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# CHANGE THE VILLAGE, CHALLENGE YOURSELF!

A European networking project on youth participation



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Coordinated by  
MIJARC Europe &  
Rural Youth Europe



With the support of  
the European Commission



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Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs (SAYFC)  
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Printing office: Actual Print (Brussels)  
Photos: Titel (© Paha\_L - FOTOLIA), photocase.com, Pixelquelle.de, Isabelle Maras  
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Rural areas offer a lot of opportunities, especially to young people: stable social structures, close links to the decision makers, people who know how to bring ideas into reality and an atmosphere full of creativity. However, many young people are forced to leave their villages because of a lack of job opportunities or limited access to education. This is one fundamental finding of the project „Change the Village - Challenge Yourself!“.

The International Movement of Catholic Agriculture and Rural Youth (MIJARC) will not only focus on these problems and ask the policy makers to change something.

Together with Rural Youth Europe (RYEurope) and youngsters from 29 countries, we have developed visions and ideas to improve, to strengthen our villages and to help youngsters to see themselves living and contributing in rural areas.

The most important thing is to trust young people, to offer them places and resources to work out their own ideas and help them to make these dreams real. Young people need opportunities to take responsibility and to identify themselves with their home villages. They need opportunities to influence their environment and their society.

We as youth movements call for this participation but we also have something to offer: the young people, who gain valuable skills through their participation in our movements who can play important roles in rural areas.

We will build up villages, in which young people can participate now and where they can see themselves living in the future.

*Christian Schaertl, Member of the European Board of MIJARC Europe*

It has been a wonderful experience for Rural Youth Europe to have been involved with MIJARC Europe in this project. What is of paramount importance is that young people stay in their local rural areas and take ownership of these communities.

It is this 'young blood' in rural areas that will drive communities forward and ensure that new generations have a sustainable future !

The findings of the project will be beneficial to everyone who has an interest in young people and in rural areas.

Enjoy reading the booklet and most of all let's put this good work into practice and ensure that our young people have a future in our rural areas!

*Delme Harries, Chairman of Rural Youth Europe*

*Special thanks to Mrs Antje Rothemund, Director of the European Youth Centre of Budapest (Council of Europe).*

## A. INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

The history of the project "Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!" is linked to the [cooperation between its two supporting movements, MIJARC Europe](#) (Mouvement International de la Jeunesse Agricole et Rurale Catholique, International Catholic Movement of Agricultural Rural Youth) and [Rural Youth Europe](#) (RYEurope).

The two European umbrella rural youth movements MIJARC Europe and Rural Youth Europe are well established in rural areas throughout Europe, with approximately 700 000 rural young members throughout Europe.

MIJARC Europe seeks to build a common political position on both a European and global level for a fairer rural world.

RYEurope aims to focus the attention of international and national bodies (both governmental and private), as well as the attention of the general public, on the problems and needs of rural youth.

[The two European youth organisations have as their objectives](#) helping their members make contact with and exchange with young people all over Europe about their ideas, realities and experiences and to educate and train young people, notably by promoting intercultural learning and understanding through international meetings. Above all, both organisations promote the positions of their rural young people to give them a voice with which to speak to the decision makers

at the European Union level and globally by supporting the activities of rural youth organisations and thus creating awareness about the issues of the countryside.

[MIJARC Europe](#) is the [European branch](#) of the International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth. An action-oriented and self-organised movement of young people for young people, MIJARC Europe gathers around 140 000 rural youngsters from fourteen European countries<sup>1</sup> who want to participate in the building of a fairer society on the basis of Christian values.

Using the methodology "See – Judge – Act", MIJARC Europe addresses the following topics: sustainable development, agriculture and food sovereignty, thinking globally and acting locally, alter-globalisation, rural development, social economy and fair trade, gender mainstreaming, youth policy and youth participation.

[Rural Youth Europe](#) is a [European rural youth organisation](#) which has 500 000 members with member organisations in twenty different European countries<sup>2</sup>. Three types of organisations are involved in Rural Youth Europe: rural youth organisations, young farmers' organisations and 4H Clubs.

Rural Youth Europe provides international training possibilities in rural-related issues and works as an [intermediate between national organisa-](#)

1 Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Catalonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Switzerland.

2 The various regions of Europe are represented: British Isles and Malta (Group I), Central Europe (Group II), Scandinavia (Group III) and Eastern Europe (Group IV).

tions and European level youth organisations and institutions, both governmental and private, in order to draw attention to the problems and needs of rural young people.

### Origins of the cooperation

The cooperation between the two rural youth organisations MIJARC Europe and Rural Youth Europe dates back several years.

In October 1997, the two European organisations of rural young people [MIJARC Europe](#) and [ECYF4HC](#) (European Committee for Young Farmers and 4H Clubs, [today Rural Youth Europe](#)) met in the European Youth Centre Budapest. Their purpose was to discuss the situation that young people living in rural areas faced and their prospects, notably in Central and Eastern Europe.

For the first time, rural youth associations and representatives of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe were brought together on this occasion. A round table discussion was organised between these two parties to put forward the concerns of young people from rural areas and to ensure greater co-operation in the future.

As a result, a symposium "Youth Participation in Rural Development" was held at the European Youth Centre (Strasbourg) in March 1998. Its objective was to develop an integrated approach towards rural development and youth policies. This was an important landmark as this seminar represented a culmination of the combined ef-

forts of MIJARC Europe and ECYF4HC. Together with the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe, these organisations reached their goal to put rural youth on the European political agenda.

One of the main outcomes of this event was a Recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. This Recommendation outlines the difficulties and current trends affecting rural youth while recommending concrete steps to remedy the situation (See Appendices for the original text of the 1530 Recommendation).

The [major principles underlying our project](#) are derived from those recommendations, which form the basis of the political reflection on the issue of rural youth in Europe.

It was acknowledged that [young people in rural areas in Europe still encounter many difficulties as a result of urbanisation and rural decline](#).

According to the Assembly's approach, the solution might be to give young people and their representative organisations a greater say in the preparation, at both national and European level, of youth and rural development policies.

As the cornerstone of our cooperation, this text has enabled each of our organisations to keep working in close collaboration with the Youth and Sport Directorate of the Council of Europe. Furthermore, it has paved the way for a common reflection on how to develop this issue in our actions over the intervening years.





The approach adopted by our project is also inspired by the guidelines stated by other European legal documents published before and following the Recommendation 1530 of the Council of Europe. Following the publication of the “[Charter on Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#)” by the Council of Europe in 1992, the [European Commission's White paper](#) entitled “A new impetus for European Youth” (2001) has promoted the implementation of policies to promote all aspects of youth and testifies to a great concern for youth participation<sup>3</sup>.

Indeed, youth policies are of a “crucial importance” to the objectives set by the European Union (EU), both in the field of economic growth and employment, in line with the Lisbon Strategy, and regarding citizenship policies. People aged 15-24 years old represents on average around 13% of population of the 25 EU Member states<sup>4</sup>.

In July 2006 at an event for youth sponsored by the Finnish EU Presidency, Pierre Mairesse commented on the importance of this cohort of young people in the EU: “Maintaining and further developing dialogue with young people on the European agenda has always been a central issue for the (European) Commission and for the Member states”<sup>5</sup>.

3 The Charter was revised in 2003. See: Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, 2003

4 Source: Eurostat Portal, 2005

5 Pierre MAIRESSE (Director of the unit “Youth, sport and relations with the citizen unit” in the DG Education and Culture, European Commission), “Active European Citizenship of young people”, Finnish EU Presidency youth event “Young Active Citizenships”, Hyvinkää, 3 July 2006

Rural youth organisations have always been aware of the specific trends affecting the situation of rural youth in Europe and the means to promote youth participation.

What kinds of living conditions do rural youngsters have to deal with? What are their needs? What are their expectations? What means and opportunities do they have and could they develop in order to feel happy in their villages?

### OUR AIM: working for the future of rural youth

[From these common observations, we, MI-JARC Europe and Rural Youth Europe, decided to take specific action!](#)

By means of a grant for pilot projects on youth participation, we applied and obtained financial support from the European Commission to run a two-year project.

[According to our common principles and expectations for youth and rural areas, we intended to reduce the gap between the discourse and practice concerning rural young people.](#)

The ‘Change the Village – Challenge Yourself!’ project was set up in February 2005 in order to evaluate the current situation of rural youngsters, organise exchanges of experience, assess the expectations of young people, as well as present recommendations to relevant political leaders and adopt suitable strategies to “change the villages”.

The initiative also aims at enhancing a new co-operation between governmental and non-go-

vernmental partners while highlighting the role of rural youth organisations in the empowerment by youth of their rural environment.

Using the 1530 recommendation by the Council of Europe as a guide, our proposed common approach is necessary in order “*to improve the co-ordination of national policies in these fields, so as to avoid incompatibilities and increase the positive impact of the measures recommended*”<sup>6</sup>.

As a consequence, one of the leading objectives of the project is to assess the situation and expectations of European young people regarding participation in order to properly tailor suggestions and activities.

We hope that this qualitative and quantitative research will provide a unique perspective and illustrate the realities that rural youngsters face in different regions in Europe.

This leaflet aims to convey what we have experienced and learnt over the course of the project “Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!”.

The motivation of the young participants has been a powerful incentive to pursue our goal, according to the motto: [SEE, ASSESS, EVALUATE, RECOMMEND and ACT to change your village!](#)

We hope that this report inspires you to get involved to move the rural youth forward!

6 Recommendation 1530 (2001) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

## B. OUR METHODOLOGY

As the project focuses on rural young people, we must first define what we mean by the term “rural areas” and describe their characteristics.

First of all, we intended to address youth issues in rural areas: but what does this really mean?

### [How do we define rural areas?](#)

The European rural space is plural because several definitions of „rural areas“ and the „rural world“ exist.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) definition indicates that „If 50% of the population of a region live in rural communities, this region is defined as a rural area. Communities with a population less than 100 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> are defined as rural communities.”<sup>7</sup>

Rural areas cover 90% of the EU's territory and include approximately 50% of its population<sup>8</sup>.

If the most distinctive feature for rural areas is a lower population density, the notion of rural itself has diverse facets pertaining to the kind of social network and social life existing in the village, the sense of proximity to other inhabitants, the lack of access to basic services (employment, education and cultural opportunities, leisure activities, health, etc.).

7 See OECD, Creating rural indicators for shaping territorial policies, Paris, 1994

8 Rural Foundation of Wallonia (Fondation rurale de Wallonie, Belgium), Rural Europe (L'Europe rurale), February 2006



As a consequence, it is not easy to develop an appropriate and common understanding of rural areas, as any attempt to define the term rural must integrate subjective elements.

Despite some discrepancies, we think that there are common characteristics encountered by all rural young people in Europe. However, some situations, which may appear similar, in fact may be very different for different young people.

### Changes in rural areas

Since the 1960s, major economic, social and natural changes such as the urbanisation, intensive agriculture, pollution, the subsequent rural decline and ageing of the population, as well as the increasing impact of globalisation and the explosion of the services sector have deeply transformed European rural areas and influenced their development.

It is generally acknowledged that many rural areas remain structurally and economically weak. Some discrepancies can be observed however: rural areas located at the fringes of urban areas are expanding and may benefit from employment opportunities, infrastructure developments and leisure opportunities.

The decreasing share of agriculture in overall employment: Around 90% of rural households throughout the European Union do not earn their living from farming<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> In the 1960s, around 30% of the rural active population were farmers. Source: Rural Foundation of Wallonia (Belgium), op.cit. It should be noted that in 1997, there were approximately 7.4 million people working in the agricultural sector in the EU (agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing). Source: European Commission, BARTHELEMY, Pierre Antoine, Changes in agricultural employment, Eurostat, 1997

The recent enlargement in May 2004 of the European Union has had a significant impact on the future European rural landscape: the ten new Member States added 106 million people<sup>10</sup> to the population of the EU. Many of these new Member States had economies largely based on agriculture, which increased the rural area of the EU significantly<sup>11</sup>.

Furthermore, rural young people from the Baltic states and Eastern and Central European countries have gone through social, political and economic changes which are distinct from the experience of Western youngsters.

As a consequence, the share of the rural population in the European Union in 2005 is 22%, which totals approximately 102 million rural people<sup>12</sup>. On the basis of previous figures (see p.6), there are approximately 13 million rural youngsters between the ages of 15-24 years old.

Rural youngsters are confronted with the "two worlds" of rural and urban environments: this mix implies contradictions and multiple fears to overcome but also a great wealth and a greater awareness about rural youngsters' own identities.

<sup>10</sup> In 2005, the European Union's population which included 25 Member states was over 463 million people. Source: Eurostat, [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-NK-06-016/EN/KS-NK-06-N16-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NK-06-016/EN/KS-NK-06-N16-EN.PDF), 2006

<sup>11</sup> The surface area of the EU devoted to agriculture increased by 44% and by 9 million people active in rural areas. The integration of these new Member States will double the rural active population. Source: Rural Foundation of Wallonia, op.cit.

<sup>12</sup> Source: INSEE (French National Institute of Statistics), Population, density and part of urban population in the major countries in the world, Paris, 2006

### What makes rural youth different?

Rural youth needs special consideration.

Because of the broad scope of membership within rural youth organisations and the wide range of ages covered by the term "rural youth", the project has included young people from 13 to 30 years old. We use this term to cover a given period of life corresponding to the period of involvement of most rural youngsters in our organisations: our aim was to give a general and relevant picture of their situation<sup>13</sup>.

Firstly the "village social system" is very complex, as it includes various interdependencies, shortcomings, positive and negative aspects.

While the sense of community is generally widespread in rural areas, and quality of life is generally considered to be good, social pressures are more intense in a small community than elsewhere. It is thus sometimes difficult for young people to articulate their ideas and needs. However, if young people start to develop a project for the benefit of their community – whether on environmental protection, on creating awareness for the needs of local rural economy etc. – such an initiative constitutes a powerful lever enhancing rural youth participation.

Another important element is that participation of rural youth results from the collaboration with other local partners, such as the local authorities, other associations, religious organisations (the Church still has an important impact on local life in

<sup>13</sup> Council of Europe, CHISHOLM, Lynne, KOVACHEVA, Siyka, Exploring the European youth mosaic – The social situation of young people in Europe, October 2002, p.19-20

villages) etc., this collaboration results in recognition of the participation by young people.

The existence of a project for the benefit of the whole community and the involvement of other organisations provide a concrete way to become involved in the community.

### General methodology and anticipated outcomes

MIJARC Europe and Rural Youth Europe wanted to analyse the environment, the life, the needs and the situation of the participation of youngsters in society and politics across Europe.

Conscious of the sometimes pigeon-hole descrip-



tions or limited focus of reports published at national or European level on the topic, we felt that a broader study with a comparative basis focusing on rural youth in Europe was needed to ascertain the major trends of in rural youth participation which is constantly changing.



The study aimed to reach youngsters even beyond the European Union's boundaries. A special emphasis was put on research in Eastern and Central European countries since numerous developments have recently occurred in these countries (notably the enlargement of the EU).

Thus, the project included the following themes:

### Rural youth and their environment

The Identification of youths within their region

The role of agriculture

The social system of the 'village'

### Needs of rural youth

Formal and non-formal education

Employment

Leisure opportunities

Values and general needs

### Youth work in rural areas

Activities on a local level

The role of youth organisations, schools

and other associations

New methods/approaches in rural youth work?

A specific youth policy for rural areas?

### Youth participation in society and politics

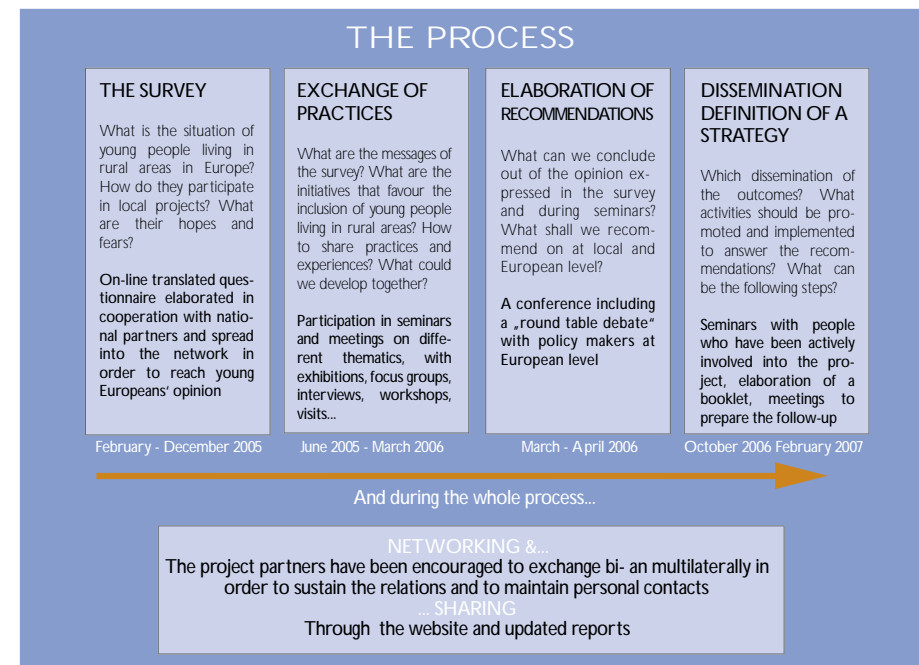
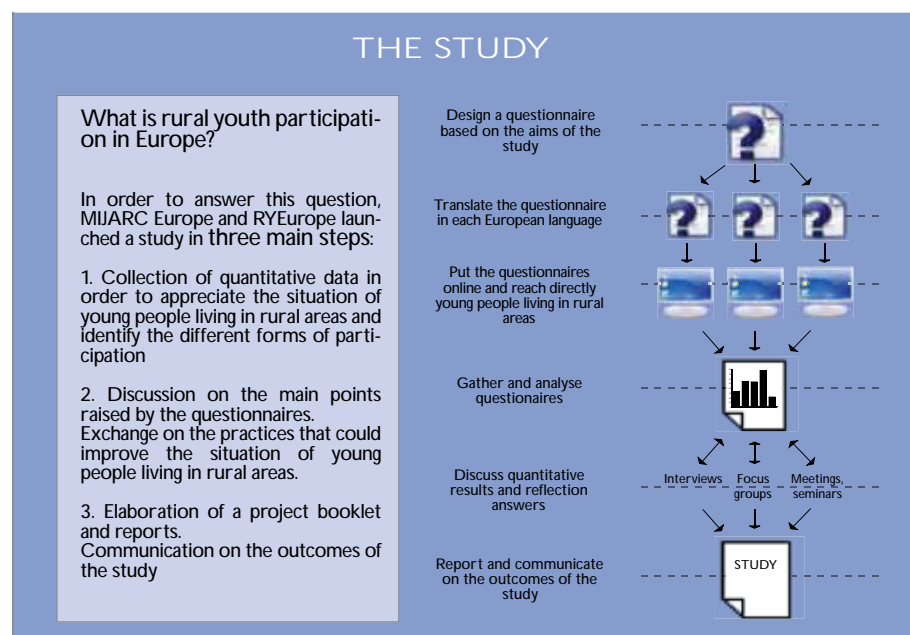
Options to express oneself in rural areas

Are the existing options for participation an appropriate answer to the expectations of rural youth?

The role of politics and how young people experience politics

### Analysis of the outcomes of the study

An online survey was first made available on the



project website ([www.change-the-village.org](http://www.change-the-village.org)) and in written versions from February 2005 to February 2006 through the member organisations.

Several rounds of interviews were also made with youngsters from different countries and backgrounds living in rural areas in two phases (summer-autumn 2005; spring-summer 2006).

Different youth events and meetings were held, including European seminars which brought together young rural people with the goal of making them aware of themes related to rural issues:

A notable example of a youth event is the Double Study session held in March 2006 in the European Youth Centre of Budapest (Council of Europe) which focused on rural youth participation and rural development.

MIJARC Europe and Rural Youth Europe or-

ganised summer seminars held in Bourges and Austria (summer 2005), RYEurope European coordinated a rally (summer 2006) as well as an Autumn seminar (autumn 2006).

In the aftermath of the Double Study Session, a it was decided to begin collecting good practices from across Europe to include in the project booklet.

Published in January 2007, this booklet outlines the project's achievements and includes a compilation of best practices.

### Highlights

The seminars were significant events and ensured communication between organisers and participants, as well as shaping messages for decision makers.





In particular, the [talk show debate](#) during the [Double Study Session](#) (March-April 2006, European Youth Centre, Budapest) brought together seventy rural youth participants and a large panel of political leaders and experts who debated with the young audience on the two following questions:

- “How to stop the brain drain in rural areas?”
- “How can rural young people best participate in decision-making processes?”

### Online survey on rural youth participation

The questionnaire<sup>14</sup> was part of this study and its results will be used to convey useful information and recommendations to decision makers and organisations. The questionnaire was completed by European youth between the ages of 13 and 30 years old, who live (or come from) rural areas.

In answering the questions, rural youngsters were given an important opportunity to be heard at both national and European level and to have their needs and hopes addressed. The outcomes will greatly contribute to changing the village!

The profile and main characteristics of the rural participants involved were drawn from the survey's results.

[1491 answers](#) were recorded from 27 different countries throughout Europe<sup>15</sup>.

The answers have been ordered according to [five geographical areas](#):

#### 1. Anglo-Saxon countries

Great-Britain, Ireland, Iceland;

#### 2. Central Europe

Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands;

#### 3. Eastern European countries

Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (Baltic countries), Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Albania, Belarus, Yugoslavia;

#### 4. Northern European countries

Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark;

#### 5. Southern European countries

Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece.

The major share of the youngsters who responded to the survey were under 25 years old (72% of the participants)<sup>16</sup>.

The majority - 65% - of the respondents were women<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Six countries had the highest levels of participation: Germany (24,68 %); United-Kingdom (18,78%); France (17,37%) ; Finland (15%); and both Denmark and Latvia with 5,77 % of the answers. Unfortunately, the number of respondents included in the survey was too small in some countries to allow for comparisons at the national level.

<sup>16</sup> See related graph appendices.

<sup>17</sup> Concerning gender sharing in the answers to the survey, see graph in appendices.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendices for the of the original questionnaire (English version)S.

Around 30% of the participants lived in [rural areas counting](#) between 500 and 2500 people (about one third of the answers); another 30% of respondents lived in communities with populations over 5000<sup>18</sup>.

According to the results obtained, the participants in the survey – who were mostly members of the rural youth organisations involved in the project – were students or young professionals<sup>19</sup>.

As to be expected, the largest number of respondents (48%) were from the ‘student’ category. Following students in popularity at 30% were respondents who identified themselves as ‘employees’ (productive and services sector). 10% of respondents selected the option ‘others’ and 3% of respondents identified themselves as [not-employed](#)<sup>20</sup>. Finally, 6% of respondents identified themselves as [farmers](#).

This booklet on “Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!” is an overview of the project's outcomes. It aims to provide information about current needs and expectations of the European rural youth while highlighting where rural youth organisations, decision makers and youngsters themselves can efficiently intervene.

<sup>18</sup> One third of the participants lived in villages with populations under 500 : see graph in appendices.

<sup>19</sup> See appendices for graph on professional activity and a further focus on geographical and gender data.

<sup>20</sup> The category of “Others” can relate to several situations or status ranging from pupils, public service-related jobs, children or elderly people care, people helping at farming, young graduates looking for a job or taking a professional training.



This booklet represents the views of both [MIJARC Europe](#) and [Rural Youth Europe](#) and conveys the opinions and testimonies gathered from the young people who participated in the project's seminars and interviews<sup>21</sup>.

Therefore the booklet first reviews our methodology. The first chapter focuses on participation in rural areas in a broad sense, and notably defines keys notions and provides important data concerning our target group of rural youth. The second chapter is devoted to the topic of education. Chapter three addresses employment issues; chapter four examines the theme of leisure time. Finally, chapter five outlines the main findings as well as future perspectives and the follow up of the project.

The Annexes deserve particular attention, since they include the text of the Recommendation 1530 and several graphs describing the data from the survey.

<sup>21</sup> However, participation in this project was not limited to members of the organisations mentioned above: “Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!” set up links with other European and national associations involved in rural matters.



While resources of all kinds are increasingly becoming concentrated in urban areas, it appears that everyone cannot participate on an equal footing and that young people living in rural areas are disadvantaged and continue to face specific problems. Participation in society needs to be enhanced in general, however in both urban and rural areas. Therefore education, mobility, but also exchanges and inclusion all contribute to enhancing youth participation.

But what do we mean by participation?

There are four main 'tools' which are the preconditions for participation in decision-making in a democratic society:  
Motivation; Resources and Structures; Access; Ability and Knowledge.

As all of these important concepts refer to needs – not restricted to youth - that arise through interaction with other people within the social space, state structures must strive to integrate all of them. This model can therefore be replicated at local level.

However, if these elements contribute to a better understanding, they do not constitute a complete and appropriate definition of what is 'participation'.

The concept of participation has been addressed at European level, and is part of the basic principles of a new approach to public action within the European Union<sup>22</sup>.

22 The five basic principles of this new approach are openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.

According to the European Commission's White Paper "A new impetus for European Youth" adopted following a broad consultation process, one of the four strategic priorities is "to promote new forms of European governance"<sup>23</sup>. The official publications of the European Union on this topic have helped to raise awareness about the need for to help rural young people to become „empowered“.

White paper on Youth  
(A new impetus for European youth)  
*"The young people who were consulted see themselves as responsible citizens. (...) This will to participate must be given room for expression at various levels, from local to international (...). Moreover, this involvement cannot be limited to a single consultation and certainly not to opinion polls. It has to include young people in the decision-making process.  
Participation must be encouraged, without exception, which means making it easier for those who have the greatest difficulties and providing greater access to existing structures for young people who are not members of organisations."*

Participation is a process to "ensure young people are consulted and more involved in the decisions which concern them and, in general, the life of their communities"<sup>24</sup>.

23 The term 'governance' refers to all the rules, mechanisms and practices which affect the way the various powers are deployed, as well as opening up the EU decision-making process to enable the people of Europe to be involved in the decisions which concern them. Source: White Paper on Youth, A new impetus for European youth, p.7  
24 Ibid, p.7-8

Understanding young people living in rural areas

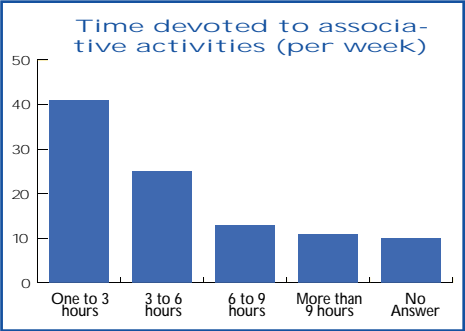
Country life in general is rarely lives up to the popular idyllic image, particularly for young people. Rural young people may face geographic and socio-economic disadvantages: most of them lack access to transport, education, leisure facilities, health care, careers and the many benefits of a multicultural society.  
In addition, they feel often isolated from other people of the same age and can suffer from social pressures, for instance because of their sexual preference.  
Young people in rural areas live in a specific social system which does not facilitate recognition for their work and the development of participation-based projects. For rural young people, the European dimension of these initiatives is difficult to grasp.

Participation means to make our voice and ideas heard by acting within our environment. This explains why we used the sentence "Change the village!" as a motto and title for our project.  
We want to move things and positively change our environment!

After assessing the profile of the participants in the survey the outcomes related to the concept of participation will be considered, and special attention drawn to the means of participation that the young participants would like to see promoted in rural areas.

Participation of rural young people in organisations

More than 40% of the participants in the survey spend from 1 to 3 hours a week in activities linked to an organisation, while around 25% of the respondents devote 3 to 6 hours to these activities. A commitment of six hours/week appears to be a "turning point" for commitment in general: beyond this time commitment, the youngsters devote themselves to a given activity. 15% of the participants in the survey devote considerable time - from 6 to 9 hours a week - to their activities.



The participants in the seminars commented on the results of the survey and pointed out significant discrepancies in the answers, which can mostly be linked to national origin and to the level of responsibility taken on by the youngsters within their organisation.  
Young people felt that being involved in youth organisations was valuable and stimulating.



## Why do young rural people belong to a club or an organisation?

Respondents listed three main reasons for joining organisations: the desire to learn new things (33%), to meet people (30%) and to be useful (more than 10%).

These responses are evenly distributed across all the geographical areas included in the survey. This testifies to a will to socialize, to gain new knowledge and to the open-mindedness about the "Other" in general.

*'The key word for participation is "idea": Participation is an area where young people are able to identify their problems and find solutions. Briefly said, that means having new ideas for a better life'.*

Aline F., MRJC (Mouvement Rural de la Jeunesse Chrétienne), France



## Measures to foster the participation

Which of the following measures should be taken to make it easier for young people to participate in society?	% of people
Carry out specific information campaigns for young people	15
Set up more clubs/associations for young people	16.2
Increase transport opportunities for young people	15.7
Reduce voting age	2.5
Introduce (or develop) in schools an educational programme about citizenship	11.6
Consult young people before any public decision is taken which directly concerns them	18.2
Set up (or develop) programmes to encourage voluntary work	16.2
Other	1.3
None of these	0.8
No opinion	2.5

The need for increased consultation of young people before any public decision is taken, to set up more clubs/associations for them, to carry out specific information campaigns for young people (15%) and to benefit from programmes encouraging voluntary work were specifically emphasised.

## Major problems and needs

### Self motivation

Youngsters should be motivated to achieve something positive in their community;

### Involvement

This notion relates to the will to get involved in leisure activities instead of "staying at home", according to comments from some youngsters;

### Information

Young people should be better informed about the range of opportunities from which they can benefit;

### Cooperation and lobbying

Youngsters need to make their voice heard at all levels, with different actors within society, and notably by decisions makers, to communicate about their own sustainable projects;

### Organisations

Rural and other Non Governmental Organisations (NGO ) can play an important role as regards participation;

### Responsibility

Young people have to become aware that they can organise constructive initiatives, just like many of their parents and actors in civil society;

### Professional experience

Young people need to gain adequate skills and knowledge in order to better master the methods of participation.

## Recommendations

### a) What can rural organisations do?

Rural youth organisations play a crucial role of 'awareness raising' in the promotion of participation among young people.

One could therefore argue that recognising youth organisations which have considerable experience representing young people as the voice of young people is a way to ensure their opinion and propositions are heard.

As a consequence, young people living in rural settings should be fully aware of the opportunities offered by rural organisations.

For instance, participation could be improved by setting up many more rural youth clubs. Youth organisations should fight to obtain more facilities within rural areas; they should also organise open evenings focused on activities, in order to support the youngsters' involvement in their community.

In order to enhance participation in rural areas, rural youth organisations should ensure a proper balance between formal and non-formal education. For example, young people should be better informed by those organisations about the wide-range of possibilities which are offered to them in general. Rural youth organisations should open information and education centres in order to improve the management skills of group leaders.



Furthermore, young participants suggested that the youth organisations develop schooling and education systems in order to deepen their knowledge of all facets of citizenship. Clearly, political will and practical support are required to make these changes.

Martin G., from Austrian Rural Youth, talked about the fact that rural youth organisations were a place where youngsters were learning to be active citizens:

*"It creates a community life where you can get to know each other better by doing things together. It helped me, like all youngsters involved in such activities, to take on more and more responsibility. It is known that many politicians were first been involved in Landjugends activities. It's a great first step to becoming involved in community life".*

#### b) What can we expect from political leaders?

Most of the time, youngsters are just not being heard, even when political debate is focused on an issue relevant to youth or on local issues.

Political leaders should fully support rural youth activities as a whole and encourage voluntary work in the rural youth field.

In order to facilitate the participation of young people in society and at all levels of political action, it is important that they can more actively take part in the decisions, not only be asked or be consulted but also to raise new questions and

to make decisions themselves.

In particular, the participants felt that it was most important for them to be consulted on all issues before any decision is taken. For example, in France, initiatives favouring youth participation can be promoted through a system of youth councils operating at three political levels (regional, departmental and local or town levels) where youngsters are consulted but also fully involved in political bodies.

If rural young people meet with decision makers with information about their material and financial needs in order to set up activities, decision makers should give them significant attention and grant them financial support to help them host various youth activities within villages and rural areas.

It goes without saying that infrastructure problems also have social implications. In that respect, a better public transport system in rural areas would greatly facilitate rural young people's daily life and their participation. Indeed, rural young people often have to travel to other villages for their work with organisations (often located in other places or towns) and use much of their leisure time due to transport constraints. These infrastructure problems in fact widen the social gap between youngsters whose parents have a car and sufficient time to drive them and other young people with less financial means and support.

#### c) What can young people do?

In order to increase the coherence of the youth organisations and in particular, at a political level, rural youngsters should also engage in lobbying actions at local, regional, and national levels in order to secure broad support, and useful funding. They should also encourage volunteers to assist with youth work, and give them greater recognition for their involvement: this is the first step towards broader social recognition.

Furthermore, young rural people should encourage their friends and relatives to join their actions and activities, in order to contribute to breaking the "isolation circle" experienced by certain youngsters in the countryside.

Furthermore, the so-called "brain drain" also impacts the levels of participation, as well as education, employment and leisure time.

Most young participants in the project activities observe that the brain drain is a major problem affecting rural areas in many European countries. Indeed, it cannot be denied that a significant share of the rural young people are or will be leaving the countryside, at least for a given period.

But how to describe the brain drain phenomenon?

The brain drain can be defined as "the departure of educated or professional people from one country, economic sector, or field for another usually for

better pay or living conditions"<sup>25</sup>.

It is important to analyse in depth the reasons given by the youngsters which could lead them to leave their villages.

Responding to the question about whether they "will to leave the countryside", approximately 50% of the participants could imagine leaving their rural area, while around 28% could not (approximately 20% did not answer the question).

The main reasons mentioned are: education (25% - for instance leaving for a few years before coming back to the countryside); the desire to spend one's life in a place with more job opportunities (around 24%); the desire to travel



<sup>25</sup> See Encyclopaedia Britannica: <http://www.britannica.com/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=brain%20drain&q=brain%20drain>. The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), an dependent institution of the United Nations, defines the brain drain phenomena as: "An abnormal form of scientific exchange between countries characterised by a one-way flow in favour of the most highly developed countries".



(around 23% - for a period of time ranging from a few months to a year); the desire to live abroad for a few years (working or studying) (20% of the participants).

Finally, around 8% of the participants indicated they would like to spend their life in a place presenting more leisure opportunities.

Most participants indicated they would move from rural areas to towns for education and employment reasons.



Furthermore, some youngsters mentioned that many of their friends and schoolmates were able to build their social and personal life in towns.

It should also be noted that one important element explaining why youngsters do not appreciate rural life, and agriculture-related activities in particular, relates to a great extent to a problem of image: living in the countryside appears as "not fashionable".

As a consequence, the 'brain drain' trend may affect rural clubs' membership at given periods due to lower membership numbers.

In the two rounds of interviews, [similar realities](#) were pointed out by the young interviewees, who drew a link between the brain drain phenomena's characteristics and the notion of social cohesion.

Similarly, participants strongly criticised the "dormitory" effect: urban people who settle in rural areas while commuting every day to towns for their professional activity and for most aspects of their social life.

Participants regret that no concrete strategy exists in order to include rural areas into a dynamic society and no investment has been made to improve social life in villages (such as libraries, places to dance, social clubs, etc.)

Furthermore, many young people feel that farmers are less and less recognised and valued.

Participants also stressed several "negative aspects" of community life: social pressure that limits experimentation and innovative experiences and the focus on a traditional way of life, which sometimes leads to a reluctance to accept modernity. In addition, rural people can often feel isolated in rural areas, according to the youngsters.

[The 'brain drain' constitutes is an issue that cuts across all the major topics we will address in the following chapters.](#)

However, youth organisations have developed a number of good practices to promote local initiatives to enable young people to stay in their villages and contribute to local development.



The process of developing a project, setting out objectives and achieving these objectives is valuable for young people.

For most local groups, the facilities operated by rural youth organisations are the only spaces where young people can decide for themselves what they want to achieve; young people are thus empowered. Furthermore, the partnership with other organisations and local authorities is crucial in the setting up of any initiative.

So, by convincing all actors and citizens that a youth activity is necessary, young people can make a real difference in our villages!

Other projects with an international scope have mobilised rural youngsters:

*"In that moment, we are trying to improve agriculture in poorer countries. We are working on a charity project in North Africa: it is called the Zomba Action Project, and many organisations in Northern Ireland and in our area in particular are supporting the charity.*

*We are raising money through selling fireside quiz sheets, and the sum raised will be going towards buying farm animals and putting into operation irrigation systems for the land".*

Leanne M., Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster, Northern Ireland

## BEST PRACTICE: NEU LAND PROJECT - HIER WIRD GEBAUT ...

GERMANY

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION: National.

CURRENT STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION: Implemented from 2001 to 2005.

PLACE/COUNTRY: Germany.

### AIM / OBJECTIVES

On the basis of a theoretical debate held within the organisation Katholische Landjugendbewegung Deutschlands (KLJB), the project objective was to set up an action-oriented campaign to enable youngsters to shape their villages.

According to the motto "We are actors of a sustainable rural development", youngsters had the opportunity to translate their vision of rural areas into actions by shaping and setting up sustainable activities on a piece of land. Following this process, the best projects were then rewarded.

The objectives of the "Neu Land project" were to offer training opportunities on sustainable development, to develop the youngsters' future perspectives about their rural area, to motivate them to cooperate and get involved in the shaping of their villages, to become aware of other foreign rural areas with other cultures and to work in close cooperation with partners (local churches and groups).



## CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

Young people who live in rural areas are confronted with radically different realities from those that their parents experienced in the past. Cultural features, values and ways of living usually vary between regions in Europe. The growing mobility, the plurality of possible employment opportunities and broader economic opportunities extend the variety of options when a youngster shapes his or her own life. The question of "leaving or staying" is becoming particularly acute. Experience shows that when appropriate support is missing, the involvement of young people can result in limited concrete achievements. Thus, a real shift in the approach towards rural areas and youngsters is required to achieve a major change in our society!

## STEPS OF THE PROJECT

Design of the projects for each piece of land / Work in cooperation in local groups/ Achievement/ Documentation by each group (photos,

reports and press articles). The initiatives and local actions were related to the main activities led by the KLJB local groups.

## OUTCOMES

The project was very successful: more than 130 groups participated (original aim: 50) and set up garden, fields, corn labyrinths, meeting places, etc..

The results went well beyond the objectives and the feedback from local groups was very positive.

Youngsters became conscious of the need for local and national support from partners, political leaders (notably by providing a piece of land for each group).

## PARTNERS

Dioceses and bishoprics, political leaders.

## PEOPLE INVOLVED

Young members of KLJB local groups, KLJB representatives.

## CONTACT

Organisation: KATHOLISCHE LANDJUGENDBEWEGUNG DEUTSCHLANDS (KLJB) e.V.

Address: Drachenfelsstrasse 23  
D-53604 Bad Honnef - Rhöndorf

Email: bundesstelle@kljb.org



An example of social inclusion from Northern Europe ...

## GAY ON THE COUNTRYSIDE NORWAY

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION: National.  
Current state: Finished in December 2003.

## AIM / OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this project was to make it easier to be homosexual in the countryside in Norway. The Norwegian Rural Youth Organisation initiated the project, and we wanted to reach the organisation's members, their family and friends. The name of the project needs some explanation: "Gay in the countryside" in Norwegian almost sounds like the title of a children's song; "having fun in the countryside".

## CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

Initiating a project about homosexuality was not easy, because the countryside is more conservative than the bigger cities, and not all places welcomed homosexual life styles. By convincing the recognised leaders in the organisation's regions of the value of the project, we managed to reach many members.

## STEPS OF THE PROJECT

The project started July 2002 and ended in December 2003. We used the existing arenas for implementing the project, such as meetings, rallies, membership, letters etc. Representatives from our local clubs visited school classes. We had a theatre travelling to many of our regions and performing a



play about homosexuality.

All the time we had contact with media, and most of the feedback on the project was positive.

## OUTCOMES

Though they are difficult to measure, we believe that this project has had an impact on how our members feel about homosexuality. We do not hear jokes about homosexuality that often, and our feeling is that it is more acceptable to be gay within our organisation.

## PARTNERS

We cooperated with a public relations company in this project, which was financed by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs in Norway.

## PEOPLE INVOLVED

President of the Norwegian Rural Youth Organisation (NBU) at the time: Kristin SØYLAND.  
Project manager: information consultant Tone SIMONNES.

## CONTACT PERSON

Name: Guro BJØRNSTAD, Secretary general  
Address: NBU PB 9377 Grønland  
0135 Oslo, Norway  
Email: general@bygdeungdom.no  
Organisation: NORWEGIAN RURAL YOUTH ORGANISATION (NBU) (Norges Bygdeungdomslag)

## Chapter 2 REVITALIZING RURAL AREAS WITH FORMAL & NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

In the previous chapter, we have seen the role that the rural youth organisations play in both formal and non-formal education.

But how can we better define the concepts of formal and non-formal education?

Formal learning “*takes place in education and training institutions and leads to recognised diplomas and qualifications*”<sup>26</sup>, whereas non-formal learning can be defined as a “*structured process that gives young people the possibility to develop their values, skills and abilities other than the ones developed under the framework of formal education*”<sup>27</sup>.

These abilities can include social skills such as know-how in different fields, sense of social behaviour, critical thinking and an open attitude towards learning as well as leadership and organisational skills, conflict management, practical problem-solving skills, team work, a sense of initiative, self-confidence, discipline and responsibility<sup>28</sup>.

Within the European Union, the emphasis had been primarily on formal education, notably at political level and through the education systems. There is now a great diversity of learning places; every day life demands many abilities which

26 European Commission, A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, November 2000, p.8

27 According to the European Youth Forum's definition. In MADSEN, Peter Torp, “Reforming the concept of education through the recognition of non-formal education”, Coyote, No. 11, May 2006, (partnership “Training-Youth” Council of Europe & European Commission), pp.23-25.

28 Most skills described pertain to the European Youth Forum's definition.

can be acquired in different environments and through activities.

It is widely acknowledged that the basic objectives of a learning process include active citizenship, personal development and social inclusion, as well as employment-related aspects<sup>29</sup>. In the perspective of lifelong learning, a complementarity between formal, non-formal and informal education seems necessary<sup>30</sup>.

The notion of lifelong learning refers to “*all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and abilities within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective*”.

European Commission, Communication: ‘*Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*’, November 2001<sup>31</sup>

### Major problems and needs

In the field of **non-formal education**, the major needs can fall under **three main themes**.

### The recognition of non-formal education

According to the youngsters, non-formal educational activities, in particular those linked to youth issues, should be as widely recognised as formal education.

29 European Commission, Communication „Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality”, November 2001, p.3

30 European Commission, A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, op.cit., p.9

31 European Commission, Communication « Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality », op.cit., p.9

### The lack of meeting places for non-formal education

In the villages, young people usually lack meeting places where they can meet and organise their activities as well as an easy access to them (due to time restrictions and rooms allocated to other associations for example).

Young people spoke about the lack of basic equipment and access to Internet, such as libraries, and access to new consumer technologies. Since young people find it difficult to travel to places where educational or leisure activities take place, transport-related problems can constitute an important barrier for them.

In that respect, financial support is crucial, as financial resources are important to ensure that activities can take place, but organisation of transportation is also very important, particularly at local level.

### The lack of leaders

Young people seem to lack motivated and committed youth leaders, willing to take on the responsibility of organising activities for youngsters in rural areas. Indeed, many leaders do not have enough as they are busy with school, their studies or their professional activities and would consequently need time “off” to take part in training sessions for young leaders, etc.

General information about how to apply for grants should be extended at all levels **and into the field of non-formal education**, according to the participating youngsters. This is necessary to raise awareness among youngsters and to pro-

vide the necessary knowledge to deal with the technical and bureaucratic aspects of an application.

In the field of **formal education**, **three main needs** emerge:

### School-related difficulties

The class sizes is as well an important issue, on which participating young people had contrasting views. In rural areas, it is common for different levels to share the same class. It is also possible that the same pupils stay five years with the same teacher. For some young participants, it is essential that pupils have the opportunity to experience different learning methods during their school years. For people holding these views, staying in the same class with the same teacher would not allow for a ‘good education’. On the contrary, some surveys led in different EU countries showed that the “single-classroom” teaching stimulates the development of cooperation between pupils and enables their teachers to experience new educational methods. Learning in such a classroom can contribute to create a cheerful and supportive atmosphere, and young people usually enjoy being mixed with pupils of different ages and levels.

Another essential issue is at stake: how to take into account the ‘rural’ environment, learn about it and put this knowledge into practice? In that respect, schools could be more active in getting rural youth more involved in their local environment.





The need for appropriate opening hours of schools, high school libraries and the Internet access in classrooms for example, was mentioned as an issue for young people and also for the local population.

This can be linked to the “brain drain” phenomena: How can well-educated teachers be encouraged to come back to rural areas after completing their education in bigger towns?

#### Access to university education

First, young people living in rural areas need broader and facilitated access to higher education opportunities and knowledge provided by universities. Subsequently, young people require support and practical advice about settlement in rural settings when they return home, after graduating.

**Career counselling:** young people need more information and expertise provided by people working in different vocational fields.

*“Non formal education is a great way to educate people differently. It's a global approach to education: we don't only deal with people's knowledge but also with emotions and skills. (...) It's good to pass the baton from a generation to a new generation. The responsibility is shared in a progressive way.”*

Mikala Hoj L., Youth leader in 4H Clubs, Denmark

#### Recommendations

a) **Rural youth organisations have a major role to play in formal and non-formal education:**

**Non-formal education** - Closer cooperation and joint lobbying should be developed between youth organisations regarding information sharing but also the lack of meeting places for non-formal education activities. Furthermore, special training sessions on fundraising (e.g. types of grants and sponsors) could be organised.

In order to maintain the leaders' involvement in the long run, training opportunities for youth leaders should be organised and financially supported.

Furthermore, a ‘Handbook for young leaders’ would be of the utmost importance in order to enable rural young people to gain basic knowledge about their respective duties within their organisation. For instance, the handbook should adopt a practical approach to the functions of association boards, describing the roles of various positions: the chair, the treasurers, the public relations responsibilities, etc.

More public campaigns raising awareness of rural young people should be promoted by rural youth organisations on the recognition of non-formal education to promote a positive image of non-formal education and importance to young people.

**Formal education** - Youth organisations should provide help or assistance for rural young people in a **learning situation** as a whole, according to the youngsters participating in the project. Spe-

cial attention should be paid to living conditions and the loneliness of rural youngsters who have migrated to towns for their studies, as well as for those who intend to move back to their home areas.

In order to increase the recognition of non-formal education, national governments and institutions should work towards a greater involvement of rural young people and consult the organisations active in this field as partners that cannot be ignored, when policy-making processes regarding youth-related policies, but also all issues of concern for youth are debated (such as employment, social issues, etc.).

Furthermore, political leaders could provide a forum where policies should be discussed by all citizens and implemented where appropriate.

b) **Decision-makers are also fundamental actors in the field of education:**

**Non-formal education** - Political leaders should address the lack of meeting rooms for rural young people.

The participants emphasised that youth initiatives and meetings should be supported by the national governments, but also local councils, businesses and sponsors.

Political authorities should provide rural young people and rural organisations with proper financial and material means on a multi-annual basis to reach their objectives.

Youth networks should be financed at European

and national levels. In particular, administrative grants should be allocated by political leaders for the management of NGOs and the setting up of projects.

Local authorities should ensure longer opening times for schools and extend the use of community buildings and facilities to NGOs, notably rural youth organisations.

In order to resolve the problem of a lack of leaders, a credit system should be promoted and set up in order to promote voluntary work.

For instance, more periods of time off (in school programmes) should be dedicated for youth activities led by youngsters. In that regard, a “credits” system at university or in schools could reward the involvement of youngsters in the life of their communities.

In order to increase the recognition of non-formal education, national governments and institutions should act towards a greater involvement of rural young people and consult the organisations active in this field as partners that cannot be ignored, when policy-making processes regarding youth-related policies, but also all issues of concern for youth are debated (such as employment, social issues, etc.).

Furthermore, political leaders could provide a forum where policies should be discussed by all citizens and implemented where appropriate.

**Formal education**, In order to improve the education provided in schools, life-long training should be provided to teachers in order to ensu-

re high levels of education amongst teaching staff and ensure teachers are up to date with newest educational methods.

With the support of political leaders, a greater cooperation between village schools should be set up in order to save costs. For example, additional teachers could share their teaching between different places (jobs openings in school networks for example).

Given that most schooling and study programmes usually use rather "city-oriented" examples, decision makers should plan school programmes that make youngsters aware of the possibilities in rural areas, as well as opening schools to the rural reality of the region (through visits to farms for instance).

In order to increase the number of rural students who can attend university, scholarships should be provided for students who study far away from home as well as a specific assistance for those returning to rural areas to have their diplomas recognised and valued.

c) **What can we expect from youth participation? Rural youngsters can do the following:**

Regarding the lack of meeting places, youngsters should lobby the decision makers with appropriate arguments to convince them and to raise awareness about the importance of youth work (especially activities led by youth organisations).

For example, a young participant used the term of 'brainwashing' the mayors.

**Formal education** - Concerning professional guidance, rural youngsters should strongly support closer co-operation between schools, for example, teachers sharing their time between schools and working with experts who can provide practical advice and recommendations.

**Non-formal education** - At European level in particular, rural young people should lobby European politicians to recognise the work of rural youth movements and their involvement in the field of non-formal education.

In turn, rural young people should also take into account all the suggestions they made to political leaders and rural youth organisations in their daily activities.

Some local organisations strive to focus on training for leaders on specific issues:  
*"The YFCU trains officers from all clubs in child protection, which is a very big issue in Northern Ireland. They also run training evenings for the work which club leaders, secretaries, treasurers and public relations officers do".*  
 Leanne M., Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster, Northern Ireland



## GUIDE FOR TEACHERS FOR REGIONAL VISITS & OUTINGS WITH PUPILS

(Life-Long Learning - Guide du Routard enseignant) FRANCE

**LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION:** Regional, in Lower Normandy (Basse-Normandie).

**CURRENT STATE:** Started in 2006, ongoing.

### AIM / OBJECTIVES

This guide for primary schools teachers aims to enable the community of teachers from Lower Normandy to have easy access to resource material which reviews all the different places in the area, so that teachers can organise educational outings with their classes.

The objective is that this tool constitutes a reference easily available for consultation on the Internet so that the teachers discover interesting places according to the themes they seek for their future outings. As many details as possible are provided to communicate all necessary information (entrance fees, opening times, accommodation, food services, etc.). Moreover, the primary schools teachers have enriched this website by adding information which has resulted in a true exchange of good practices.



### CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

Following the establishment of the Lisbon Strategy in March 2000 at the European level, de-

bates about employment and the school system in France put an emphasis on the concept of Life-Long Education and Training as a lever for social change. Through the Life-long learning Charter, the MRJC (Rural Movement of Christian Youth - Mouvement Rural de Jeunesse Chrétienne) wishes to share its vision about Life-Long Learning and invite its partners and all the citizens to reflect on this question<sup>32</sup>.

School and education are indispensable to the establishment of the common good, as they both refer to the organisation of the way to live together in a community. Besides, school is seen as an institution and is integrated in more global initiatives for local development.

Several milestones can contribute to lead Life-Long Learning (LLL) actions:

- School is at the midpoint of LLL because it strives to enable all pupils to acquire a common corpus of knowledge and skills. Beyond knowledge for the sake of knowledge, this knowledge base must lead to the development of the skills such as autonomy, initiative, team work, time management, creativity for everyone.

<sup>32</sup> Therefore the following definition was adopted: „Life-long education encompasses all formal education-related actions (School, professional training), non formal education-related actions (associations...) but also informal initiatives (within the family, media, in the public space, ...) from pre-school level until retirement from professional employment...which seek to reach the following objectives: personal fulfilment, active citizenship, socio-economic integration with the goal of sustainable development of the territories".



- Outside and within the school, all the concerned actors (teachers, parents, pupils, local political leaders and elected members of local councils, members of the professional world...) work in co-operation to set up a shared understanding and an educational project on a given territory which takes into account: formal, non-formal and informal education; the educational challenges of the territory regarding the needs and problems of the territory and its inhabitants; the professional and personal curriculum of each person as well as his or her "life project";

The citizen must be an actor in his or her education.

- The LLL project is linked with other educational projects in the area and is in line with national education projects and the European challenges in the field of education.

### STEPS of the project

1 ) The MRJC team „School Group“ was made up of a majority of school teachers, who had felt that something was missing in their professional activity: they had no reference document in order to organise pedagogic outings with their classes.

2 ) We tried to fill this gap by creating an Internet website reviewing different places, at regional level.

3 ) Elaboration of a leaflet presenting the project with clear objectives and budget planning.

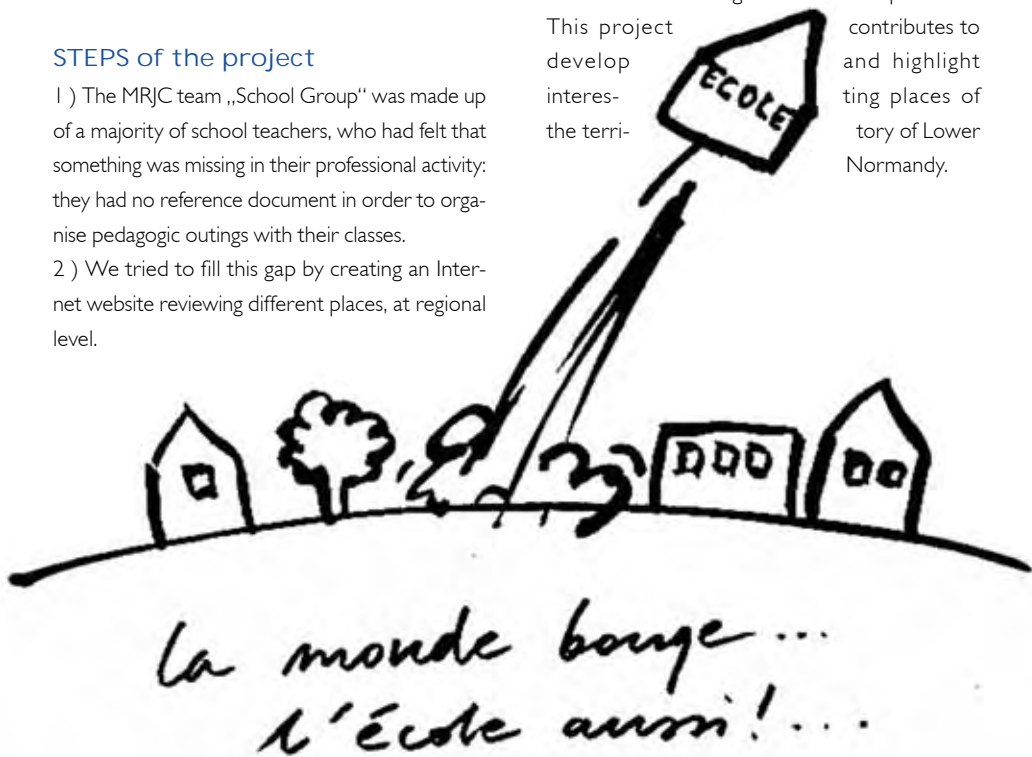
4) Presentation of the project to potential partners and dissemination of the leaflet to schools.

5) In March 2006, a workshop held on the topic of life-long learning, organised by the MRJC inter-regions Broad of the West of France (Lower Normandy, Brittany and Pays de Loire), during which we explained our project.

6) Setting up and launching the website, which is regularly updated.

### OUTCOMES

We hope that this tool will be useful to teachers and that the website will be often visited and updated, so that many teachers can benefit from this exchange of best practices. This project contributes to develop interesting places of the territory of Lower Normandy.



### PARTNERS

Contacts primarily with the French Centre for Pedagogical Training, which helps to disseminate our leaflets. We have also built up contacts with many schools in the Department of Orne and Lower Normandy. In addition, we are in the process of setting up contacts with the National Institutes for the Building Trades Teachers (Institut Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres), the national teacher training institutions, and another education organisation (Ligue de l'enseignement).

### PEOPLE INVOLVED

The "School Group" Lower Normandy, composed of a permanent MRJC employee in the French department of Orne and three primary school teachers.

### CONTACT PERSON

Name: Marion VANNIER, animator within the MRJC movement (department of Orne)  
Address: MRJC Lower Normandy and Orne  
6 rue Wilfrid Challemeil, BP 48, F-61600 LA FERTE MACE  
Email: mrjc.bn@free.fr  
Organisation: MRJC (Mouvement Rural de Jeunesse Chrétienne), Lower Normandy and Orne

The following best practice illustrates how educational- and social- oriented initiative towards rural young children can help young parents settle and improve their daily life in the countryside:

### MAMY PRZEDSZKOLE ("MOTHERS AND KINDERGARTEN")

Szalejów Górny, POLAND



Children and their *moms* (young women involved in the project), Iza Pindral, teacher

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION: Local.

CURRENT STATE: The kindergarten started on January 2006 and ran until June 2006 and will run for the next ten months: from September 2006 until June 2007.

### AIM / OBJECTIVES:

To increase the education and child care opportunities for 12 children aged 3-5 years old in the village of Szalejów Górny (lower Silesia) thanks to



the realization of alternative child care programmes developed and implemented by parents.

### CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

Gmina Kłodzko (County of Kłodzko) runs 3 public kindergartens, for 35 villages. In Szalejów Górny's area, there is no kindergarten: the area is scarcely populated and the costs would be too high. In Szalejów Górny, the primary school is not able to organize education for children aged 3-5 years old because of the lack of space (rooms) and funds. According to the parents, their children's development was suffering: the children had no contact with other children of their age and no possibility to participate in educational activities. Because mothers had to take care of their children, they were not able to seek employment.

### STEPS of the project

The kindergarten originated from an initiative of the parents, who have been helpful during the whole

course of the project. The parents transformed a room from a former post-office to a child care space.

The kindergarten usually opens three times a week for four hours. The programme is in line with the Ministry of Education's guidelines.

For example, once a month on Saturdays, some activities were organised by a specialist-therapist. Parents, volunteers and children prepared some activities for the people from the village (Spring Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Children's Day, a ceremony for the end of the school year). There were also excursions to the zoo and common picnics with the primary school.

### OUTCOMES

The project has had an excellent influence both on children and their parents. The children's development has been improved as is demonstrated by increased ability to care for them themselves and increased independence. Since the setting up of



Children with teacher and one of the moms and a giraffe during a visit to the zoo in Wrocław (May 2006)



the kindergarten, the children have had long lasting contacts with children their own age and the parents have been greatly involved in their kids' education. As the parents initiated the project, they have been co-organizing and co-financing it while fulfilling all the related obligations.

The educational activities proposed were much appreciated by the parents. They participated in some activities and assisted the teacher as volunteers. It helped them to feel more comfortable and self-confident in raising and educating their children in general. In addition, the parents had the opportunity to acquire new education methods to use with their children at home.

### PARTNERS

Stowarzyszenie "Edukacja i Rozwój" („Education and Development” Association), the parents, the Culture Centre in Ołdrzychowice, the primary school in Szalejów Górny.

### PEOPLE INVOLVED

Hubert Krech, vice-president of the Association, director of the Culture centre, teacher / Izabela Pindral- teacher (kindergarten), member of the association / Beata Reszka- teacher, specialist-therapist /parents

### CONTACT PERSON

Name: Hubert KRECH  
Address: Krosnowice 91, 57-362 Krosnowice, Poland  
Email: rechh@poczta.onet.pl  
Organisation: "EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT" ASSOCIATION, (Stowarzyszenie Edukacja i Rozwój)

## ADVANCED TRAINING TO YOUNG RURAL LEADERS FROM THE AUSTRIAN RURAL YOUTH

AUSTRIA

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION : Natinal

### CURRENT STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:

Already implemented.

### AIM / OBJECTIVES

The 'Auf ZAQ' training proposed by the Austrian Rural Youth aims to provide rural young people a high quality and advanced education. The objective is for young people to better understand their own personalities and develop themselves according to their personal assets.

This training aims to teach specific techniques so that they can shape clear, efficient and motivating communication methods in the teams that they will work with in the future.

While the flexibility of youngsters is improved during the modules, one of the leading objectives of the training is to show rural young people that they can benefit from external expertise, but also from the knowledge and skills they possess themselves. The training programme also enables young people to learn strategies and develop effective decision-making methods.

Furthermore, participants are provided with conflict solving and resolution methods for use in teams and groups, so they will be able to bring out the potential within a team.



## Chapter 3

### THE EMPLOYMENT ISSUE IN RURAL AREAS

#### CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

Statistics have shown that young people living in rural areas usually have a lower level of education than youngsters from urban areas because they do not have the same access to learning and education due to location. That is why informal and non-formal learning outside formal education structures are of the utmost importance in rural areas.

There is a strong national network of 1100 local rural youth groups throughout Austria.

The certified training is aimed at Austrian young people who are leaders within the Austrian rural youth organisations at regional and national levels.

Through a choice of different modules, rural youth leaders are provided relevant educational tools so that they acquire the skills they need to lead their teams within the Landjugend Österreich.

#### STEPS OF THE PROJECT

##### Module 1: Presentation

This module is intended to improve participants' interaction and communication skills.

Young people are taught communication skills, assertiveness, and persuasive techniques and strategies to help motivate teams.

Another important part of the module consists in training focused on the relevant issues in youth work.

##### Module 2: Project management

This module is intended to give participants useful tools for the implementation of projects.

The basics of project management include methods and techniques from the fields of project planning, project coordination but also crisis management and closure of implemented projects. In addition, basic notions of the main creativity-related methods are provided.

##### Module 3: Project implementation

In this phase, rural young people have to carry out a project in cooperation with other young people. In this framework, a project booklet is to be realised, including an advertisement strategy and a costs projection or budget planning.

##### Module 4: Groups monitoring

At the end of the training, the young rural participants acquire specific methods and techniques for dealing with group dynamics. They learn how to recognize characteristics and symptoms stemming from conflict, as well as monitoring mechanisms for use in situations of conflict.

To complete the training successfully, young participants have to prepare a presentation on the project they have carried out with young partners.

#### OUTCOMES

The young people from the Landjugend Österreich who have completed this training receive a state-recognised certificate that they can use for their later professional activities.

According to the ECTS international educational scheme, the Training has a 9 point -value.

#### PARTNERS

Rural Institute for Long-Life Training  
Federal Ministry of Social Security Generations and Consumer Protection

#### CONTACT PERSON

Address: Schauflegasse 6, 1014 Wien, Austria  
Email: oelj@landjugend.at  
Organization: LANDJUGEND ÖSTERREICH

During the seminars, the participants in the project "Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!" had the opportunity to discuss about the various realities regarding the employment situation that they experience in their respective countries, a topic closely linked to education as discussed above.

Over the last twenty years, European Union Member States have been confronted with periods of economic recession, resulting in endemic and cyclical unemployment rates among young people.

Due to the decline of traditional industries and the rise of the service sector, and more recently, of the new technologies, young people are confronted with a demand for specialised skills and thus higher levels of education and ability.

Given the new patterns characterising the employment market, the transition from education to employment is a determining factor for young people's secure "employment path"<sup>33</sup>.

In that regard, many changes may mark this transition, and above all the level of qualification and skills (well educated young people usually have smoother and faster transitions into professional life) and the length of this transition (from the end of compulsory school until they enter the

labour market)<sup>34</sup>.

According to the European Youth Forum's report, Education, Employment and Young people in Europe, different factors can influence the transition for European young people from education to employment such as the education they have been provided, their social and economic origins as well as the place they come from, their gender, ethnic origins, and the economic and social conditions of their country.

In short, youth unemployment levels in the EU Member States is related to the success of this transition: according to the European Commission's estimation, 45% of young people between 15-24 years old become unemployed at least once, and 20% are unemployed two or three times<sup>35</sup>.

Rural young people are particularly affected by the current situation and experience all aspects of this post-school or post studies transition.

<sup>34</sup> In addition, labour market deregulation, the variations and rising level of risk as regards social protection over the two last decades as well as changes to traditional life-stages (access to all forms of independence, different types of households, etc.) also constitute important changes in this transition phase. According to Eurostat 1999 figures, young people compose a large share of temporary workers (38.5%) and part-time workers (15.6%), indicating that an experience of temporary and part-time work is quite common between the ages of 15-24 before young people gain stability in the job market. Figures drawn from: European Commission, The Social Situation in the European Union, 2000. Cited in: European Youth Forum, Youth Report, ibid, p. 51

<sup>35</sup> Source: European Commission, Implementing the European Employment Strategy, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1999. Cited in: European Youth Forum, Youth Report, ibid, p. 53



Indeed, European rural areas as a whole are often suffering from weaker infrastructure and economic performance which makes for higher rates of unemployment, in particular among active rural young people. In addition, the importance of agriculture is declining, even if it still plays an important role in shaping the rural landscape in many countries.

For instance, rural regions in OECD countries<sup>36</sup> are not performing as well economically as urban areas. agriculture's share of gross value-added for the economy remains low<sup>37</sup>.

However, broad differences characterise rural areas in terms of performance. The many assets of rural regions, such as quality of life or environment, as well as improved transport links and infrastructure can serve to retain or attract people, businesses and organisations<sup>38</sup>.

These many aspects of employment in the countryside are important concerns for the millions of European young rural people who are searching for jobs!

This rather difficult employment market provoked many discussions during the seminars but also generated very constructive and stimulating suggestions!

36 The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) is made up of 30 member countries, and includes 21 European Union Member states.

37 In the 25 EU countries, 96% of rural land use is agricultural (including forestry), but only 13% of rural employment is in agriculture, producing only 6% of gross value added in rural regions. Source: OECD Policy Brief, Reinventing Rural Policy, October 2006, p.2

38 Indeed, in more than a third of OECD countries, rural areas are the regions with the highest rate of employment creation. Source: Ibid.

The youngsters tried to identify the main differences but also the common points between their experiences, while looking for concrete recommendations and propositions.

According to the rural young participants in the seminars, **distinct strengths and weaknesses characterise European rural areas** regarding employment issues.

The **natural resources of rural areas** and the **human power** exerted on areas are the first of these strengths.

Rural areas also feature closer communities characterised by the strong social links between their members.

Furthermore, traditions and long established cultures usually mark these areas, where the acceptance of the inheritance of the past and the respect of natural rhythms are usually widespread. Rural people tend to inherit specific skills that should be valued.

Finally, rural areas provide space and a natural environment which could be favourable for potential investors.

The participants also identified several factors contributing to the **weaknesses** of rural areas.

The high prices of property result in a lack of opportunities to purchase land or to start one's own business. In addition, the education system provides limited opportunities to obtain or create a job in a rural area. There is a lack of communication between key players in the field, for example between employers and job seekers.

Due to the employment situation, it seems difficult for creative young talents to arise from rural areas.

### Major employment problems affecting rural young people

The major obstacle to youngsters who want to be active is the **high unemployment rate** in Europe in general, which particularly affects youngsters in rural areas. Young people are unable to find jobs related to their skills and education with this problem more pronounced in rural areas.

The lack of jobs on a local, national and European scale is correlated with a high **job insecurity**. People no longer work at the same job their whole professional lives. Employment is now more 'diverse' and sometimes 'volatile'. For instance, most of the jobs available to young people are only short term, temporary and seasonal work.

In the farming sector, the progress of **industrialization** has led to a lack of work linked to the constant technical advances leading to an increasing number of machines.

More globally, the overall **consequences of liberalization** and the "services revolution" can worsen the brain drain already affecting rural areas.

The issue of **corruption** may also reinforce the overall feeling of insecurity. In certain countries and areas, corruption is indeed a real problem, as is demonstrated by a lack of serious investments in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

Given this pattern of employment the affected areas, the issues of **migration** (brain drain from villages to cities and emigration to another country) as well as **immigration of people** are relevant topics.

Indeed, many young people from rural backgrounds work in urban areas and therefore no longer take part in the social life of the villages, for example by buying houses and land. This causes financial speculation and increased prices for those living in the villages. Therefore the **cost of housing** is also a major factor preventing some youngsters and notably young farmers from settling in the countryside and thus looking for a job in those areas.

Thus the **brain drain** is a major problem which particularly affects the employment of young people, but also pertains to general living conditions in rural areas, including social and educational aspects.



However, the young participants believe that most youngsters will **return to their villages** at some point or will relocate to another rural place. For instance, they intend to move back to their village once they have completed their studies.

But some participants felt that the time spent away and work might be barriers to people moving back to their village.





In all European countries, cities are in fact very close to the countryside: many people live in rural areas, but work in the cities.

Technology is making it easier to communicate it is now possible for people to work from home, which in turn opens up [new possibilities for jobs](#) in rural areas.

A general [lack of awareness in urban society about rural youth issues](#) was highlighted by the project.

People from rural areas, who benefit from social security (i.e. unemployment grants or family allocations) should be helped to find new jobs. Social security benefits should encourage people to seek work, to prevent people from reinforcing or descending into social exclusion.

### Resulting needs

The main issues to be addressed are the [possibilities of employment](#) and [economic development of rural areas](#) for the future (sustainable agriculture, development of agricultural jobs but also related activities; increased support, in particular funding).

Access to agriculture: Helping young people get started in agriculture

*"I would like to see the agriculture field more attractive for new people and new entrants. It is hard to start for someone to get into agriculture: land is very expensive; there are no margins: it is difficult to make business profitable".*

Andrew S., Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs

Rural youngsters need to exchange about their experiences and to develop their own projects. They also need assistance in order to build their skills.

Broadly speaking, young people need recognition and respect when they choose a rural life or/and take up agricultural work, from the government and more generally from society.

The youngsters pointed out that there is an image problem associated with agriculture and rural areas.

### Recommendations

#### a) Rural organisations can help

Anchored at grass-roots level, youth organisations should be the real "contact" points for the dissemination of useful information to youngsters. They could provide specific skills training and organise regular and focused workshops in order to keep rural young people up to date on employment market issues.

For instance, by providing career advice on how to find a job and how to prepare for interviews, writing curriculum vitae, or by means of "methods sessions", etc.

Furthermore, more local groups with specific projects should be set up to further include rural youth in the social life of rural communities. Through their involvement, youngsters could make their voice heard on this issue in public bodies, and for instance at political level.

#### b) What can we expect from political leaders?

Local and national leaders should stimulate a major improvement of the employment situation by [encouraging sustainable agriculture, developing agricultural jobs and also the secondary activities](#) that are linked to the agriculture sector.

For example, they should support and promote national resources but also local products in rural areas, according to the founding principles underlying the rural youth organisations' vision (in terms of food sovereignty, economic cooperation, and sustainable development).

Further, those leaders should support initiatives of inter-regional cooperation and strong ties between villages to achieve a balance between the strengths and the weaknesses of areas with similar issues, in particular employment concerns.

Political leaders could also promote support for economic activities, in particular financial support that could help people create sustainable economic activities.

Grants could contribute to setting up subsidies systems that provide micro-credit that enable people to start their own businesses, make the area more



attractive for investors and encourage local businesses and job creation.

Political leaders should enable young people to [settle on farms](#) by providing proper incentives. For example, cheaper land and subsidies for seeds and fertilizers would favour the settlement on farms. Incentives to help people on social benefits return to the labour market are also important measures.

The role of political leaders is to shape [special or specific financial offers](#). For example, lower taxes, and specific incentives to attract businesses to rural areas. At a more global level, they could be part of an overall coherent economic policy towards the concerned rural area gathering all actors.

#### c) What can rural young people do?

Young people should strongly [encourage sustainable agriculture and the development of agricultural jobs](#) but also [all related activities](#).

If they are willing to settle in the countryside, they could look for all the existing possibilities to find a suitable job or to create their own activity before moving to urban areas.

Rural young people could promote local products in rural areas while applying the main principles underlying their vision of the development of sustainable rural areas (food sovereignty, economical cooperation, and sustainable development)

They can also support any political incentives established to increase inter-regional cooperation between villages (mostly concerning employment).



*whilst creating long term income for Tan House Farm to maintain its landscape and habitats using current farming methods."*

## CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

The owner and sub-post office mistress of the old premises was determined to retire and I had to leave the building in November 2003. I had to plan a permission, but also to get a grant to start the new building. Above all, I had to maintain the energy for the project when I was so tired and confronted with many obstacles!

## STEPS OF THE PROJECT

**December 2003:** Review and decision on tender application for a start date of the new store building between 1 January and 1 February 2004. Reception of the official confirmation from the DEFRA (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom) for acceptance or refusal for a £60,000 grant. As it was successful, we could proceed to January 2004. If unsuccessful, we would have kept the temporary shop and post office open for a further month, in order to try and find alternative solutions, otherwise we would have had to foresee closure in February.

**January 2004:** Start building and start receiving HSBC Development loan. Re-establishment of milestones with DEFRA under consultation and signature of official documentation.

## HOPES OF LONGTOWN

Longtown, UNITED KINGDOM

**LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION:** National.

**CURRENT STATE:** Start in December 2001, ongoing.

**PLACE/COUNTRY:** Longtown, Herefordshire (United Kingdom).

## AIM / OBJECTIVES

The project was about to relocate the village shop & post office run under the management of Christine Hope ([www.hopesoflongtown.co.uk/](http://www.hopesoflongtown.co.uk/)) to Tan House Farm, on the edge of the village in Longtown (where Christine's parents are farmers and the sixth generation to live on the property).

The objective was to diversify the farm income and to ensure its viability.

Thus the overall aim is focused on the business' sustainability:

*"To secure the future of a Village Store and Post Office, keeping the village on a tourism route which will enhance employment and trade opportunities,*

**February 2004:** Building Work continued.

Confirmation for an alternative proposition for the post office after April. At the end of the month, project review conducted with DEFRA as planned building works were not completed due to bad weather conditions. Start to put in a claim for receipted works.

**March 2004:** Building work continued. Internal building work started.

Confirmation of the opening date of premises with the builder and planning of the marketing strategy for the opening.

**April 2004:** Post office had to move out of the temporary accommodation on hire. Internal work was continuing.

First of the receipted claims was received.

**May 2004:** Internal building work continued.

4th May 2004: Opening of the brand new premises!

**June 2004:** Final Claim for receipted payments made.

## OUTCOMES:

I moved into new premises on the May 2nd 2004.

## PARTNERS:

I started as a sole trader, and then I went into partnership with my parents.

## PEOPLE INVOLVED:

My family was a constant support. The staff also helped me, so I could sort problems as well as an accountant, the grant body and the bank manager.

## CONTACT PERSON

Name: Miss Christine HOPE

Address: c/o Tan House Farm, Longtown, Herefordshire HR2 0LT.

Email: [christine@hopesoflongtown.co.uk](mailto:christine@hopesoflongtown.co.uk)

Organisation: I attend the Young Farmers' Club of my area.





#### FERMWEB

Flanders, BELGIUM

**LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION:** National (in the region of Flanders).

**CURRENT STATE:** Operational.

**PLACE/COUNTRY:** Flanders, in Belgium.

#### AIM / OBJECTIVES

The objectives are to motivate youth movements to buy products directly from a local farmer.

Fermweb is a website (<http://www.fermweb.be>) where you can find addresses of local farmers, a list of the products they sell, information about agriculture (traditional, sustainable, biological), seasonal fruits and vegetables, etc.

#### CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

It becomes more and more difficult for farmers to provide for their own needs. One of the problems causing this are the prices for which a farmer can sell his products on the market. That is why this project encourages direct selling of farm products.

This is not only important for the income of the farmers but also for the environment (less pol-

lution by packing and transportation, promotion of the local biodiversity, consumption of local and seasonal products, etc.)

#### STEPS OF THE PROJECT

Development of the project and of the project-website / Launching of the website and its promotion / Keeping the website up to date and further completion of the data.

#### OUTCOMES

The website has had almost 20,300 visitors over the last year.

#### PARTNERS

The KVLV (Catholic Organisation of Rural Women - Katholiek Vormingswerk van Landelijke Vrouwen) and the Government of Flanders. KVLV is a rural and agricultural movement for women in Flanders and is related to KLJ.

#### PEOPLE INVOLVED

KVLV local members.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Organisation: KVLV (Movement for women in rural areas - Vrouwen met vaart\*), Belgium  
Address: Remylaan 4b, B- 3018 WIJGMAAL.  
Email: [steunpunthoeveproducten@kvlv.be](mailto:steunpunthoeveproducten@kvlv.be)



Leisure time is of the utmost importance for the overall development of youngsters. Besides school, training or their professional activities, young people need to dedicate time to the activities and hobbies they particularly enjoy, in order to exert their talents, develop their creativity and thus mature.

Leisure time is a privileged time for all young people to socialize with others, practice a hobby or simply reflect on one's path and dreams. It is during their leisure time that young people can come together in rural youth organisations to become involved in long term projects and initiatives.

In rural settings, the **social dimension of leisure time** is often highlighted by the difficulties sometimes faced by young people to be involved in stimulating activities and to enjoy their environment.

Three main activities are regularly practiced by rural young people during their leisure time<sup>39</sup>.

The **3 predominant activities** for the young participants in the survey were:

- To meet friends (16%)
- To participate in activities organised by associations/youth clubs (12%)
- To read / To participate in sports (around 10%).

In addition, other activities were also identified by the participants:

- To use a computer, use the Internet, play video games, etc... (8.42%),
- Listen to music / To help out in the house/farm (5.5%),
- Go for a walk, a drive, a bike ride (4%).



Two of the most represented activities expressed by the participants correspond to basic youth-related activities referring to friends, reading, participating in sports. Many participants emphasised the importance of sports.

Nowadays, using a computer, surfing the Internet or playing video games appears as a global phenomena which increasingly affects European youth (with some nuances between Western and Eastern European countries). When young people experience the transition from school to employment, IT skills are also a means accessing job offers and useful information and to get in touch with firms and organisations.

<sup>39</sup> See Appendice: "Chapter 4: Leisure time"





Most participants were concerned about socialisation in general (meeting friends and participating in activities organised by rural youth clubs)<sup>40</sup>.

Certain activities seem interlinked, while different conceptions of leisure time arose. Young people are involved in a variety of leisure activities including individual activities like using computers or reading. Rural youth organisations facilitate different kinds of activities for young people: group activities as well as things that young people can do independently.

It should be noted that youngsters usually prefer spending their leisure time using the cheapest existing options due to their limited financial means.

Most participants spontaneously emphasised the importance of the topics of participation as well as the employment situation, with the topic of leisure time considered of lower importance. For efficiency purposes, though they consider that becoming involved in leisure activities is the easiest action to undertake in order to change their immediate environment in rural areas, and potentially stimulate other changes.

<sup>40</sup> An emphasis should be put on the discrepancies in the presence of rural youth organisations between different regions in Europe, which is reflected by a variation in the data obtained. Many countries – and notably Eastern European ones – still experience a lack of places for youth, youth organisations or youth clubs in rural areas and therefore access to telecommunications.

### What problems to rural young people face in terms of their spare time?

The participants mainly highlighted **absent or unsatisfactory infrastructure** and a **lack of information**.

This can be explained by bad infrastructure connections between local areas and cities. In the field of new technologies, the lack of facilities for using computers and the Internet was often pointed out.

Rural areas are characterised by a real lack of leisure time opportunities. Young people do not have enough means to influence the policy in their local areas, they feel they cannot change the fact that there are not enough appropriate activities.



### What are their needs ?

The following needs arose from the seminars held in the framework of the project.

#### Recommendations

a) **Rural organisations can provide efficient remedies:**

Concerning the **lack of recognition**, Local organisations should strongly promote their image among the population and in public events. For instance, they should organise national information campaigns about their actions as well as social events and fundraising activities to show how organised and useful they can be for youngsters.

The projects should be interesting and attractive, such as camps and sport activities.

As regards the **lack of opportunities**,

Training opportunities, seminars as well as study sessions should improve the knowledge of youngsters so that they can really influence the social and economic processes in their region. Access to information and notably to the media should also be improved through initiatives led by those organisations.

In that regard, leisure time should be a time dedicated to the training for the youngsters at all levels, so that they grow up and evolve as responsible citizens.

Rural youth organisations' recommendations should be disseminated to national organisations and governments.

Regarding the **lack of motivation and interest**, Local organisations should set a good example for youngsters who are not involved in activities yet and strive to awaken interest in others.

b) **Political leaders have a role to play: support and funding**

Concerning **bad infrastructures and lack of information**, local governments should improve public transport (e.g. by arranging more regular bus lines) and provide more media access in order to guarantee that rural youngsters can participate in constructive activities during their leisure time.

In that perspective, national governments should also provide subsidies to those territories, while the European Union should allocate more subsidies to national governments. Concretely, an overall system of subsidies towards rural youth should be developed, so that the money provided by all levels of government for rural areas can really benefit rural young people and positively impact their daily life.

As for the **lack of motivation and interest**, National governments and organisations should support local projects, but also provide the material means to set up initiatives and provide.

In terms of training, governments should also strongly support training for organisation leaders. For instance, sessions in which young leaders are brought together from across Europe serve as platforms for sharing experiences: local youth leaders should have better access to these opportunities through better information.

A few people talked about the importance of local recognition of rural youth activities at political level. In fact, being supported by the local government helps a lot of youngsters to have the feeling of being useful for the community:

*"For young people, we have a place where we can meet. This is really important because we have a strong support from the local government. As an organisation and personally, we feel recognised and useful",*  
Wilm B., Landjugendverband Schleswig-Holstein, Germany

The image of young farmers' organisations:  
*"Some people said that they know it's a great organisation and they have the highest respect. As a whole most people think about MACRA but some people are blinded by seeing young farmers and don't see the political lobbying we do, the leadership training and the opportunities for development which we offer if they want to join and participate",*  
Thomas D., Macra Na Feirme, Ireland

c) Youngsters can take an active role to support public initiatives

Young people should use all means possible to reach their local political leaders and suggest specific ideas to expand their leisure time options in their local areas.

They should also be highly motivated and support the work of rural youth organisations by being involved and committed.

## INTERGENERATIONAL INTEGRATION

Plasenzuela, SPAIN

**LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION:** International.  
**CURRENT STATE:** The project is at its first stage of implementation.

**PLACE/COUNTRY:** Plasenzuela, Spain.

**The AIM / OBJECTIVES are the following:**

- To promote inter-generational relationships between young people and adults in the rural world
- To increase awareness about different European cultures
- To exchange about different ways of working
- To promote inter-generational relationships between young people, children and adults

### CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

The project takes place in a rural area, in Plasenzuela (Estrémadura area), a rural village of 620 inhabitants, in Western Spain.  
It is about an under privileged area due to emigration to big cities, and a focus on raising cattle.  
We are in the first phase of the project which is the continuation of 5 years, with two European Union volunteers from Germany and Estonia, who work jointly with the Spanish organisers.



## STEPS OF THE PROJECT

Chronologically, they consist in:  
Determining the needs / Cost analysis - provisional budget / Identifying of the volunteers / Search for financing / Place of implementation (deployment – location) / Integration of the project and implementation and revision.

## OUTCOMES

The project is very positive for young Europeans, as it totally changes their conception of Europe, as well as their conception of villages and of Spanish young people.  
The participants have been so delighted by the results that we have been attempting to continue the project for six more years.

## PARTNERS

European Union Member states, and currently: Spain, Germany and Estonia.

## PEOPLE INVOLVED

Young people of Plasenzuela, of Estonia and Germany, adults of local associations, housewives; associations (young people, hunting, sport): "all the social strengths of a village".

## CONTACT PERSON

Name: Lorenzo Martin ROBLEDÓ  
Address: c/ NOGAL 10 CP, E-10271 PLASENZUELA  
Email: fotoextremadura@hotmail.com  
Organisation: ACCION RURAL (Rural action)

## WALES YOUNG FARMERS CLUB'S COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

Wales, UNITED KINGDOM

**LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION:** Local

**CURRENT STATE:** Ongoing.

## AIM / OBJECTIVES

The scheme is an opportunity for members of Wales YFC to work with their local community to complete either one of two challenges. It is open to all Young farmers members in Wales.  
The two challenges that are available to choose from are:

- **"Week-end Challenge"**  
A fast grant option: min. 40hrs (man working hours) to be spent on the challenge. Clubs have to keep a record through taking photos, etc...
- **Big Challenge**

Same principle, but – min. 70 hrs to be spent on the challenge.

In addition there will be a Special Award available when taking part in the Main Challenge which will be awarded to the club who has contributed the most to the YFC movement.

There are 8 different topic areas to choose from: Environment, Education, Sport, Social, Entertainment, Music, Art/Drama, General/Other (Clubs may enter up to two projects/year).

### CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

The project responds to the need to set up collective projects to stimulate the YFC members and bring positive inputs in society.



to generate their understanding and awareness of the need to create sustainable communities.

## PARTNERS

YFC local clubs.

## PEOPLE INVOLVED

Youngs YFC local clubs members.

## CONTACT PERSON

Name: Susie HOBBS  
Address: Wales YFC  
Llanelwedd, Builth Wells, POWYS LD2 3NJ  
Email: [info@yfc-wales.org.uk](mailto:info@yfc-wales.org.uk)  
Organisation: WALES YOUNG FARMERS' CLUB

## STEPS OF THE PROJECT

- 1) To choose a project.
- 2) To submit an application form to the Wales YFC Office (summary of the task, timetable and plan/photo of the site included).

Every completed project will be judged by an Assessment panel at the Community Challenge Open Day, where all participants attend with a record of their work.

A panel of judges interviews the Clubs assessing the project according to the following criteria:

1. Relevance to the needs of the surroundings area, community or Club;
2. Degree of enterprise and ambition shown by the Club;
3. Standard of workmanship related to project;
4. Imagination and resourcefulness shown (financial support/equipment);
5. Benefit to the Community/Club;
6. Size of Club and degree of participation;
7. Environmental awareness.

## OUTCOMES

Key element within the Wales YFC programme of activity, the scheme has ensured that hundreds of young people in rural Wales have received guidance, support and training



years old, this constituted both a big challenge and a great learning opportunity for us.

The festival aimed to give youth the opportunity to meet each other and to present their works (for ex., young bands and other talents performed in front of the audience). The festival was also dedicated

## LIFE IN SIGHT – 4H – FESTIVAL

Paavola in Ruukki, FINLAND

## LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION :

Three provinces (districts).

## CURRENT STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:

Already held, from 3 to 5 of August 2004.

Place: At the Ruokolahden lava, in the village of Paavola in Ruukki (Finland)

## AIM / OBJECTIVES

The project was organized for the youth that had been participating in the project "Youth making the village live" (Nuoret remmiin). The young people organised activities for themselves, about the themes they were interested in. Project co-ordinators only helped them to launch the project, before they continued on their own. These small groups of people held different activities in 52 different villages around those three provinces. As all young people involved were under 20

to the people living in Paavola. The village inhabitants showed great team spirit when working with us, and they could also participate in the festival.

Our aim was also to organize such an event in the smallest village that could offer the adequate location for a festival gathering 500 people. The whole festival was free of charge for everyone.

## CONTEXT, PROBLEMS & NEEDS

The biggest problem the organisers were confronted with was to find the convenient time and place to organize the event; seven youngsters from all over this area (with quite long distances, up to 400km) were involved. In addition, none of the young organisers had ever done something similar before: everyone was learning during this project. No one knew the place before, since the village chosen was a brand new place: therefore the young organisers had not had any contacts with the partners beforehand.



## STEPS of the project

The project was expected to start about seven months before it was held. The organisers gathered the people willing to help, found the village, created the basic principles of the program of the festival, applied for funding, and started the real work. Advertisements were made, and the team contacted all the bands and artists before starting to build the village at the festival place.

## OUTCOMES

The three day festival was organised "in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the week", according to Riitta, one of the organisers. 500 participants came during those three days, plus all the people working there as volunteers (about 100). Despite rain and difficulties, the festival finally turned out to be what the young people originally expected. In the end, everyone was very happy with the results!

## PARTNERS

Finnish 4H- association, the village of Paavola in Ruukki and all the wonderful volunteer people.

## PEOPLE INVOLVED

Many people got involved with an important turn over. The main organisers were: Anna Liinamaa, Riitta Mikkola, Karoliina Kempainen, Mirjami Kemppainen, Pekka Pinola, Jyrki Pinola, Laura Pistemaa and the coordinator Soila Haapasaari, who gathered the preparatory team in different provinces.

## CONTACT PERSON

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Organisation: THE FINNISH 4H FEDERATION



The "Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!" study has made important contributions in terms of depicting the realities faced by European rural youngsters and making them reflect actively about how they could act on their rural environment.

Confronted by two worlds, young people are educated in a culture which merges urban and rural elements: they have to navigate through new territory because the traditional structures of employment, family and community have changed and they must also find their own benchmarks.

The Seminar held in Cardiff on the topic of "Breaking the barriers" between town and rural areas showed that participants were fully aware of their rural identity:

*"Even if we usually study and work in towns and if the way we spend our leisure time is similar to urban youngsters, we don't recognise ourselves in the expression "rurban youth" though: we feel we are, and remain above all, rural youngsters and that we are anchored in our rural areas",* stated a group of participants in the RYEurope Cardiff seminar in the autumn 2006.

Many of the participants have to leave their areas to go to bigger towns or to other regions where it is easier to get employment, thus limiting their involvement in the local development of their local rural areas.

Therefore the problems encountered by young farmers and young people living on the countryside mainly concern difficulties (financial, fiscal

and legal) in setting up a business, the inefficiency and inadequacy of training, high unemployment rates, the lack of alternative jobs and the traditional shortcomings of rural areas as to infrastructure and services. A negative image of farming and a lower standard of living goes hand in hand with the difficulties described above.

The measures to be undertaken confirm the outcomes presented in the booklet.

The participants' three main answers refer to meetings places for young people (13%), leisure activities (12%) and both job offers and opportunities to move in the local and regional area (infrastructure, public transport ...) (9% each)<sup>41</sup>.

Furthermore, the project generated tangible steps towards a greater recognition of rural youth perspectives.

In that regard, the Final statement, drafted by the rural participants in the Study Session in Budapest, constitutes a milestone in the dissemination of rural young people's expectations.

The issues tackled by the participants and the solutions they advocated were integrated in the Recommendation 1530 (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - 2001) on which they worked.

<sup>41</sup> See table in the Appendices.

Since 2001, the landscape of European rural areas has evolved: therefore rural young people enriched the previous recommendations with their current observations.



According to rural young people, it is of the utmost importance create a positive image of rural areas and of rural youth organisations; to stress the issue of housing for young people in rural areas and to care about the conservation and development of basic services in rural areas.

Furthermore, the rural youngsters' recommendations emphasise the importance of the transmission and dissemination of information towards young people on policies and thus existing funding programmes, etc.; necessity to help young people to settle in the countryside (micro-credit possibilities, grants or alternative funding schemes).

Finally, the importance of having a school anchored in the rural place as well as the valuable role played by rural youth organisations in non-formal education, notably in the development of social skills for youngsters but also at all levels of the community was greatly stressed.  
(See Final statement in appendices)

### Important advice for key actors in rural areas

The project strongly emphasised the crucial role that rural youth organisations play and will play in rural areas.

Furthermore, it reinforced existing contacts with their European partners, as well as stimulated their networking abilities by extending their links with organisations, at local, national and European levels.

In line with the long term work of rural youth organisations, this pilot project contributed to "Europeanise" the way that rural youngsters reflect as well as providing a European dimension to their local projects.

The continued exchange about the implemented projects has enabled the project partners and their participants to better identify this "European feature" as a motor, as well as to define the fields and exact questions to work on and put forward within their own local organisations at the local level.



### Focus on international networking

In particular, international meetings and actions initiated by rural youth organisations are good places to learn from other practices and, at the same time, be reassured that we are asking ourselves the right questions and moving in the right direction.

Zsolt T.-M., from AGRYA – Second Wave (Hungary) underlined the interest of networking: "We have just finished a PHARE project (European programme to support new EU Member States) and it has helped to improve the structures of our organisation. Being involved in international projects helped a lot to promote our organisation.

*What I've also learnt is how to deal with the perception people have of my country. Youngsters I meet from the former 15 EU countries are not surprised about us. They don't think we are coming from the Middle Ages. We feel valued in what we do.*

*In fifteen years, there has been such a cultural change in my country that we need to be recognised for what we have done'.*



The project "Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!" led to the establishment of cooperation with the European Citizens' Panels initiative, a European project promoting an active citizenship.

This initiative is chaired and coordinated respectively by two Belgian organisations: the Foundation for Future Generations (FFG), and the European Association for Information and Local Development (AEIDL).

From spring 2006 until the end of the year, nine European citizens' panels located in nine different European countries gathered participants chosen at random around the following theme of discussion: "What roles will rural areas play in tomorrow's Europe?"

The objective of the European Citizens' Panel is to stimulate a bottom-up contribution from citizens to the discussion on the future of European policies affecting rural areas.

In April 2007, the leaders of each panel will meet in Brussels at the Committee of the Regions in order to present their findings.

Representatives of rural youth organisations who have been involved in our project will take part in the "panel of experts" which will be at the disposal of the panel of leaders: we will thus contribute to nourish this "think tank" and reflection process.

At political level, the project "Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!" has paved the way towards long term cooperation with decision makers, and notably political leaders. By doing do, it has helped reduce the gap between their discourse and





reality, in initiating a fruitful dialogue during seminars as well as at formal meetings.

#### Focus on a concrete political outcome

Following the Double Study Session, Walter Schmied, president of the Committee for Agriculture of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe invited the representatives of our organisations in November 2006 to participate in a special hearing to present our expectations, discuss the issues of common concern related to rural youth participation and talk with parliamentarians about long term cooperation on this issue.

Last but not least, the project achievements have initiated, nourished and supported the global reflection of the European rural young participants in the project on the issues they confront in their lives, while stimulating their ability to lead real actions in their local environment and to approach decision makers.



#### A concrete initiative to empower rural youngsters during national political campaigns

The French rural organisation MRJC, in its publication, MRJC news in autumn 2006 entitled 'Rural youngsters suggest - Special electoral debate'<sup>42</sup> provides useful knowledge concerning the Presidential and Parliamentary elections to be held in France in spring 2007. It notably refers to the European outreach of the current Study "Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!" in recalling the Final Statement emphasising the needs drafted in the spring 2006 in Budapest.

This publication will serve to empower rural young people with real arguments and clearly-focused *desiderata*, so that they can present and express their views when visiting local and national political leaders in the coming months.

#### Perspectives

MIJARC Europe and Rural Youth Europe intend to keep working on the topic of rural youth participation by preparing the ground for follow-up activity: firstly by maintaining contact with the wide range of partners who have been involved in this project while seeking to complete the current outcomes and stimulate initiatives by sustaining the networking process launched by MIJARC Europe and Rural Youth Europe in the future on a regular basis.

<sup>42</sup> Mouvement Rural de Jeunesse Chrétienne (MRJC), Les infos du MRJC n°52 (MRJC News), 'Rural youngsters propose. Special electoral debate' ('Les jeunes ruraux proposent. Spécial débat électoral'), Autumn 2006



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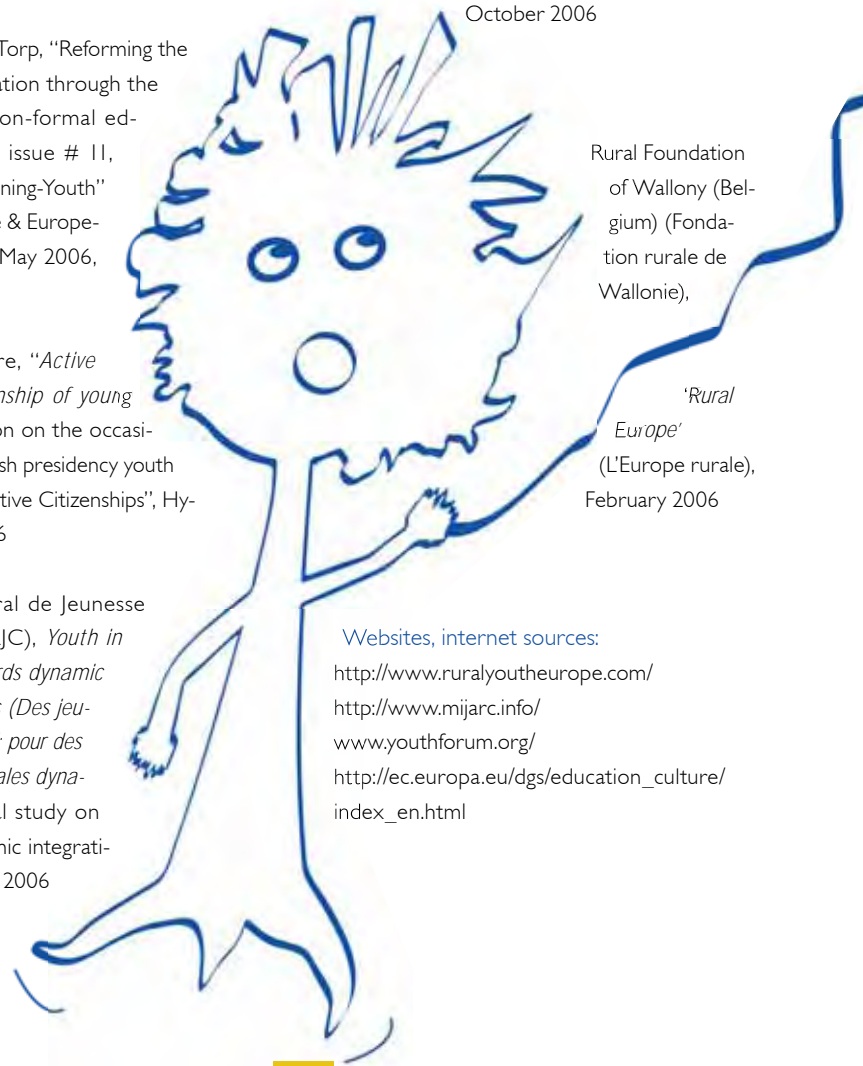
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## APPENDICES



### RECOMMENDATION 1530 (2001): SITUATION AND PROSPECTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS<sup>43</sup>

For a long time the Assembly has been recommending measures to help rural areas and in particular young people living there, for example in its Recommendation 776 (1976) on the situation of rural and agricultural youth in Europe.

1. Although progress has been made, young people living in rural areas in Europe still encounter many difficulties, especially as a result of urbanisation and rural decline. This is particularly true in central and eastern European countries, which are experiencing even greater imbalances owing to the vast socio-economic changes currently taking place.

2. The Assembly stresses the need to give young people and their representative organisations a greater say, at both national and European levels, in the preparation of youth or rural development policies that concern them. It is likewise necessary to improve the co-ordination of national policies in these fields, so as to avoid incompatibilities and increase the positive impact of the measures recommended.

3. The problems encountered by young farmers and young people living in the countryside mainly

<sup>43</sup> See the Council of Europe's website: <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=http%3A%2F%2Fassembly.coe.int%2FDocuments%2FAdoptedText%2Fta01%2FEREC1530.htm>

concern difficulties (financial, fiscal and legal) in setting up in business, the inefficiency and inadequacy of training, high unemployment, the lack of alternative jobs and the traditional shortcomings of rural areas as regards infrastructure and services, not to mention the often negative image of farming and a lower standard of living.

4. The Assembly considers it urgent to change this state of affairs, otherwise living conditions will become even more difficult for rural populations, in particular young people. The socio-economic development of European countries in various fields (education, health, communications and transport, etc.), the modernisation of lifestyles in rural areas and the increased appeal of rural areas resulting from the new activities that could be developed there would make it possible to offer better opportunities to young people who live in rural areas and would like to build a future there.

5. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

i. instruct the European Youth Centre and the European Steering Committee for Youth to foster activities of relevance to young people in rural areas and in particular:

- devise and implement a European strategy reconciling the needs of both youth policy and rural development policy;
- take stock of, support and promote member states' innovative rural education and training programmes;



- c. encourage studies and comparative research on youth in rural areas;
- ii. invite the governments of member states to:
  - a. consult rural youth organisations on the drafting of rural and youth policies, particularly where the setting up and implementation of education and training programmes are concerned;
  - b. pay particular attention to the problems of young farmers, making it easier for them to set up in farming, providing training appropriate to their needs, helping to improve the public image of farming and introducing increased tax relief for those acquiring or developing farms;
  - c. ensure that educational and training opportunities in rural areas are maintained and developed and that opportunities for further study are not found only in urban areas. Priority must be given to keeping rural primary and secondary schools open;
  - d. take steps to develop distance learning in rural areas, promote access to the latest technology and encourage the establishment of businesses in the countryside;
  - e. train teachers specialising in educational fields adapted to the needs of rural areas;
  - f. introduce a training programme for young managers of small and medium-sized businesses in the countryside;
  - g. provide support, including financial support, for the development of rural youth organisations, with particular emphasis on youth organisation programmes and projects to promote rural development;

- h. instruct local authorities in rural areas and their associations to set up pilot development projects (i.e. involving businesspeople in the provision of training and mentoring for the young, setting up youth business centres providing equipment for a given period (seedbeds for rural enterprises) and offering grants to companies that employ young people, etc.);
- i. encourage young people to participate in local political life in rural areas (through consultation, encouragement to participate in decisions concerning them, youth councils, etc.);
- j. encourage job creation in rural areas by means of support programmes for people wishing to retire, making it easier to transmit skills and transfer operations and ownership;
- k. promote new activities and help young people to find alternative employment in the countryside;
- l. encourage the development of communications, transport and new information technologies in rural areas, especially the most remote ones;
- m. promote sustainable agriculture and rural development and encourage local initiatives for a better protection of nature and the environment.

## Reference graphs

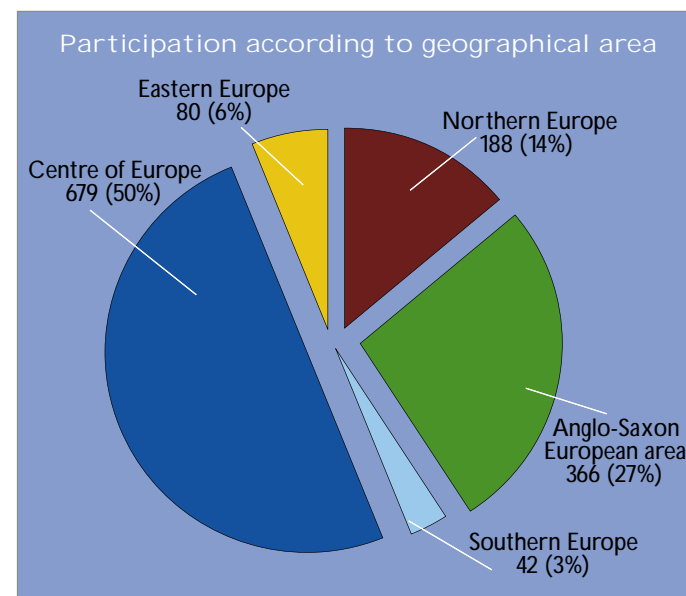


### Introduction

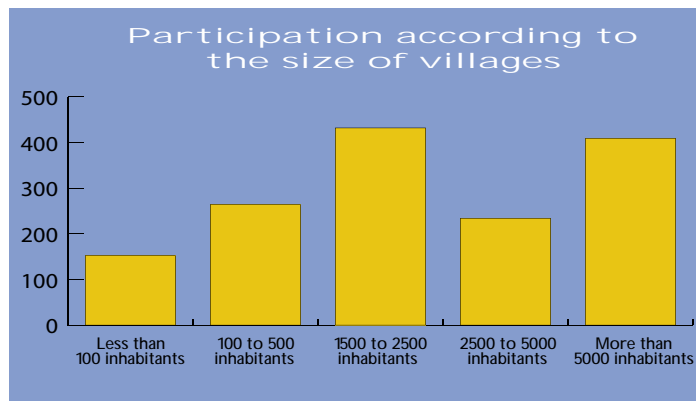
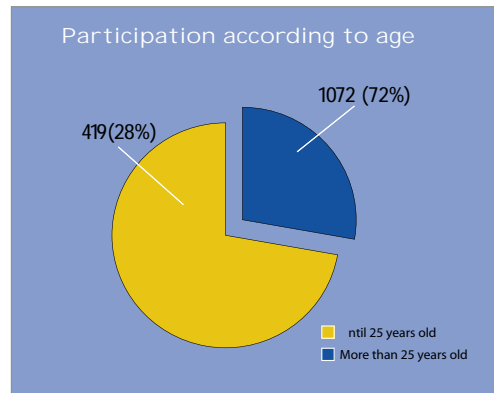
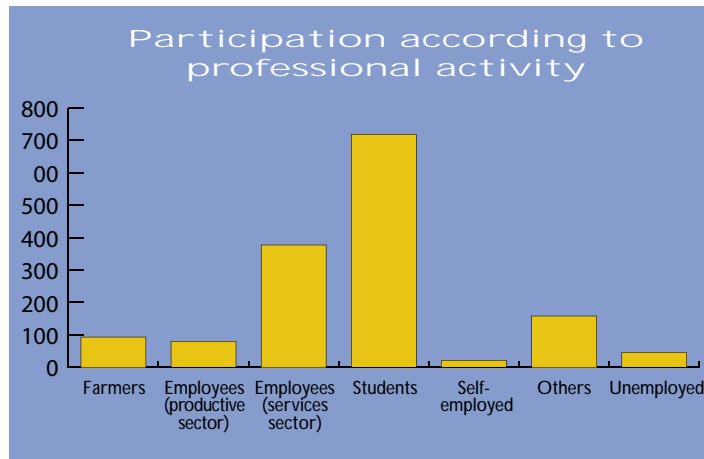
Focus on first results

	Country	Total	%
1	Albania	2	0.13
2	Austria	23	1.54
3	Belarus	2	0.13
4	Belgium	24	1.61
5	Bulgaria	6	0.40
6	Czech republic	2	0.13
7	Denmark	86	5.77
8	Finland	151	10.13
9	Former Yugoslavia (Kosovo)	2	0.13
10	France	259	17.37
11	Germany	368	24.68
12	Greece	6	0.40
13	Hungary	2	0.13
14	Iceland	4	0.27

	Country	Total	%
15	Italy	4	0.27
16	Latvia	86	5.77
17	Lithuania	17	1.14
18	Netherlands	5	0.34
19	Norway	7	0.47
20	Poland	24	1.61
21	Portugal	2	0.13
22	Russia	10	0.67
23	Slovenia	62	4.16
24	Spain	30	2.01
25	Sweden	26	1.74
26	Ukraine	1	0.07
27	United Kingdom	280	18.78
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1491</b>	<b>100</b>



## Chapter 1 : Participation



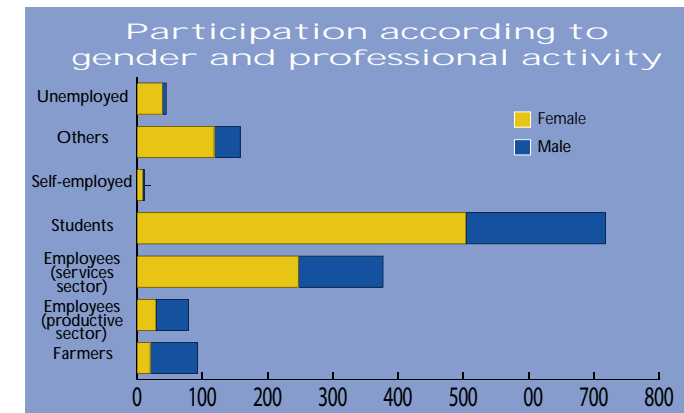
Geographically, the students and the employees active in the services sector are the most represented in the countries from the so-called Centre of Europe (respectively almost 25% and 12% of the overall answers).

In the Anglo-Saxon countries, the employees (services) are well represented (8%) followed by the students (around 7%) and the farmers (4%).

The Anglo-Saxon area entails the biggest part of farmers.

In the Eastern European area as well as for the Northern European countries, the most represented category is the students' one.

The countries of the Center of Europe do have the largest share of participants who are unemployed.



From a gender perspective, female participants represent more than the double of the male share in the most represented categories: students (70,19 %) and employees (65, 52 %), taking into account the predo-

The large rates of students and employees in the services sector in the Centre of Europe area and of farmers for the Anglo-Saxon area may correspond to the membership scope of the rural youth organisations present there.

For instance, Rural Youth Europe (mostly located in the Anglo-Saxon area, in the Centre of Europe & Northern and Eastern countries) appear to have a younger membership in some parts and entail more farmers in others, while MIJARC Europe's membership tends to cover mostly students and young professionals and a bit less the farming sector (the movement is well established in France, Belgium, Germany and Southern Europe).

Since the end of the 1980's, the number of organisations in Eastern European countries is growing increasingly.

minance of female answers in the survey.

On the contrary, the productive sector (industry) entails a majority of men as employees.

Around 80 % of the farmers who have answered are men (78,49%).

In line with the so-called "classical" sharing of roles and activities between genders showed by those

figures, the women represent a dominant share as students or as employees in the services sector; men are the majority in the productive sector and as farmers.





## Chapter 4 : Leisure time

## Final chapter

Which are the three main activities you usually practice in your leisure time?	% of people
Read	9.9
Play sport	9.9
Go to the cinema, theatre, concerts	5.5
Watch TV	8
Go shopping	2.2
Use a computer, use the Internet, play video games, etc.	8.4
Go for a walk, a drive, a bike ride	5.1
Meet friends	16
Play an instrument	2.6
Listen to music	5.5
Paint	0.4
Go dancing	3.3
Participate in activities organised by associations/ youth clubs	12
Help out in the house/farm	5.5
Do some work for money	2.6
Handicraft activities	1.8
Others	1.3

There were other concerns arising from the answers by youngsters about what they would change in their environment:

- Situation of farmers:
  - Cultural opportunities (cinemas, libraries...) (8% each)
- Studies/training opportunities; Housing issues (finding a house to rent, buying a house); Mix of people/cultures; Basic shopping opportunities (7% each)