € allocated to materials, 5,000 € to travel.

Proposals serve as tools to secure funding and communicate project intentions effectively. While grant applications are a primary method for acquiring funding, alternative fundraising strategies are also required.

Key techniques include:

- Crowdfunding platforms: Use platforms like Kickstarter or GoFundMe to gather individual contributions. Crowdfunding enables projects to reach a global audience.
 - A tech start-up raises 200,000€ via Kickstarter.
- Sponsorships: Collaborate with corporations to secure financial or in-kind support. Examples include funding for events, branding partnerships, or equipment donations.
 - A marathon event sponsored by a sports brand.
- Fundraising events: Host events such as galas, marathons, or auctions. These can both generate funds and increase public engagement.
 - Charity auctions generate 50,000€ for local schools.
- Membership programs: Establish subscription or membership models to maintain ongoing support from stakeholders.
 - A museum's yearly subscription for exclusive exhibitions.





Common grant writing mistakes and how to avoid them

- Lack of clarity: Ensure the proposal clearly articulates the problem, objectives, and outcomes. Use simple, direct language.
- Weak needs analysis: Provide evidence-based justifications, including data and statistics, to highlight the urgency of the issue.
- Misalignment with funder's priorities: Research funding priorities carefully and tailor the proposal accordingly.
- Overcomplicated budgeting: Keep the budget realistic, transparent, and aligned with the project's activities. Use templates.
- Ignoring sustainability and impact: Clearly explain how the project's outcomes will be sustained beyond the funding period.
- Poor formatting and structure: Follow the application guidelines precisely, ensuring logical flow and well-structured sections.

Cases Studies:

1. Erasmus+ KA2 Project:

Project: ON-FARM: Farming, Food Production and Food Processing with Added Value for Local Small and Medium-sized Farmers 2021-1-CZ01-KA220-ADU-000033511

Objectives:

- Promote resource-efficient societies.
- Improve the local landscape and promote biodiversity.
- Develop farmers' skills for sustainable production.

Results:

- Created a web-based training platform.
- Engaged stakeholders through multiplier events.

Source: (*Erasmus+*, n.d.)





2. Crowdfunding Success Story:

Platform: Kickstarter

Project: Center of innovation and entrepreneurship

Details: Remisen project raised over DKK 98,610 where is South Zealand's only entrepreneurship and innovation center gives ambitious entrepreneurs the courage to take action as the incubator environment where young entrepreneurs can hack the present and create the future.

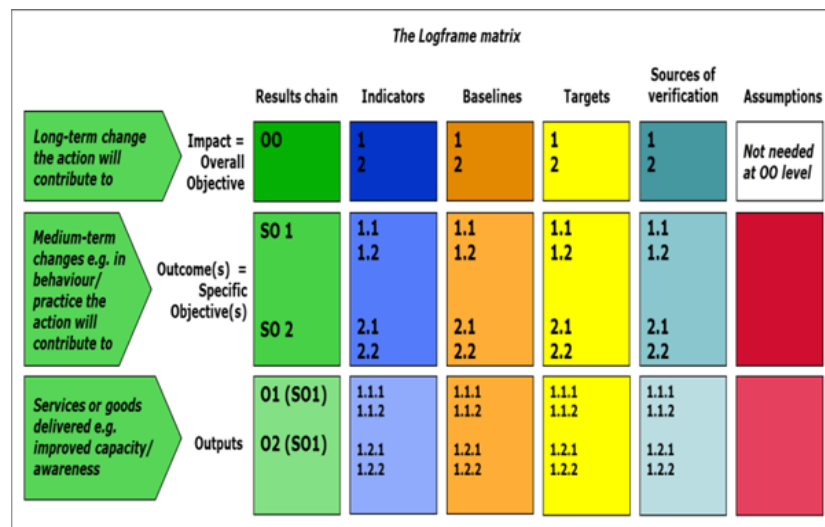
Source: (Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, n.d.)

Logical Framework of Project Design

A Logical Framework is the foundation for structuring a project. It helps establish a clear need-solution approach by linking objectives with identified needs, gaps and issues. Ensures consistency between objectives, activities, and expected outcomes.

The key elements include:

- Needs analysis: Identifies root causes, core problems, and effects.
- Solutions: Maps out corresponding solutions and interventions.
- Indicators: Defines measurable benchmarks to assess project success.
- Means of verification: Determines data sources to track progress.
- Assumptions and risks: Identifies external factors that may impact project success.



European commission - Logical Framework Approach (LFA) (Logical Framework Approach, n.d.)





Different Methodologies of Project Design

- **NAOMIE Methodology:** Provides a structured approach focusing on needs, aims, objectives, method, implementation, and evaluation. In grant writing, this method ensures a logical sequence from identifying problems to presenting solutions, making proposals more persuasive.
Example: A non-profit applying for a youth empowerment grant follows the NAOMIE methodology by first conducting research (Needs), defining clear learning goals (Aims), setting measurable objectives (Objectives), designing workshops (Method), planning a timeline (Implementation), and assessing the impact through KPIs (Evaluation).
- **Theory of Change:** Maps long-term goals and the necessary steps to achieve them. In fundraising, it helps demonstrate the logical link between project activities and their impact, ensuring funders see how their support will generate measurable outcomes.
Example: A climate action initiative seeking funding for reforestation projects outlines a Theory of Change where tree planting (activity) leads to increased green cover (short-term outcome), resulting in carbon reduction and biodiversity restoration (long-term impact).
- **Design Thinking:** Encourages user-centered problem-solving through iterative design and stakeholder feedback. In fundraising, this approach is useful for crafting donor-centric campaigns that effectively communicate the project's value and urgency.
Example: A crowdfunding campaign for an educational startup uses Design Thinking by first interviewing potential donors, refining messaging based on their concerns, and testing different fundraising strategies before launching a final donation platform.

Partnership

A partnership in the context of grant-funded projects refers to the collaboration between organizations or institutions to achieve shared objectives. Partnerships are important for:

- Resource sharing: Combining expertise, tools, and networks.
- Diverse perspectives: Integrating insights from various sectors or countries.
- Increased credibility: Demonstrating the project's legitimacy through collaborations.





Examples:

- Erasmus+ KA2 partnership: NGOs from Italy, Lithuania, and Cyprus collaborating on digital education projects.
- Horizon Europe consortium: Companies working together to innovate in renewable energy.

Budget Planning

Budget planning is the systematic allocation of financial resources to project activities. It ensures:

- Transparency: Clear tracking of expenses and funding sources.
- Feasibility: Adequate allocation of resources for all activities.
- Compliance: Meeting donor requirements.

Budget Planning Templates

EACH ACTION HAS A PRE-FIXED LUMP SUM. NO OTHER AMOUNT CAN BE AWARDED.
 TO AVOID REJECTION, MAKE SURE THAT THE TOTAL OF THE BUDGET TABLE BELOW (cell I13) CORRESPONDS TO THE PRE-FIXED LUMP SUM FOR THE CHOSEN ACTION.
 ONCE YOUR BUDGET TABLE IS FILLED IN, CHECK THAT THERE ARE NO OUTSTANDING ERROR MESSAGES (RED) AND ENSURE THAT IT IS CONSISTENT WITH "SECTION 3 - BUDGET" OF THE eFORM.

CHOSEN ACTION	PRE-FIXED LUMP SUM AS PER CALL (in €)		
Cooperation partnerships (SCP)	120,000	250,000	400,000
Small-scale partnerships (SSCP)	30,000	60,000	
Not-for-profit European sport events (SNCESE)	200,000	300,000	450,000

WARNING: the total below does not correspond to a pre-fixed lump sum. The budget table needs to be filled in or corrected

DETAILED BUDGET TABLE ERASMUS SPORT

Estimated budget – Lump sum breakdown - MAKE SURE THIS TABLE IS CONSISTENT WITH "SECTION 3 - BUDGET" OF THE eFORM.

Participants <small>(only 1 participant for SNCESE Type III - EU WIDE Events - 450,000€)</small>	WP 1	WP 2	WP 3	WP 4	WP 5	WP 6	WP 7	TOTAL (in €)
[title]	[title]	[title]	[title]	[title]	[title]	[title]	[title]	-
[name]								0
[name]								0
[name]								0
[name]								0
[name]								0

Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnerships Application Budget Table (EU Funding & Tenders Portal, n.d.)






grant_budget_template

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A B C D E F G

1  **LEARNGRANTWRITING.ORG**

2 **Instructions and Summary**

3

4 Award Number: _____ Due Date: _____

5 Grant Program: _____ Form prepared by: _____

6

7 1. Fill out only the blank white cells in workbook tabs a. through j. The Instructions and Summary tab will auto-populate.

8 2. The costs on tabs a. through i. must be Total Costs including both requested funds and your cost share.

9 **SUMMARY OF BUDGET CATEGORY COSTS PROPOSED**
The values in this summary table are from entries made in subsequent tabs, only blank white cells require data entry

10 **Section A - Budget Summary**

Grant Agency	Cost Share	Total Costs	Cost Share %	Proposed Project Period Dates
\$108,821	\$30,000	\$138,821	21.61%	

13 **Section B - Budget Categories**

CATEGORY	Project Period	Total Costs	% of Project	Comments (as needed)	
a. Personnel		\$10,000	\$10,000	7.20%	
b. Fringe Benefits		\$2,500	\$2,500	1.80%	
c. Travel		\$3,966	\$3,966	2.86%	
d. Equipment		\$30,000	\$30,000	21.61%	
e. Supplies		\$60	\$60	0.04%	
f. Contractual		\$62,000	\$62,000	44.66%	
g. Construction		\$0	\$0	0.00%	
h. Other Direct Costs		\$2,000	\$2,000	1.44%	
Total Direct Costs		\$110,526	\$110,526	79.62%	
i. Indirect Charges		\$28,295	\$28,295	20.38%	
Total Costs		\$138,821	\$138,821	100.00%	

Summary a. Personnel b. Fringe c. Travel d. Equipment e. Supplies f. Contra

Grant Writing Budget Template – LearnGrantWriting.org (Writing L. G., Free grant Writing Resources, n.d.)

Interactive Exercise:

Step-By-Step Grant Proposal Writing Exercise

Understanding how a grant proposal is structured is an essential step in developing effective funding applications. The following example is based on an **Erasmus+ Small Scale Partnership in Youth application** and presents the key sections commonly required in project proposals. Each component contributes to building a coherent project design by linking identified needs, objectives, activities, partnerships, budgets, and expected impacts.

The steps outlined below provide a practical framework that can be adapted to different funding programmes and project contexts. They illustrate the typical structure of a grant application and highlight the information generally required by funding bodies when assessing project proposals.





- **Context:** Define the project’s purpose and its alignment with EU priorities. Include a needs analysis highlighting the existing gaps and justifying the necessity of the project.
- **Priorities and Topics:** Ensure the project adheres to one or more key EU priority areas (e.g., inclusion and diversity in all fields of education, training, etc.). Demonstrate how the project contributes to addressing these priorities.
- **Project Description:** Clearly outline objectives that are linked with needs, expected results, target groups of the project as well as the needs and the motivation of the consortium.
- **Participating Organisations:** Provide information about required partner organization qualifications as the applicant. Emphasize the complementarity of expertise among partners and the added value each brings to the project.
- **Cooperation Arrangements:** Explain what tasks the consortium partners will undertake to achieve the project results, and what will be done to ensure that the process is progressing correctly. Discuss mechanisms for quality control and best practice exchange.
- **Activities:** Explain in detail the scope, duration, and required budget of all activities to be carried out within the scope of the project. Use a structured methodology to define key actions.
- **Budget Planning:** Use predefined templates to list costs under categories like project management, learning activities, and dissemination. Ensure the budget aligns with the activities outlined and follows grant guidelines.
- **Impact and Follow-up:** Describe the potential long-term benefits and how the project results will be sustained. Include strategies for stakeholder engagement, knowledge transfer, and policy impact.
- **Summary:** Summarize the project by clearly outlining its needs, objectives, methodology, expected outcomes, and sustainability measures. Ensure the project’s value proposition is clear.

Building on the structure presented above, the following exercise focuses on the development of a project proposal inspired by an Erasmus+ funding application. The exercise encourages the application of key concepts related to needs analysis, project planning, partnership building, budgeting, and impact design.



Scenario: Develop a project proposal for an adult education project on environmental sustainability and entrepreneurship with three partner organizations from Cyprus, Lithuania and Italy.

Requirements:

- Write a needs analysis based on local environmental challenges. Address socio-economic factors, internal and external needs, and skill gaps within the target group.
- Outline training materials and a training program for participants. Ensure the content is tailored to different learning needs and incorporates best practices in environmental education.
- Draft a budget using provided templates. Ensure financial planning aligns with project activities and compliance requirements.

Evaluation Questions

1. What are the main components of a grant proposal? Select all that apply.

- Background
- Objectives
- Needs Analysis
- Methodology
- Budget
- Marketing Strategy
- Outcomes

Correct answer: Background, Objectives, Need Analysis, Methodology, Budget, Outcomes

2. How do you align a project with EU funding priorities? Select the correct answer.

- By researching and addressing the priorities outlined in the funding program guidelines.
- By focusing only on financial feasibility.
- By submitting the same proposal to multiple funding agencies.
- By prioritizing internal organizational goals over EU guidelines.





Correct answer: By researching and addressing the priorities outlined in the funding program guidelines

3. Which of the following are alternative fundraising techniques to grants? Select all that apply.

- Crowdfunding
- Corporate sponsorships
- Government taxation
- Fundraising events
- Personal loans

Correct answer: Crowdfunding, Corporate sponsorships, Fundraising events

4. Clarity, alignment with project activities, and accurate cost estimation are key elements of an effective budget plan.

- True
- False

Correct answer: True

5. Match the partnership benefits with their descriptions. Drag and drop the correct pairs.

Benefit	Gaining trust and validation from funders and stakeholders
Expertise sharing	Description
Best practice exchange	Combining specialized knowledge from different partners
Resource optimization	Learning from proven methodologies and successful experiences
Increased credibility	Efficient use of financial and human resources

Correct answer:

Benefit	Description
Expertise sharing	Combining specialized knowledge from different partners
Best practice exchange	Learning from proven methodologies and successful experiences
Resource optimization	Efficient use of financial and human resources
Increased credibility	Gaining trust and validation from funders and stakeholders





Role Model Video

Learn the Fundamentals of Grant Writing and Fundraising

Watch the YOUth Roots Role Model video to gain a practical introduction to the fundamentals of grant writing, fundraising, and project development. The video explains the key stages of developing a successful funding proposal, from identifying community needs and funding opportunities to planning activities, building partnerships, and preparing realistic budgets.

The video also highlights the importance of strategic project design and demonstrates how well-structured proposals can transform innovative ideas into sustainable initiatives that generate long-term impact for rural communities.

Scan the QR code or access the video using the link below:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdRxGsnU2F4>

Digital activity: Miro Toolkit

To complement the content of this module, [Session 5](#) of the Miro Toolkit provides practical tools and templates related to grant writing, fundraising strategies, project planning, and funding opportunities. The session supports the development of project proposals and financial sustainability plans through structured and interactive resources.

Conclusions

Grant writing and fundraising are essential skills for transforming ideas into impactful and sustainable projects. Well-designed proposals combine clear objectives, evidence-based planning, realistic budgets, strong partnerships, and measurable outcomes. By understanding funding opportunities and adopting diverse fundraising strategies, entrepreneurs and organisations can strengthen the long-term sustainability of their initiatives while creating lasting social, economic, and environmental value for their communities.





References and resources:

- Erasmus+. (n.d.). <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2021-1-CZ01-KA220-ADU-000033511>
- Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. (n.d.). Kickstarter. https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1118818047/center-of-innovation-and-entrepreneurship?ref=discovery&term=entrepreneurship&total_hits=54&category_id=362
- Logical Framework approach. (n.d.). Wikis Europa EU. <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/Logical+Framework+Approach+-+LFA>
- EU Funding & Tenders Portal. (n.d.). <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/ERASMUS-SPORT-2025-SCP>
- Writing, L. G. (n.d.). Free resources for grant writing and funding. Learn Writing Grants and Grant Funding.

1. Books:

- “The Only Grant-Writing Book You’ll Ever Need” by Ellen Karsh and Arlen Sue Fox.
- “Winning Grants Step by Step: The Complete Workbook for Planning, Developing, and Writing Successful Proposals” by Tori O’Neal-McElrath.
- “Fundraising for Social Change” by Kim Klein

2. Official Guides:

- Erasmus+ Programme Guide – European Commission <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide>

3. Official Websites:

- EU Funding & Tenders Portal – European Commission <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

4. Online Courses:

- Proposal Writing – Candid Learning <https://learning.candid.org/topics/proposal-writing/>





5. Research Papers:

Hager, M. A. (2003). Is grant proposal writing a fundraising expense. *Nonprofit Quarterly*, 10(1), 24-28.

Gunning, S. K. (2015). Proposal Writers' Role in Creating and Managing Organizational Memory: Adding Value to the Grants Profession Beyond Fundraising. *of the*, 95.

6. Videos:

- Take a Deep Breath | Grant Writing for Small Nonprofits – Birken Law
<https://youtu.be/kQ03w0-3r-g?si=Vh4GQKtgnuyE6k7k>
- The ABC's of Grant Writing "Y" Yield Positive Outcomes – GrantYOUiversity
<https://youtu.be/kG5DjIBKdwY?si=TxX2f5HtEmlvJ7QM>

7. Website Articles:

- How to Write a Grant Proposal [Templates Included] – Venngage
<https://venngage.com/blog/grant-proposal/>
- How to write a grant proposal: a step-by-step guide – PandaDoc Blog
<https://www.pandadoc.com/blog/grant-proposal/>





Resource Directory

This Resource Directory has been developed to support young entrepreneurs, youth workers, and community stakeholders in identifying useful organisations, networks, funding opportunities, and support services related to rural entrepreneurship and sustainable local development.

The directory combines European-level resources with country-specific organisations from the partner countries involved in the YOUth Roots project: Cyprus, Lithuania, and Italy. The resources included cover key areas explored throughout this handbook, such as entrepreneurship, sustainability, business development, community engagement, networking, and funding opportunities.

As opportunities, programmes, and services may evolve over time, users are encouraged to consult the official websites regularly for the most up-to-date information.

European Resources

Entrepreneurship & Business Development

1. Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)

Provides support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), helping entrepreneurs access international markets, find business partners, and develop innovation projects.

Website: <https://een.ec.europa.eu>

2. EU Academy

Offers free online courses on entrepreneurship, digital skills, sustainability, innovation, and other topics relevant to personal and professional development.

Website: <https://academy.europa.eu>

Rural Development & Sustainability

1. European CAP Network

Supports rural development across Europe by sharing good practices, resources, and opportunities related to sustainable agriculture and rural innovation.

Website: <https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu>

2. European Green Deal

Provides information on European policies and initiatives promoting sustainability, environmental protection, and green growth.

Website: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en





Youth & Community Engagement

1. European Youth Portal

Offers information on mobility, volunteering, participation, and funding opportunities for young people across Europe.

Website: <https://youth.europa.eu>

2. Eurodesk

Provides guidance and information on European opportunities for young people, including training, exchanges, volunteering, and funding programmes.

Website: <https://eurodesk.eu>

Funding Opportunities

1. Erasmus+ Programme

Supports projects in education, training, youth, and sport, including initiatives related to entrepreneurship, inclusion, and sustainability.

Website: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu>

2. EU Funding & Tenders Portal

The European Union's official platform for funding programmes and calls for proposals.

Website: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal>

3. European Solidarity Corps

Provides funding and support for solidarity and volunteering initiatives led by young people and organisations.

Website: https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en





Cyprus

Entrepreneurship & Business Development

1. Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF)

The Research and Innovation Foundation is Cyprus's national funding agency for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It supports start-ups, SMEs, and collaborative projects aimed at strengthening the country's innovation ecosystem.

Website: <https://www.research.org.cy>

2. Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI)

The CCCI provides business support services, networking opportunities, market information, and guidance for entrepreneurs and enterprises operating in Cyprus.

Website: <https://www.ccci.org.cy>

Rural Development & Sustainability

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment

Responsible for policies and initiatives related to rural development, sustainable agriculture, environmental protection, and support for rural communities in Cyprus.

Website: <https://www.moa.gov.cy>

Youth & Community Engagement

1. Cyprus Youth Council (ONEK)

The national platform representing youth organisations in Cyprus, promoting youth participation, active citizenship, volunteering, and community engagement.

Website: <https://onek.org.cy>

Funding Opportunities

1. IDEA Innovation Center

A business incubator supporting innovative entrepreneurial ideas through mentoring, training, networking, and access to funding opportunities.

Website: <https://ideacy.net>

2. Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (IDEP)

The national agency responsible for implementing Erasmus+ and other European educational programmes in Cyprus.

Website: <https://idep.org.cy>





Lithuania

Entrepreneurship & Business Development

1. Innovation Agency Lithuania

Innovation Agency Lithuania supports entrepreneurship, innovation, business growth, and internationalisation. It provides advisory services, training opportunities, and support programmes for start-ups and small businesses.

Website: <https://innovationagency.lt>

2. Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (LCCI)

A network supporting entrepreneurs and businesses through networking, business development services, training, and international cooperation opportunities.

Website: <https://www.chambers.lt>

Rural Development & Sustainability

1. Lithuanian Rural Network

Promotes cooperation among rural stakeholders and supports sustainable rural development through knowledge sharing, networking, and dissemination of good practices.

Website: <https://www.kaimotinklas.lt>

2. Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania

Responsible for agricultural and rural development policies, supporting sustainable growth and innovation in rural communities.

Website: <https://zum.lrv.lt>

Youth & Community Engagement

1. Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT)

The largest umbrella organisation representing youth organisations in Lithuania. It promotes youth participation, active citizenship, and community engagement.

Website: <https://lijot.lt>

2. Agency of Youth Affairs

Supports youth development initiatives, participation opportunities, and policies that encourage young people to become active members of society.

Website: <https://jra.lt>





Funding Opportunities

1. Education Exchanges Support Foundation (SMPF)

The Lithuanian National Agency responsible for the implementation of Erasmus+ and other international education programmes.

Website: <https://www.smpf.lt>

2. Invega (National Development Bank)

Provides financial instruments, loans, guarantees, and support measures for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and SMEs.

Website: <https://invega.lt>





Italy

Entrepreneurship & Business Development

1. Invitalia – National Development Agency

Invitalia is Italy's national development agency. It supports the creation, growth, and competitiveness of businesses through incentives, funding schemes, advisory services, and entrepreneurship programmes. It is particularly relevant for young entrepreneurs, start-ups, and innovative business projects.

Website: <https://www.invitalia.it>

2. Unioncamere (Italian Chambers of Commerce Network)

Provides support services, training opportunities, business information, and networking activities for entrepreneurs and SMEs across Italy.

Website: <https://www.unioncamere.gov.it>

Rural Development & Sustainability

1. Rete Rurale Nazionale (National Rural Network)

Supports rural development through knowledge sharing, capacity building, dissemination of good practices, and information on opportunities available for rural communities and entrepreneurs.

Website: <https://www.reterurale.it>

2. Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests (MASAF)

Develops policies and initiatives related to agriculture, rural development, sustainability, and support for local communities.

Website: <https://www.masaf.gov.it>

Youth & Community Engagement

1. Agenzia Italiana per la Gioventù (AIG)

The national agency responsible for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps in Italy. It promotes youth participation, mobility, active citizenship, volunteering, and non-formal education opportunities.

Website: <https://agenziagioventu.gov.it>

2. Consiglio Nazionale dei Giovani (CNG)

The Consiglio Nazionale dei Giovani is the official advisory body representing young people in dialogue with Italian institutions. It promotes youth participation, active citizenship, networking among youth organisations, and the development of policies supporting young people and their initiatives.

Website: <https://consigliozionalegiovani.it>





Funding Opportunities

1. Incentivi.gov.it

The national portal that gathers information on public incentives and funding opportunities available in Italy for entrepreneurs, start-ups, SMEs, and local development initiatives. It allows users to search for financial support programmes based on sector, target group, and type of investment.

Website: <https://www.incentivi.gov.it>

2. OpenCoesione – Funding Opportunities

Provides information on European and national cohesion policy funding opportunities available in Italy, including regional, national, and transnational programmes supporting local development and innovation.

Website: https://opencoesione.gov.it/en/opportunita_2021_2027/

3. Invitalia

Italy's National Development Agency, providing funding programmes, incentives, and support measures for start-ups, youth entrepreneurship, social enterprises, innovation, and business development projects.

Website: <https://www.invitalia.it>





Tools for Feedback and Evaluation

To support trainers in assessing the learning process and evaluating the outcomes of their training activities, a Learning Evaluation Survey has been prepared as a reference tool. The survey is not intended to be completed directly through the link provided here. Instead, trainers are encouraged to copy, replicate, and adapt the survey for their own sessions, so they can collect and review responses from their participants.

The purpose of this survey is to help trainers evaluate the outputs of their activities, gather feedback from learners, and reflect on the achievement of the handbook's learning outcomes.

Scan the QR code to access the Learning Evaluation Survey template:





Concluding Remarks

The YOUth Roots: Nurturing Rural Entrepreneurship Handbook has been developed as a practical learning resource to inspire, guide, and support young people, youth workers, trainers, educators, NGOs, and community stakeholders who are committed to strengthening rural communities through entrepreneurship, sustainability, and active participation. Throughout this handbook, rural entrepreneurship has been presented not only as a pathway for business creation, but also as a powerful tool for community development, social innovation, environmental responsibility, and youth empowerment.

Across the six modules, readers have explored the essential competences needed to transform local challenges into meaningful opportunities. The first module highlighted the importance of an entrepreneurial mindset, encouraging young people to develop creativity, resilience, adaptability, initiative, and problem-solving skills. These qualities are fundamental for recognising opportunities in rural areas and for responding constructively to barriers such as limited resources, access to markets, or infrastructure challenges.

The handbook then placed sustainability at the heart of rural entrepreneurship. Sustainable practices, circular economy approaches, responsible resource management, and community-based environmental action demonstrate that rural businesses can create economic value while protecting natural resources and contributing to social well-being. The examples and case studies presented show that sustainability is not an additional feature of entrepreneurship, but a core principle for long-term resilience and impact.

Business planning and modelling were introduced as essential steps for turning ideas into viable enterprises. By using tools such as the Business Model Canvas, young entrepreneurs and youth workers can better understand their value proposition, customers, resources, activities, partnerships, costs, and revenue streams. This structured approach helps ensure that entrepreneurial ideas are realistic, adaptable, and connected to the needs of the local community.

Marketing, branding, and storytelling were also addressed as key elements for making rural businesses visible and trustworthy. A strong brand identity allows entrepreneurs to communicate their values, share their journey, and build meaningful relationships with customers. In rural contexts, authentic stories rooted in local culture, traditions, heritage, and community impact can help businesses stand out while preserving their unique identity.

The handbook also emphasised the importance of community engagement and networking. Rural enterprises thrive when they are connected to local people, organisations, institutions, and support systems. By identifying community assets, building partnerships, and engaging stakeholders, young entrepreneurs can create initiatives that are not only economically sustainable but also socially rooted and widely supported. Collaboration strengthens resilience and allows communities to grow together.





Finally, the module on grant writing and fundraising introduced practical tools for securing support and transforming ideas into funded projects. Understanding how to design proposals, plan budgets, build partnerships, and communicate impact can help young people and organisations access opportunities that support long-term development. Combined with alternative fundraising methods, these skills contribute to the sustainability of youth-led and community-based initiatives.

The role model videos, digital Miro Toolkit activities, resource directory, and evaluation tools further enrich this handbook by offering practical examples, reflection opportunities, and pathways for continued learning. They encourage users to move beyond reading and actively apply the knowledge gained through workshops, community initiatives, business ideas, and collaborative projects.

As a final reflection, this handbook should be seen as a starting point rather than an end point. Rural entrepreneurship is a continuous learning journey that requires curiosity, cooperation, experimentation, and courage. Every rural community has its own strengths, resources, traditions, and challenges. By recognising these local assets and combining them with entrepreneurial thinking, young people can become active contributors to the future of their communities.

We hope that this handbook will continue to support youth workers and young people in creating initiatives that are locally rooted, sustainable, inclusive, and forward-looking. Its ultimate purpose is to encourage rural youth to believe in their potential, remain connected to their communities, and take practical steps toward building resilient, innovative, and thriving rural areas across Europe and beyond.





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Nurturing Rural Entrepreneurship

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Open Educational Resources

