



# CHAMPIONING RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## *ENTRE RURALITÉS ' TOOLKIT*



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



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**Gilles Evrard ESSUMAN**  
Project Coordinator & Researcher  
Réseau Solidaire & Participatif (RESOPA)



**The #EntreRuralité project was organized in Clermont-Ferrand – a city right on the empty diagonal\* in France in order to reunite young people from all over Europe to work**

on issues related to rural development and community building. During the project, the participants had the chance to visit different local and rural initiatives in order to understand the role of young people in that regard. Also, the participants had the chance to exchange on the realities from their countries as well as participate in a hackaton where they proposed solutions to rampant rural problems from their territories. This toolkit is a testament of this interesting experience which reunited 30 people who took time to reflect on issues related to rural development and youth participation in Europe.

Empty Diagonal – The empty diagonal (French: diagonale du vide) is a band of low-density population that stretches from the French department of the Landes in the southwest to the Meuse in the northeast. The diagonal's population density is very low compared to the rest of France



**Gabriel BREZOIU**

**GEYC & PRISMA European Network**

**Just over one quarter (28.0 %) of the EU-28 population lived in a rural area in 2015, with a somewhat higher share living in towns and suburbs**

(31.6 %), while the biggest share of the EU-28 population lived in cities (40.4 %). However, despite the significant concentration of inhabitants, the GDP contribution is low while the unemployment rates are high with many familiar involved in informal rural work and in their own farms. We believe that in the post-pandemic recovery, youth work should play a more significant role in rural development in order to nurture the young people's potential, decrease unemployment, and to promote youth entrepreneurship.

# INTRODUCTION

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*"Europe cannot afford wasted talent, social exclusion or disengagement among its youth."* The European Commission, 2018

On the 22nd of May, 2018, the European Commission launched the European Youth Goals, which, for 2019-2027, will act as the framework of the European Union (EU) Youth policy. Facing a horizon obscured by great uncertainties, the Youth is presented as the next chapter of European integration's catalyst.

Among the eleven adopted objectives, one demography stands out, appearing to be in need of EU Youth Policy and its mechanisms' diligence. Goal number six, entitled *Moving Rural Youth Forward*, puts an emphasis on the challenges faced by the youth living in rural areas. Rural areas consist the majority of the EU's geography: 91% of the territory, for 56% of the Union's total population (EU Science Hub, 2020). Rural areas, and their leading sector, agriculture, have long acted as the springboard for the continent's economies and societies. As such, they contribute to the Union's cultural and natural heritage, as underscored by Walter Schwimmer, former Secretary-General of the Council of Europe. In 2020, the EU's agricultural industry generated an estimated gross value of EUR 177.0 billion, continuing the trend of an increase in the indicator, since 2007. Nonetheless, Goal number 6 implies that peril lurks.

Indeed, in the most recent years, rural areas have been under the threat of structural and persistent dangers: public services desertification, depopulation, poverty... In rural areas, young people are twice as likely to be unemployed as their adult counterparts, and in 2014, 27.2% of the rural population in the EU was at risk of poverty. Furthermore, underlying phenomenon such as the brain drain or population aging hinders the development of rural areas: to their disadvantage, high skills and competencies are captured by Member States' urban centers.

Rural areas and rural youth qualify as a priority area for EU public action. With the Conference on the Future of Europe sketching a new route to prosperity, there is an opportunity to redirect funding mechanisms and public policies' vitality



towards supporting the growth of rural areas. The path to recovery and further integration cannot ignore the peripheries of the Member States.

Such state of affairs does engage civil society actors and NGOs, as they are equipped to tackle a number of challenges specific to rural areas. They can participate in community building, guide young people on the job market, inform authorities on the needs of their population, or put pressure on elected representatives when they fail to acknowledge their responsibility to act.

RESOPA is up for the challenge, and between the 2nd of July 2021 and the 10th of July 2021, together with Prisma European Network, it gathered a consortium of thirty youth workers and young people from ten European countries to extensively work on the issue of rural development with *Entre Ruralités*. #Entreruralites was a training course implemented in Clermont-Ferrand, France setting out to uncover how youth organizations can empower young entrepreneurs in rural areas. Four challenges, four obstacles to dismantle, were put on the programme's agenda: youth unemployment, community development, civic engagement, the brain drain.

In line with the endeavor, the objective of *Entre Ruralités* were threefolds:

- to equip thirty youth workers with adequate non-formal and formal education methods or tools allowing them to act as the catalysts to change in the EU's rural areas
- to thus reduce the rate of youth unemployment in the Union, by means of an increase in youth participation and of the number of rural entrepreneurs;
- to empower participating youth organizations to engage, with their beneficiaries, in community building.

Supporting the realization of these targets, a series of collaborative and engaging activities, including the visit of rural entrepreneur ventures led by young people in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, enabled young people to share and perfect their contribution to the dismantling of the aforementioned obstacles. *Entre Ruralités* will carry out a postulate: rural areas have the potential for autonomous development, founded on rural assets.



## Réseau Solidaire Participatif (RESOPA)

A non-formal education organization based in Gerzat, France, RESOPA works with European youth at grassroots levels to help them develop qualities and skills that are relevant to community building. The organisation makes use of social innovation and Erasmus+ projects (KA1 & KA2) to implement its ideas and hold impact. RESOPA's targets are NEETs and young people in rural or remote areas. The organisation's expertise ranges from sustainable development to social entrepreneurship, and rural development.

*"For us, quality is not a slogan, it's a network!"*

With members in Europe, Eastern Partnership countries, North Africa, and the Middle East, PRISMA gathers active organizations in the youth field, such as RESOPA, committed to developing qualitative youth work and opportunities at an international level by taking advantage of the new media technologies. PRISMA advocates at the EU level for a more inclusive and digital Union, connects with relevant stakeholders (companies, public institutions, media, academia), and craft powerful campaigns with its members on the prominent issues faced by young people. Finally, Prisma European Network develops youth-centered training courses to develop skills and build new ones.





## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

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# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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On the second day, Entre Ruralités ' participants were introduced to the concepts that would frame their reflection for the week to come: rural development, smart village, rural entrepreneurship, rural youth, and rural participation.

Firstly, they assembled their knowledge on the notions, before confronting it to literature's discourse and definition.

## Rural Development

"Rural development, as a concept, coins both a process and a policy area". (Harris, 1982). The dynamic of rural development as being both something happening, and something to make happen is central to the concept of rural development. To better understand what it entails, participants considered the characteristics of rural areas: low levels of density, an agriculture sector dominating the economy and the landscape, small communities separated by large distances. The challenges associated with the growth of rural areas include natural-resources-dependent livelihoods, the brain drain, high levels of unemployment, public services desertification, aging population, social and economic vulnerability, low level of commitment to community life ... Such obstacles to development were at the heart of Entre Ruralités' schedule.

Paths towards the resolution of the issues were drawn from the Common Agricultural Policy and the Second Pillar. Indeed, to support rural development, the European Commission endeavors to:

- foster the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry;
- ensure the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action;
- achieve a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment

"A Smart Village uses digital innovation to make urban service delivery more efficient and thereby increase the overall competitiveness of a community." (OECD, 2020).

Deciphering the concept of the smart village led to a debate on whether it required without amendment to establish a so-called digital ecosystem.



The European Union does give credit to the theory that a smart city, or village, is enlightened by the harmonious organization of its assets, rather than by a degree of technological sophistication. In this regard, the smart process is quite similar to that of entrepreneurship, which innovates in a rearrangement of the productive factors. The European Union policy context does not exclusively define Smart Villages as: *"communities which build on their existing strengths and assets as well as on developing new opportunities"*.

**"Entrepreneurship is the process of creating value by assembling unclaimed resources to exploit a market opportunity."** (Stevenson)

In *Rural Entrepreneurship*, the adjective refers to a peculiar social, economical, political, geographical, and/or cultural context.

Rural entrepreneurs stimulate the growth of their community by creating jobs, they reduce the brain drain and can contribute to fostering civic participation – in sum, rural entrepreneurship creates the conditions for rural areas' development.

## Rural Youth

*"Youth is a concept without a universally applicable definition"* (Bárta, 2020)

In the EU policy context, young people are aged 15 to 29 years old, as such, Entre Ruralités defined the target group as being aged 15 to 29 years old and living in rural areas. Considering Eurostat's compiled statistics, between 2014 and 2019, approximately 18% (15 to 16 million) of the young people lived in rural areas and 45% (about 40 million) lived in urban settings. Participants were adamant to underline the specific challenges experienced by young people living in rural areas, that set them apart from their urban counterparts, such as rural youth unemployment. Participants later built the problem tree of the aforementioned issue.

## Rural Participation

*"Participation is the process in which the people are closely involved in economic, social, cultural, and political affairs which affect their lives. The success of the various rural programmes depends not only on the effective functioning of the various administrative agencies but also depends upon the active participation of people."* (Lal, 2016)



According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation, the participation of villages presents advantages for all actors of the community:

- *for rural communities:* participation is a way to identify and implement **priority** rural development activities through **better use of existing resources**
- *for governments:* the use of participatory methods in a large number of villages provides information to establish development programs that **respond to local demands and needs**
- *for service providers:* participation means becoming **more accountable** to communities. Through their strengthened organizations, villages can more strongly voice their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services received and **indicate how service delivery can be improved**





## Rural areas

Rurality is a subjective notion. Picturing rural landscapes, a French person living in the southwest of the country imagines vineyards baking under the sun. Someone from central or southeastern Poland will rather see vast expanses of apple fields.

The OECD settles for a quantitative definition: *"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"*. However, the approach is exclusive: what of communities exceeding this limit due to seasonal tourism?

A negative definition of rural areas enables the isolation of key impediments to growth: *"Despite all differences among rural areas, one common concern is that their influence has decreased more and more as the main focus of public, political, and ecclesiastical interest lies in big cities."* (MIJARC Europe, 2003). Are rural areas intrinsically lacking? Entre Ruralités challenged this prejudice and revealed the potential of rural areas.





## **NATIONAL REALITIES CHECK**

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# NATIONAL REALITIES CHECK

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Entre Ruralités gathered young people and youth workers originating from ten countries, the participants thus had experienced a variety of contexts, and contradicting understanding of the situation of young people in rural areas. The activity National Realities Check enabled engaged them in an intercultural dialogue where the gathering of contrasting realities led to the emergence of a more acute understanding of rurality, as well as of the challenges at hand for those willing to pose young people as the source of rural development.

## Typology of rural areas

Participants were tasked to assess the location and type of rural areas in their countries. For all ten countries, participants estimated that rural areas were located "all over the country", with specific foyers emerging in the hinterland, or in mountainous regions, such as in the Carpathian region in Romania. Rural and remote areas concentrated to form a pattern in some countries: the *diagonale du vide* (the empty diagonal) cuts France in half from the North East to the South West. It is characterized by low levels of population density, an aging population, and public services desertification. Participants argued that remote and rural areas, in all countries with the exception of Palestine, were overwhelmingly

former industrial areas which economies collapsed when cleaner, renewable energies began to be preferred to coal.

## Key challenges to rural development



### Aging Population

With six out of ten countries reporting it, an aging population is a prominent challenge to rural growth.



### Internal Migrations

In rural areas, labor forces migrate to urban centers, in search of social or economic opportunities.



### Lack of Public Services

The closure of public services or public services desertification in rural areas deteriorates the wellbeing

as well as the attractiveness of affected villages. The absence or undersupply of education infrastructures were spotted out as severely undermining rural communities' potential for development, as well as intensifying internal migrations and the population decline.



### **The Brain Drain**

The participants observed that the few numbers of highly qualified members of rural communities migrate to city centers due to a lack of opportunities in rural areas.



### **Access to funds**

Participants shared a lack of awareness of funding opportunities at the European level. Moreover, an asymmetry between member states differentiates situations: some national governments led financial inclusion policies while others did not. Lack of financial support was often identified as a barrier to the setting up of programmes, and thus, the implementation of a momentum leading to local development.



### **Innovation**

The scarcity of innovative ventures in rural areas, as much as it is an obstacle to development, is one challenge that participants promptly felt that they could outgrow, as civil society organizations, with targeted and empowering programmes.

## **Success Stories**

Participants were invited to share inspiring case studies of rural entrepreneurship from their countries.

You can consult the interactive map [here](#).

### **Reconciling tradition and innovation**

Melgarejo is an olive oil cooperative producing Extra Virgin olive oils in the south of Spain.

The cooperative has been described as contributing to the socio-economic and cultural development of Pegalaja, as an example of rural entrepreneurship recouring to innovative technologies without renouncing to tradition or ancestral know-hows. The company even promotes its heritage by developing Oleo tourism: in groups of up to four people, tourists are able to visit the grove and the mill, as well as take part in a tasting course.

### **Sustainable entrepreneurship for rural producers**

*"Born from the heart, made with passion"*, LUMI is an Estonian skincare brand. The company brought back to the fore a regional asset: it founded its business model on the use of hemp oil, whose properties had fallen into oblivion. LUMI sources local output from sustainable crops located in the East of Estonia.



### **Supporting rural women through social entrepreneurship**

Ümmiye Koçak is a Turkish screenwriter. Born in the remote village of Çelemn, the sixth child of a family of ten children, her parents could not afford to send her to school. A model of resources and perseverance, she managed to become a screenwriter still. She since founded Arslanköye Women Theater's Group, a theater troupe sharing the experiences of women living in rural through its numerous representations. Having won a number of awards, Ümmiye Koçak continues to defend the cause of rural women and to create opportunities for them, within her troupe, or in the films for which she wrote the script.



### **Eco-tourism and rural development**

Surrounded by the verdant forests of Bulgaria, Omayo Eco Village is located in the west of the country.

The accommodations are built with natural materials: wood, stone, and clay. The restaurant cooks organic, local, products and serves fresh fish, caught in the nearby lakes.

The foundation of the eco-village increased the attractiveness of the region, and many tourists now visit it, as well as the neighboring villages.

### **Empowering the Rural Youth**

At the end of a competition opposing villages willing to expand the reach of their youth policies, the Romanian Government award the title of the European Youth Village.

During a year, the winning municipalities are able to implement a number of activities, projects, or events at the local level to solve the needs of the youth, as well as encourage their participation in the community. The European Youth Village programme endeavors to build sustainable partnerships between the rural youth, institutions, and the private sector, for the wellbeing of rural communities.

In the last development of the

discussion, participants were tasked with identifying accessible resources within their community to impulse growth in rural and remote areas.

### **Agriculture**

In the European Union, the agriculture industry provides over 20 million jobs. Between 2011 and 2020, the agricultural income of the EU has been steadily increasing. Agriculture accounts for roughly 10% of the Union's total exports with the rest of the world. Consequently, rural development inescapably involves the agricultural sector, especially in a policy context setting agricultural products at the heart of "*vibrant rural areas*" (European Commission, 2020). Entre Ruralités' participants acknowledged the opportunity: six countries out of ten reported agriculture as an available resource, underscoring its potential to create jobs and generate revenue, as well as openings for related ventures, including sustainable and local food systems or eco-tourism.

### **Youth for Rural Development**

Participation is yet to find a fixed meaning. Various in practice, it can be punctual or continuous, consultative or executive, opened to the greatest numbers or limited to members...

Youth inclusion in the decision-making process is a long-held ambition of the EU - the Conference on the Future of Europe is an example of the endeavor, as broadening participation anchors the EU value of human dignity, the rule of law, and the democratic ideal. If the difficulty to implement participation in representative democracies was not settled at Entre Ruralités, participants agreed on the necessity to adopt a three-lensed approach to the role of the youth in rural development. They are to be its beneficiaries, participants, and initiators. In developing countries and within multilateral organizations, young people's participation in development is established in regards to the factual evidence. According to World Bank data, 50% of the developing world population is comprised of young people. Yet, in developed countries, young people swarm urban areas, rather than rural settings. Thus, youth is a population that needs to be attracted to rural areas to accomplish development. Any attempt to increase youth participation must implement activities unrooting the causes of their absence, namely poor education, weak infrastructures, lack of economic or social opportunities...



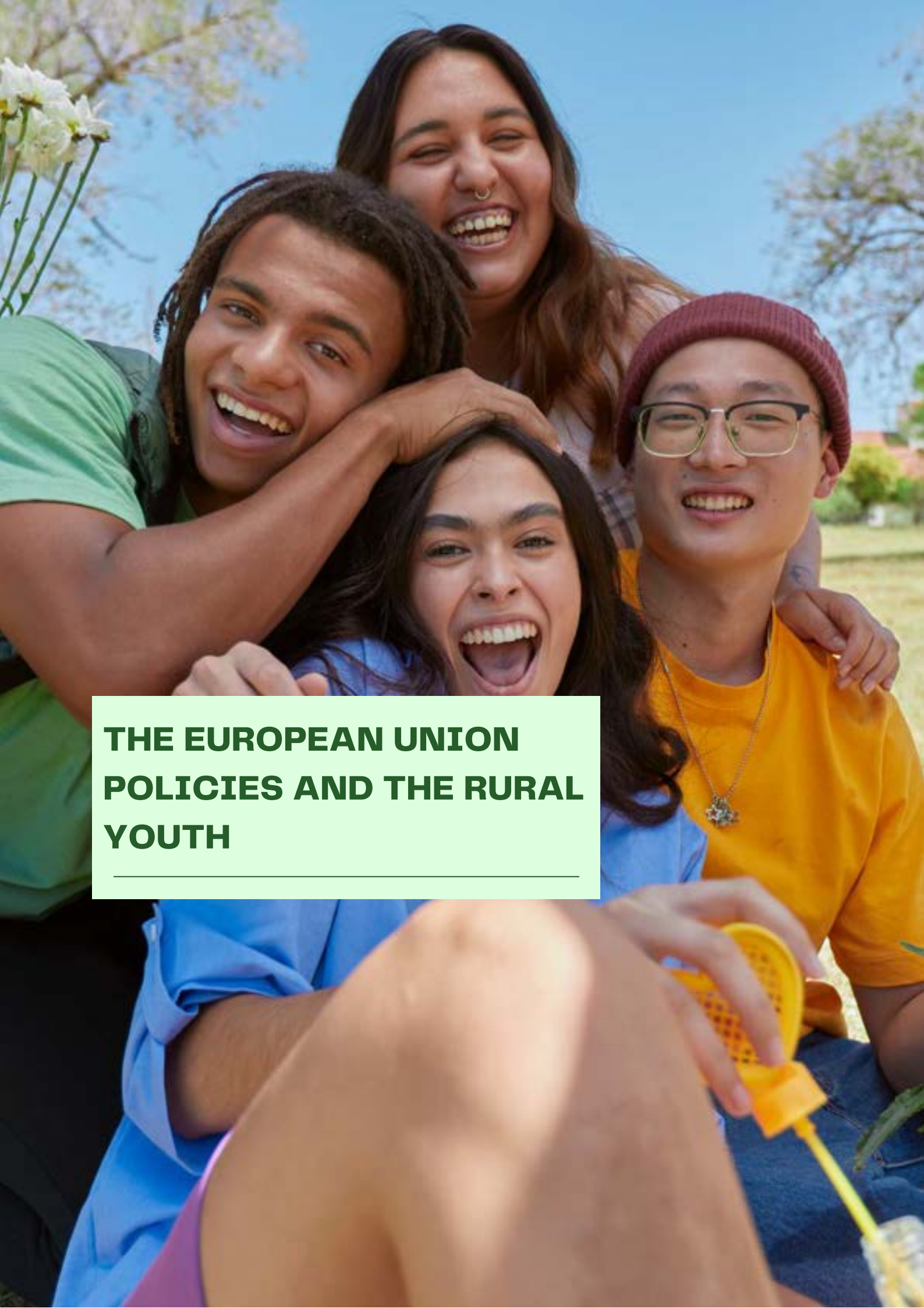
## Natural and Cultural heritage

Covid-19 reshuffled the cards of European urban lifestyles. Some now dream of a life freed from the constant hubbub, suffocating promiscuity, and high prices of the cities. Traditional obstacles to rural development; big distances or low levels of population density, are becoming rural areas' most convincing advocates.

Among ongoing transitions, the path towards sustainable tourism, supported by the European Commission (EU Ecolabel, EMAS regulation...), presents an opportunity for rural areas to be innovative and enter the tertiary sector, for now, installed in urban centers.

Participants listed a number of natural resources (waterfalls, forests, spring waters, swamps), and historic landmarks as available resources for the development of rural areas. Rurality can be a selling argument.





**THE EUROPEAN UNION  
POLICIES AND THE RURAL  
YOUTH**

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# THE EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES AND THE RURAL YOUTH

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Comprised of youngsters aged 15 to 29 years old living in rural areas, the rural youth is a minority – merely adding up to 18% of the total population of young people living in the European Union. As much as rurality dominates the Union's geography, voices of the rural population dwindle, lacking a platform to give them breadth. Not recognised as a formal European Institution, the European Rural Parliament, with the European Rural Youth Parliament (ERYP), sets up a forum where young people from remote and rural areas can gather and speak up.

In 2019, the ERYP published a declaration, addressed to EU decision-makers. *"We call on European, national, and local decision-makers, rural development organizations, and other stakeholders to respect the needs of the youth and to act accordingly"*.

On the morning of the 8th of July, Entre Ruralités' participants assessed if EU policies do comply with the ERYP's demand if they meet the transversal needs isolated in the previous section.

A survey ran at the end of the activity, found that among the thirty youth workers, 38% rated EU public action regarding the rural youth at 4 out of 7, for an overall score of 4.3 out of 7; insisting that there is room for improvement.

Youth and rural policies are within the competencies of EU public action. Three sources of policies were examined: the European Union Youth Strategy, the Common Agricultural Policy, and The European Employment Strategy.

## The European Youth Strategy

The strategy was birthed by the *Renewed Social Agenda*. In 2008, it sought to create more opportunities and it provides the framework of the European Union Youth Policy cooperation.

Established by a resolution of the Council of the European Union, the 2019-2027 agenda underscores the special role young people have in societies' development, and the



challenges they face. To engage, to engage, to empower, thus are the core activities of the EU Youth Strategy, compelled by eleven goals to be achieved by 2027.

- Connecting EU with Youth
- Equality of All Genders
- Inclusive Societies
- Information and Constructive Dialogue
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Moving Rural Youth Forward
- Quality Employment for all
- Quality Learning
- Space and Participation for All
- Sustainable Green Europe
- Youth Organisations and European Programmes

The sixth goal is straightforward: young people living in rural areas are now subjects of EU Youth Policy - they are even singled out from other demographics, such as the youth with disabilities. The specific attention granted to the rural youth is novel. Besides, the aforementioned goals do support the dismantling of obstacles to rural development.

For instance, quality employment for all in rural areas would minimize the brain drain.

Especially, the EU Youth Strategy's concrete realizations are accessible to the rural youth: the mobility programs, the participation frameworks, and the digital tools.

**The Mobility Programs:** Erasmus+ funds formal and non-formal education programmes for the mobility of young people. With the Youth in Action Programme, projects increasing the number of entrepreneurial ventures in remote and rural areas can be financed. In the presentation document of Youth in Action, the Union a variety of obstacles to development are identified, among which the geographical barriers of rural areas. Likewise, in the provisions on the funded projects' quality, two thematic are brought to the fore as priority areas of action: rural development and entrepreneurship. Entre Ruralités pinpoints a policy context benefiting youth organizations willing to support young people living in rural areas.



Similarly, the European Solidarity Corps, launched in 2016, is a resource that must be seized: the Local Solidarity Projects enable young people to run their own projects in their village, for the benefit of rural communities.

**The Participation Framework** sets up forums where the rural youth and Youth Organizations can connect with decision-makers and debate. The European Youth Dialogue supports the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027. Organized cycles of 18 months, specific thematics are discussed. The most recent dialogue focused on creating opportunities for the Youth. One of the three sub-theme, indeed, was entitled: opportunities for rural Youth. Youth Organizations in rural areas should reach out to the national working groups of the European Youth Dialogue. In each member state, they are responsible for coordinating the discussion between young people, NGOs, and policymakers. In the pursuit of encouraging youth participation, EU platforms such as the European Youth Dialogue must be invested.



**Digital and Informative Tools** are crucial: some websites may list opportunities, share databases or publications, and catalogue the regulation and priorities in place at the European level, as well as other Member States' strategies to meet the targets. The national policies and EU priorities prove to be useful: assets to put pressure on officials or elected representatives.

The European Youth Portal, centralizes traineeship, work, studying, volunteering, and exchanges opportunities. Rich with materials on how the youth can get involved at the European level, it must be part of Youth Organisations' toolkit in rural areas.

Managed by Coyote Magazine, the Rural Youth Resource Page on the website of the Council of the European Union gathers practical toolkits on how to engage rural youth, organize rural youth festivals, lead activities for the development of the rural economy, and so on.

Entre Ruralités' participants concluded that the European Youth Strategy was on the right track, with explicit attention to the fate of young people living in rural areas, at the policy discussion stage.

However, at the implementation phase, participants highlighted that the rural youth remains the collateral target of EU Youth Policy. Alerting policymakers for better inclusion of the rural youth's specific needs is thus the responsibility of Youth Organisations.

Established in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome, the CAP ambitions to increase the stability of the prizes and raise the living standards of farmers. The Policy is one of the hot-topic of the EU policy-making and each reform to its instruments is put under heavy media scrutiny and debated by the Member States as it relates to national interests. Currently, the CAP is opening up to the youth in rural areas and its new priority is to move towards sustainable systems and to support local economies. Thus, Entre Ruralités identify an opportunity for Youth Organizations to try and branch out to the opportunities of the CAP, as a means to champion rural entrepreneurs, especially for programs developing activities related to the set up of agricultural cooperatives. Especially, it could support the completion of the European Youth Goal number 10:



A Sustainable Green Europe. However, the CAP does not explicitly target young people living in rural areas, but rather, supports young farmers. The Young farmers' tools, introduced by the 2013 reform of the CAP enable a new generation of farmers to enter a competitive market. It mostly endeavors to ease the access to land, which, in the European Union is mostly inherited or disputed between older, established farmers and residential investors. This situation results in a low supply of lands to buy or rent. Thus, mechanisms such as the Young Farmer Scheme or the Start-Up Aid for Young Farmers aim at supporting new entrants to set up their businesses. The impact of the CAP is yet limited by the demography of farmers in the European Union. According to Eurostat, 29.7% of them are aged 65 years and more, 16.6% are aged 35-44, and only 7.5% are aged less than 35 years old.

### **The European Employment Strategy**

Set up in 1997, it can contribute to creating jobs for the rural youth, but, as for the CAP, it makes no explicit mention to the rural Youth. Rather, the strategy is broadly aimed at

young people with tools such as the Youth Guarantee, or the Quality Framework for Traineeship remaining statements of attention by the Member States or a legal framework regarding the respects of the interns' rights.

It must be addressed that both the CAP and the EES are both old instruments, dating back several decades, as such, they are hard to reform, mostly because they branch out with the national interests of the Member States and their level of integration is often limited by intergovernmental governance.

One question was addressed when considering the EU public action's capacity to tackle the challenges faced by young people in rural areas. If both the CAP and the EES do not take as a direct target the rural youth, they can indirectly contribute to dismantling some of the identified obstacles, by creating new jobs, revitalizing the local economy, raising the standards of living of the population in rural areas ... effectively contributing to create the conditions for rural development.





# **YOUTH WORKERS IN RURAL AREAS**

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# YOUTH WORKERS IN RURAL AREAS

Entre Ruralités invited participant youth workers and young people to discuss what should be the profile of the ideal youth worker, in a rural setting. Using the Aptitude, Attitude, Knowledge method, they gathered the prominent qualities of youth workers, committed to rural development.

## The profile of youth workers in rural areas

### Aptitude



#### Digital Skills

Rural Areas can not be left on the bench of the digital transition. Youth workers are competent in the use of ICTs and able to lead activities exploiting the benefits of digital tools.



#### Soft Skills

Listening and communication aptitudes are crucial to the success of a programme: youth workers in rural areas navigate fragile communities.

They are keen negotiators able to put pressure on institutions and to advocate the needs of the youth in front of governmental entities.



#### Goal Orientated

Youth workers are versed in establishing strategies and reaching the agreed on goals, their priority is to deliver on the objectives and they help participants to focus on the bigger picture.

### Attitude



#### Patient

Change requires time. In rural areas, processes such as the allocation of resources, the mobilization of local communities, the creation of a firm, might be winding. Moreover, rural populations can be less inclined to discuss their needs with outsiders. The youth worker is flexible, patient, and can adapt the calendar to unannounced contingencies.



#### Positive

Empowering someone starts with the creation of a culture of experimentation. Youth workers have a positive mindset, they provide guidance to their beneficiaries, advice on how to progress and highlights successes.



#### Team Orientated

Youth workers are not knowledge-holders, they co-construct the outcomes of the program with the beneficiaries.

### Knowledge



#### Funding

A key obstacle to rural development is access to funds. Youth workers in rural areas know of funding opportunities, at the regional, national and European level. They can set up a sustainable budget that will convince stakeholders.



#### Legal Framework and Governance

Youth workers are aware of the legislation framing their activities and that of the participants. They are knowledgeable on the development policy of the location of the program and can harness its potentials.



#### Rurality

Youth workers are strong of a theoretical understanding of rural areas and its processes, from the economy, to the sociology, typography, culture or history. They are mindful of their own cultural biases.

## Recommended experiences

Working with an NGO, visiting rural villages, volunteering, entrepreneurship, networking, setting up a budget, European programmes management, leading training courses

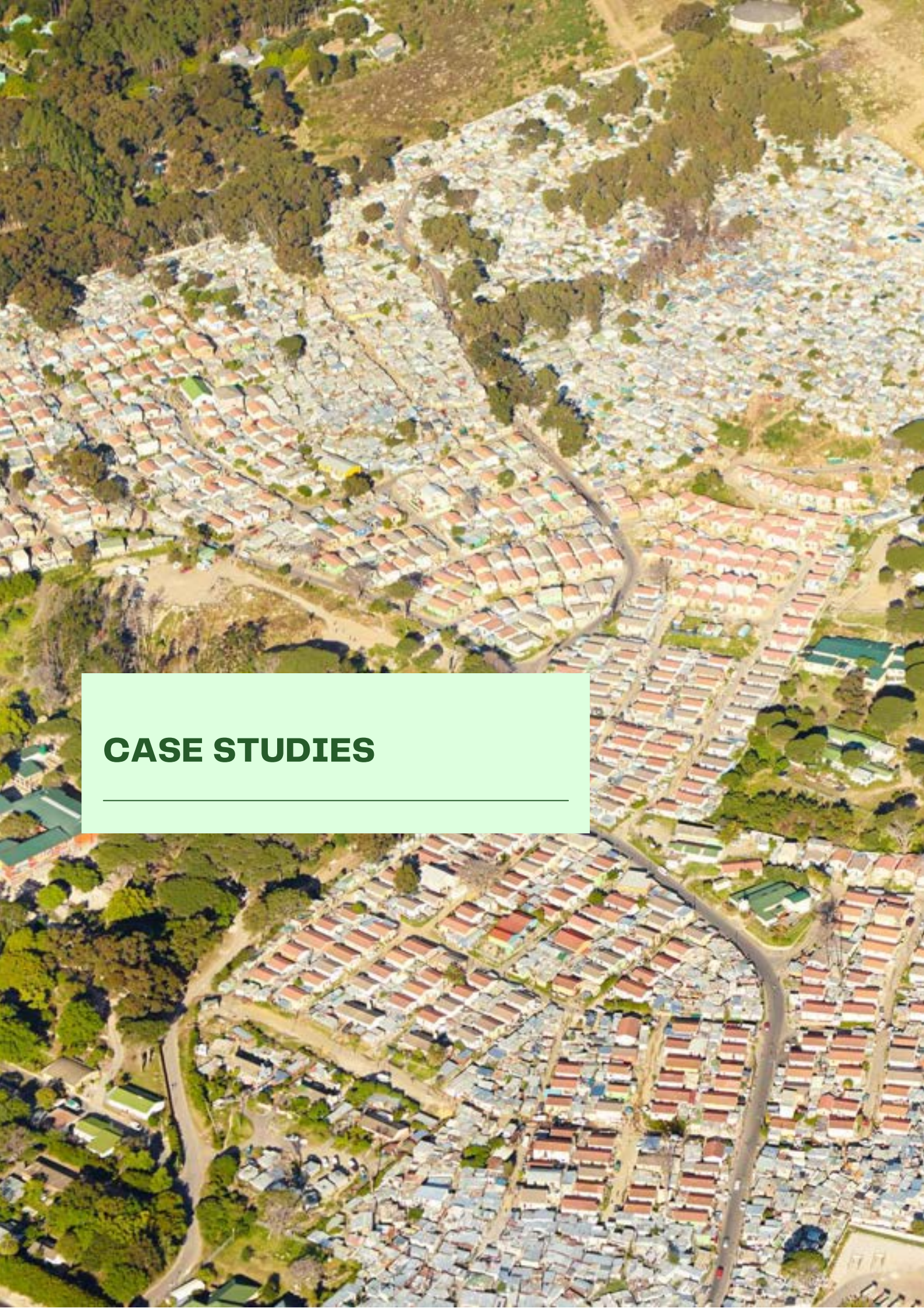
Participants agreed that fostering change in rural areas presents a set of additional challenges. The Lippitt-Knostrer Model was suggested as a useful tool to navigate rurality's complexity. The model isolates the five prerequisites to achieve positive change: vision, skills, incentives (benefits), resources, and an action plan.



Adapted from Knostrer, T. (1991) Presentation in TASH Conference, Washington, D.C. Adapted by Knostrer from Enterprise Group, Ltd.

from, The Lippitt-Knostrer Model for Managing Complex Change, SERGIO CAREDDA





## **CASE STUDIES**

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# L'AVENIR EN COMMUN

Founded in 2020 at Sciences Po Saint-Germain-en-Laye, l'Avenir en Commun is an association providing public policy consulting to medium to small municipalities. Its objective is to allow political sciences students to gain experience in policy-making and to support mayors of small municipalities in their endeavor to achieve rural development. The tool of the association is volunteering activities, for up to one month, a student will travel to the townhouse of a municipality in need and support the mayor in the identification of priority areas of actions and quality public services that meet the actual need of the community.

The methodology of the process is threefold: first, the student designs a map of the municipality, consisting of the actors, threats, and opportunities of the region, by referring to ethnographic methodologies or consulting available data such as the city's financial accounts. Then, the student proposes a set of policies to the municipality.

Finally, the student writes a Report of action, comprised of a state of affairs and the recommended solutions.





# LES PANIERS DU PETIT LUCIEN

Les Paniers du Petit Lucien, in English, Little Lucien's baskets, is an agricultural cooperative created in Truchtersheim in 2010, in the Alsace region. The company sells fresh vegetables or fruits from local producers, with the objective of sustaining the local agricultural activity. It offers stands on three principles: fresh products, harvested on the day of the delivery, local products, from sustainable crops, at competitive prices.

The business model of Les Paniers du Petit Lucien is the Cooperative Model, originating in Europe around the 17th century.

In France, there are 2 900 registered agricultural cooperatives, unions, and agricultural companies of collective interest (SICA). Together, they account for the creation of 16 000 jobs and a total turnover of €83 billion, as such, there are models for sustainable social entrepreneurship, in rural areas. The "coop" model draws from the cooperative capitalism theory, reconciling the freedom of enterprise with economic solidarity.

By joining a cooperative, a farmer joins an influential group that has increased power over a highly competitive market. Moreover, by sharing the risks and the cost of investment, they gain additional capital that they can reinvest. By reducing the number of intermediaries, such as marketing, between the producer and the consumer, cooperatives allow farmers to gain additional revenue while lowering the price for the consumers. In return, both the producers and the consumer may reinvest the additional revenue in local businesses. Cooperative are also places where farmers actively participate in the community, and may then inspire non-farmers citizens to take a stand for their communities' wellbeing.



# SOLAFRIKA

Founded in 2007 in France, Solafrika is an association implementing development projects in the least developed countries and set on tying local and international solidarities together. It presents an example of how rural development does not happen in a vacuum but needs to be considered in light of regional, national, and international contingencies, such as climate change. The objective of Solafrika is twofold. In France, the association aspires to be an actor of formation, insertion, and cooperation for the Youth. In Africa, it increases the wellbeing of populations in isolated, rural regions, victims of acute poverty.

To do so, Solafrika organizes international volunteering. In 2011, the association led the program Mangaro, in Siby, a small village in Mali. 80% of the yearly harvest of mangos rot because the national market only consumed 20% of the total annual production. Solafrika joined efforts with a local agricultural cooperative and set up a new profitable activity: the solar drying of mangos.

With great results: between 2011 and 2012, the cooperative increased its production by 60%. To be relevant, rural development can, and must, be sustainable.

**SECHAGE SOLAIRE**  
**SIBY (45 kms de Bamako)**

Activité réalisée par la  
« **Coopérative de transformation des fruits de Siby** »  
en partenariat avec l'association Solafrika.

**PRODUITS EN VENTE**

 <b>Sachets de mangues séchées:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Sachets de 50g: 400 fcsfa</li><li>-Sachets de 500g: 4000 fcsfa</li><li>-Sachets de 1kg: 8000 FCFA</li><li>-Sachets de 2kg: 16000 FCFA</li></ul>	 <b>Pots de confiture de mangue:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Grand pot: 2500 fcsfa</li><li>-Pot moyen: 1750 fcsfa</li><li>-Petit pot: 1500 fcsfa</li></ul>
<b>Sachets de pommes cajou:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Sachets de 50g: 400 fcsfa</li></ul>	

**VISITES ET PARTICIPATION**

**Visite de l'atelier de transformation:**  
Accompagné par un membre de la coopérative, vous pourrez découvrir et comprendre le fonctionnement des séchoirs solaires.

**Participation à l'activité:**  
Possibilité d'assister et de participer à l'activité de transformation des fruits: découpe des fruits, pose des fruits dans les séchoirs, emballage des mangues séchées, confiture, etc.

Adresse : A l'école de Siby en venant de Bamako, prendre à gauche au niveau de la boutique « chez Moussa » grand panneau rouge (voir carte) 5km après l'école, continuer jusqu'à un campement puis à gauche à côté de la radio Siby. Sinon s'adresser au bureau de la coopérative d'accès au programme Mangaro. Tél. 79 23 94 82 / 79 33 95 19 (numéro46) / 76 42 12 34 (numéro) [contact@solafrika21000france.fr](mailto:contact@solafrika21000france.fr)





## CIVIC HACKATHON

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# THE SMART PROCESS

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Entre Ruralités was keen on challenging its participants! On the last days of the programme, participants competed in a Civic Hackathon. The scenario? Imagine the ideal smart village. On the morning of the 8th of July, competing teams were introduced to five scenarios: *Coal Legacy*, *In the Shadow*, *The Power of the Many*, *Stuck in the Middle*, and *From Now On*. Each scenario featured obstacles to rural development. Competitors were expected to dismantle them. On the evening of the 8th, after a day well spent brainstorming and learning the smart process, special challenges arose and forced the teams to review their plans!

To guide their efforts, Entre Ruralités equipped its participants with the roadmap of the smart village, established by the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD).



## The Smart Process

The implementing team must first discover success stories of smart villages being established in the European Union. Criteria and variables leading to fortunate outcomes can be isolated and analyzed.

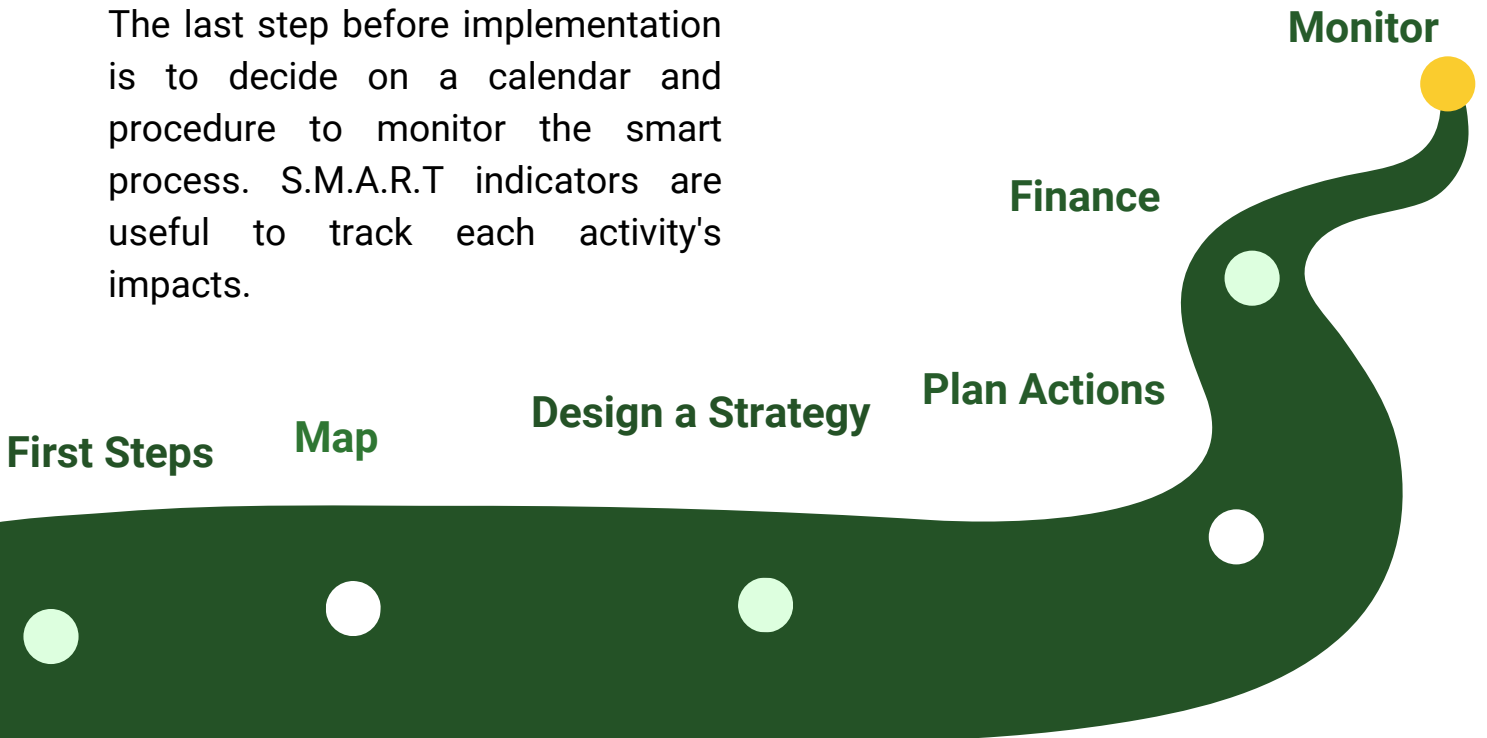
Afterward, it is time to map. The village's challenges, opportunities, stakeholders must be clearly singled out. To engage stakeholders in the smart process, the team must understand the development strategies of the village, region, and country.

From the map, a coherent strategy can be designed, comprising a clear, achievable objective, broken down into operational actions.

Planning actions is a crucial step: unidentified difficulties may be uncovered. For each action, must be specified: the target group, needed resources, the expected impact, the calendar, stakeholders, the manager, indicators to track progress, and the modalities of communities' involvement.

Before turning on the engine, financing opportunities and strategies must be sought out. Youth organizations ought to pay special attention to European funds, in the context of NextGenerationEU.

The last step before implementation is to decide on a calendar and procedure to monitor the smart process. S.M.A.R.T indicators are useful to track each activity's impacts.



*From Rural Toolbox, Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century*



# THE CHALLENGES

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## Coal Legacy

Your village was once vibrant and enriched by a prosperous coal industry. However, as the country began to transition towards renewable energies, factories closed, people left the countryside for the city, and the economy collapsed.

There may be hope! During the pandemic, families sought refuge in the village, away from the crowd of metropolises. With them, they bring an entrepreneur mindset and are set on shaking things up.

How can the village re-develop, without negating its legacy?

### *The Challenge*

The local population is reluctant to accept the projects of the young entrepreneurs and consider them as outsiders. Today, someone vandalized the storefront of a newly established merchant. The tension is growing.



## In the Shadow

Your village is said to be idyllic, with a preserved seashore and its wildlife attracting tourists in the summer. Yet, in the winter, most of the tourists are gone and the village takes the allure of a ghost town.

The village stands at the border of a growing city, where all the public services are located. Some fear that the expansion of the neighboring city will endanger the ecosystem of the seashore.

How can the village impulse a rural development that is sustainable and fosters participation?

### *The Challenge*

The village elected a new mayor. During his campaign, he promised to allow the construction of an apartment complex on the outskirts of the seashore. While the construction does not disregard the legislation on the protection of the coastline, the community feels it may endanger the wildlife due to light and noise pollutions. Time is running out, the mayor will meet the investors in a few weeks.

## From Now On

The region has just decided on a plan for your village to become smart: citizens will have a digital identity and the public services will be made available online.

However, it does not seem to be enough as one key ingredient is missing: entrepreneurs. They are choosing to establish themselves in bigger cities or in rural areas with agricultural potential. Your village is sparsely populated and its most active sector in forestry.

How can the village champion rural entrepreneurship?

### *The Challenge*

Yesterday, the mayor reported that the village reached its highest ever registered rate of unemployment. He announced the formation of an emergency unit and is willing to invest in any initiative creating decent and sustainable employment.



## The Power of the Many

Your village is joining a Community of Municipalities with two neighboring villages! Yours benefits from good connectivity and many infrastructures were constructed in its perimeter. In the last century, it was a retreat to renowned painters; the economy is now founded on culture and the organization of one of the country's biggest Art Fairs. However, if it once had a profitable agricultural sector, it is not the case anymore. As such, your village depends on the production of the two neighboring municipalities. How can the village break its dependency without compromising the merger project?

### *The Challenge*

A pest had decimated the fields of the neighboring villages. Losses are monumental and the local economies could collapse. An emergency meeting is scheduled today, with the mayors, police forces, as well as the region's cooperatives and NGOs. Some say the neighboring villages will ask your village to provide assistance. However, your finances have been severely impacted by the pandemic, this year, the Art Fair could not be held.

## Stuck in the Middle

Your village stands at the border of two countries. Strong of a sustainable agricultural industry, it is currently intending on diversifying its economy.

In the last decades, population density decreased alarmingly: the metropolises of both countries drain the brains out of your village and young people are migrating in hope of decent employment in the urban areas. Furthermore, most of the public services such as schools or hospitals are located in neighboring towns. They are far away and the village lacks the transport infrastructures that would make them accessible.

How can the village counteract the brain drain?



### *The Challenge*

The most renowned universities of the two countries are willing to establish an exchange program for their students, shedding light on the promiscuity of their cultures, of their future. They are searching for the location that could embody this interculturality.

# THE STRATEGIES

## Bucolia - In the Shadow

### Identified challenges

- Irregular Tourism
- Urbanization
- Endangered Nature

### Identified assets

- Unique natural resources

### Proposed Strategy

#### *Eco-Camp Bucolia*

Instead of the apartment complex, the municipality will support the construction of a sustainable, one-of-a-kind eco-camp. The project will build on the attractiveness of Bucolia's seashore without endangering it, as the current residential endeavor does not contradict legislation on the safeguarding of the shoreline.

#### *Smart Hotels*

Bucolia will improve its offer of tourism accommodations by implementing a smart process. Smart hotels will include remote work facilities, education centers, and organize rural hackathons...

### Funds

EAFRD, LEADER/CLLD, Cohesion Fund, CEF, EVS/ESC

### Expected Impacts

A decrease in seasonal work, an improvement of Bucolia's tourism sector competitiveness, the safeguarding of Bucolia's natural heritage



## Funku Village - Stuck in the Middle

### Identified challenges

- the Brain Drain
- Lack of public services
- Lack of economic opportunities

### Identified assets

- A sustainable and competitive agricultural industry

### Proposed Strategy

#### *Cooperation*

Funku will sign an agreement with the neighboring countries regarding the shared use and administration of public services and the itinerary of public transports.

#### *An Open Space for the Youth*

Funku will support the construction of open space for the Youth, where students will benefit from a free wireless connection. The center will act as a regional educational hub where young people will be able to enroll in classes, volunteer, network, build a community...

### Funds

Participative Budgeting, National funds, European Union

### Expected Impacts

An improvement in the accessibility of public services, increased youth participation, counteracting the brain drain

## Mystic Coals - Coal Legacy

### Identified challenges

- Attracting Investor
- Accepting Change
- Lack of economic opportunities and Population Decline

### Identified assets

- Unique natural landmarks: mines

### Proposed Strategy

#### *Mystic Coals*

Mystic Coals will open up opportunities for the tourism industry and the energy industry, through the production of renewable energy (solar energy and piezoelectricity). The municipality will invest in the installation of solar panels on private residences, and of piezoelectric carpets in the village with the objective of producing 11 250 kWh/house. Entrepreneurs will harness the peculiar identity and heritage of the village, its coal industry.

### Funds

ERDF, ESF, YEI, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Microcredit.

### Expected Impacts

A highly competitive energy and tourism industry, creation of a culture of entrepreneurship, an increase in the overall attractiveness of the village



# MYSTIC COALS

EST. 1788



## Neo Chorio - The Power of the Many

### Identified challenges

- Pests
- Natural-resources-dependency

### Identified assets

- The Art Fair and related industry
- Good connectivity
- Public services

### Proposed Strategy

#### *Cooperation*

The municipality will open up its fields to the cooperatives of the villages impacted by the pest.

#### *Investments in Agriculture*

The village will set up a smart-agricultural industry by equipping local farmers with innovative technology.

#### *A Digital Community*

The village will set up a community platform as well as an App for its Art Fair and related industry and organize a digital exhibition.

#### *Supporting Local Artists*

The village will create a fund overseeing the distribution of free art supplies and organize networking events and classes.

### Funds

European Union



### Expected Impacts

A highly competitive creative industry, the bringing together of three villages' communities, increased cooperation in agriculture, a decrease in natural-resources dependency.

## La Pequeña Ferrand - From Now On

### Identified challenges

- Unemployment
- Lack of native Entrepreneurs
- Natural-resources-dependency

### Identified assets

- Political support
- Natural heritage: the forest

### Proposed Strategy

#### *A Sustainable, Smart Tourism Industry*

The village will support the establishment of sustainable tourism ventures making use of innovative technologies and building upon the local forestry industry.

#### *A Sustainable Forest*

#### *An Advisory Platform*

The village will launch a community platform where citizens will be able to propose policies and development strategies, network, and browse job offers.

#### *Sustainable Energies*

The village will support the construction of windmills.

### Funds

Healthy Neighborhoods (Portugal), Private Investments, Erasmus+

### Expected Impacts

An increase in digital literacy, creation of new economic opportunities, competitive tourism and energy industries



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a bright pink sticky note. The hand is positioned in the center-left of the frame. The background is blurred, showing other people and papers, suggesting a collaborative meeting or workshop environment. The lighting is soft and natural.

## **RESOURCES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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# RESOURCES

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## Youth Work

-  [The Partner-Finding Tool, SALTO](#)
-  [Toolbox for training and Youth Work, SALTO](#)
-  [A New Rural Development Paradigm for the 21st Century, a toolkit for developing countries, OECD](#)
-  [Commons Open Educational Ressources, ISKME](#)
-  [Impact and Dissemination Toolkit, Erasmus+, European Commission](#)
- [Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, European Commission](#)
-  [Social Media 2020 Toolkit, European Commission](#)





## Youth Work in rural areas

-  [EU Rural Review no. 32](#)
-  [Village International, SALTO](#)
-  [Change the village, challenge yourself, MIJARC Europe](#)



## Methodologies

-  [Design Thinking Bootleg, Stanford School of Design](#)
-  [The toolkit of the decision maker: The SMART criteria, Prisma European Network](#)

## European Programs and Opportunities

-  [Go abroad, European Youth Portal](#)
-  [European Solidarity Corps: Reference documents and resources, European Youth Portal](#)
-  [Opportunities hub, Eurodesk](#)
-  [Programme Guide Erasmus+, European Commission](#)


## Inciting youth participation in rural areas

-  [8 standards for a quality youth policy, European Youth Forum](#)
-  [EU Youth Dialogue, European Youth Portal](#)


 [Rural Youth inclusion, empowerment and participation, IFAD](#)

 [Stories, European Youth Portal](#)

 [LEADER-toolkit, European Network for Rural Development](#)

 [Conference on the future of Europe, European Union](#)


## Youth Unemployment in rural areas

 [Yutrends - Youth unemployment: Territorial trends and regional resilience, ESPON](#)

 [Online Library: Online trainings for Apprenticeship in the EU, European Commission](#)

 [Europass](#)

 [ESCO](#)


 [VET Tools library, CEDEFOP](#)


 [Skills-OVATE, CEDEFOP](#)

### Captions


 Toolkits

 Studies

 Employability and Opportunities search engines


 Resources and Informative tools

 Participation Platforms


 Inspiration

## The Brain drain

 [Brain Drain vs Brain Gain, Assembly of European Regions](#)

 [Addressing brain drain: the local and regional dimensions, European Committee of the Regions](#)

## Building a community in rural areas


 [Building an online engaged community, Prisma European Network](#)

## Building a Smart Village

 [NRN Toolkit, European Network for Rural Development](#)

## European Union Policies

 [Key CAP reform documents, European Network for Rural Development](#)

 [The Archive of the European Integration, European Union Online Resources, University of Pittsburgh](#)

 [Supporting Rural Youth: Overview of EU policy instruments and funds](#)

## Sustainability

 [EU Ecolabel digital toolkit](#)



# CHAMPIONING



# RURAL DEVELOPMENT

*ENTRE RURALITÉS ' TOOLKIT*

The toolkit was co-constructed in the framework of Entre Ruralités, a training co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

It was compiled by Jade ANDRZEJEWSKI, under the direction of Gabriel BREZOIU, President of Prisma European Network, and Gilles Evrard ESSUMAN, President of Réseau Participatif et Solidaire and Coordinator of the #EntreRuralités Project, with the contribution of Entre Ruralités' participants.

