

This series of informative fiches aim to present, in summary, examples collected by the ENRD Focus Group on Knowledge Transfer and Innovation. The case studies describe practices and approaches that EU Member States and Regions have put in place in order to promote Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, mainly but not exclusively, through their Rural Development Programmes in the current period. These examples aim to contribute to the understanding of what has worked well and less well in supporting innovation through the 2007-2013 RDPs and as far as possible, draw lessons in the view of future improvement of the programmes.

Barnardo's Works Cairngorms – LEADER, helping young people into employment, UK Scotland

SUMMARY: An innovative six months working placement programme for unemployed young people that provided them with ongoing training and personal development based on continuous support to both the trainee and the employer.

1. Why the approach has been put in place

In the rural areas of Scotland local businesses, farms and land owners very often face difficulties in recruiting young people to work with them. Their image is generally not well accepted as young people are seen as not having the right skills or not being committed enough when employed. This negative image discourages employers from hiring the local young people.

The Scottish Charity “Barnardo’s” has worked with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds for many years. Through their work they realised that it is possible to help

young people to take on worthwhile employment but a serious level of personalised support would be required to be successful.

Barnardo’s set up this LEADER funded project in order to assist tackling poverty and economic inactivity of young people. Activating young people and engaging them in the local job market would strengthen the economic growth and social cohesion in rural and semi-rural communities. This would be achieved by helping young people gain work experience, skills and training.

2. How it was achieved in practice

The overall objective was to offer participating young people a six months work placement period that would provide them formal and informal training accompanied with professional and personal support. For the duration of the placement young people were paid the minimum wage.

This is a completely new approach to getting young people into employment with the use of LEADER funds and project development

support. Barnardo’s had carried out a similar project in the south of Scotland and this project was built upon the accumulated experience.

Barnardo’s contacted young people who were already on the unemployment register and twenty of them expressed their interest to participate in the project. Young people could access the service through local publicity, mainstream agency referrals, word of mouth

Current KT&I support examples across the EU27

and local agencies delivering services to young people (schools, community based groups, social work etc.). At the same time, potential employers who could provide a working place were identified.

Barnardo's staff matched young people to the available placements by taking into account their interests and skills. The initial months of the placement enabled young people to experience a wide range of activities and to develop essential core skills for employment, such as problem solving, team work, motivation and co-operation. Relevant and accredited training was integrated into the placement as it progressed.

Performance appraisals were carried out on a monthly basis throughout the six months placement. These included feedback from both young people and employers. The assessments provided evidence of the progress achieved and highlighted any issues that required attention. They also informed and helped to measure soft outcomes. Barnardo's staff also ensured that any difficulties would be addressed effectively in consultation with the partner employer and the young trainee.

In addition, Barnardo's provided support and advice to employers so that in turn they could support young people in the workplace. In bigger companies it was encouraged to

formally introduce a workplace mentor. The mentor provided in-work support in learning soft skills and understanding the business. The mentors were supported by Barnardo's as well when needed.

As the placement continued young people became more work ready and productive staff members. Based on Barnardo's experience it was expected that most young people become productive team members by the third month of the placement. At that stage, the focus shifted on more specific areas of development underpinned by formal and informal training. Young people were able to work with less supervision and this was particularly beneficial to those employers who worked in small teams or who worked alone. Personal support continued to be provided by Barnardo's staff.

Following the initial six months of work experience, training and skills development, young people became productive, reliable and ready for employment. By that point, it was expected that, where possible, the employer would keep the young person on their staff team. When this was not the case, Barnardo's staff continued to provide support and assistance to enable young people to find a job. This also included advice and support to self-employment which would allow individuals to pursue certain activities, such as seasonal work for example.

3. Lessons learnt for the future

Results: Out of the twenty young people that participated in the project, fifteen were employed after their working placement and five were signposted elsewhere having decided that this type of employment was not for them. Information about the project is available on Barnardo's website and was also disseminated through local media and various LEADER publications, seminars, etc.

Overall, the project was successful. Barnardo's continue to work in the area and they are now developing new contacts with employers to create long term apprenticeships for young people. In addition, they are working closely with the Scottish Government trying to turn this initiative into a mainstream approach helping young people in rural areas to find jobs.

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Lessons learnt:

- ⇒ Bringing together young people and local employers can be an effective way to help young gain work experience, skills and training while promoting local employment.
- ⇒ Continuous support and advice is necessary during the initial phase of the placement for both the trainee and the workplace mentor.
- ⇒ Performance appraisals and continuous feedback involving both young people and employers is critical to demonstrate the progress achieved and identify issues that require attention.

For more information:

- <http://www.ruralgateway.org.uk/en/node/3042>
- <http://www.barnardos.org.uk>

Information included in this fiche is primarily coming from the case studies carried out within the ENRD Focus Group on Knowledge Transfer & Innovation. The fiche is compiled by the ENRD Contact Point on the basis of the information collected in the EU Member States and Regions and takes into account views expressed at the European, national and regional level. This notwithstanding, the content does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EU institutions and national authorities.