

# Country Report United Kingdom



*The present fiche aims to present, in summary, how youth-related projects and initiatives are supported by the Rural Development Programmes in a number of countries selected for the second phase of the research in the framework of the Youth and Young farmers Thematic Initiative.*

## 1. Actors involved in youth related projects and main sources of financing

In the United Kingdom, a multitude of actors are involved in projects that promote rural youth. Out of the governmental actors, the most important is the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). At regional level there are other institutions involved, such as 'Mentor Mom', active in Wales, which supports young entrepreneurs.

There are some civil society organisations involved in youth projects, for instance the LAGs, 'Mentor a Busnes', and various research organisations.

The main sources of financing rural youth-related projects are the EAFRD, ESF, ERDF, Youth in Action, government and private funds.



## 2. How RDP promotes youth initiatives/projects in rural areas

The four RDPs in UK do not include specific reference to young people. Youth and young farmers are mentioned in the SWOT analyses, but not specific priorities related to them are established in the programmes and usually the measures do not have specific eligibility and selection criteria targeting youth. Measure 112 'Setting up of young farmers' was activated only in the Scottish RDP.

### a. Consultation process for the preparation of 2007/2013 RDPs

The consultation process for the preparation of 2007/2013 RDPs was delivered using different approaches, such as the organisation of formal and informal meetings, public presentations, formal public consultations, workshops and seminars and written communications. In England, a process of on-going consultations with key stakeholders and partners was established and included a designated 'Policy Advisory Group', which consisted of 21 organisations, none of which represented rural youth or young farmers. Youth organisations were included in some steps of the consultation process, but many stakeholders felt that this exercise was formal and the implementation of programmes did not address concretely young people's needs.



### b. How the RDP targets young people

The British RDPs do not specifically target young people and young farmers. Measure 112 was activated only in Scotland and no other measures establish specific eligibility and selection criteria targeting young people. At national level, the RDPs were not generally perceived as an obvious source of funding for youth projects or young people, which were accessing financial support mainly through other Government departments or private organisations. It was felt at national level, and particularly in England, that LAGs had more opportunities to focus on rural young and young farmers in their Local Development Strategy (LDS). In fact many of the projects supporting youth were implemented by LAGs.

### c. Role of the LAGs

As already highlighted, 2007-2013 RDPs in UK did not show preference for any particular demographic, with the only exception of Scotland. It was felt that LAGs had the opportunity to focus on rural youth and young farmers in their own Local Development Strategy (LDS) if appropriate. In contrast to this however, LAGs appear to have felt an obligation to respond to the objectives established by RDPs and as these also did not include a focus on rural youth, specific consideration of young person's needs has frequently not taken place within LAGs either. In spite of these general considerations, a certain tendency to engage with young people was identified in some LAGs.

In the framework of this study, two LAGs in England were selected to be interviewed, namely LAG Cumbria Fells and Dales and LAG Northumberland Uplands. Despite their LDS do not have a specific focus on youth, both LAGs recognised the need to engage with rural youth and young farmers in their areas.

LAG Cumbria Fells and Dales LDS explored how their two main areas of work – Farming and Forestry, Rural Businesses and Community - could engage with young people and initiated a range of projects to support this target group. Six youth related projects were implemented, three of which were initiated by young people. The 'Hill Farming Succession Scheme' was considered one of the most successful.



#### 'Hill Farming Succession Scheme', England, United Kingdom

**Total budget: €263 400; EAFRD €12 400 (LEADER and Measure 111), The Prince's Countryside Fund €150 000, private €101 000**

The project implemented by Cumbria Fells and Dales LAG and The Farmer Network (not for profit organisation developed to help, support and guide farmers in Cumbria and the Yorkshire Dales) aimed to provide the knowledge and skills needed by young people to work within upland hill farming in Cumbria, with a focus on encouraging new entrants into the sector.

Eight young people were trained over a two-year period in hill farming skills. They gained experience, were mentored by different farms and learnt about maintaining the unique landscape of Cumbria and sustainability. The project's success was based upon the unique opportunity to learn hill farming skills directly from existing farmers in conjunction with the traditional, higher education based learning opportunities. This has enabled young farmers to learn culturally endemic skills that may otherwise have been lost to the next generation. The trainees were also provided six months support to establish their own businesses which enabled them to focus on a tangible, beneficial outcome from their time within the project.



LAG Northumberland Uplands completed in 2010 a gap analysis of their LDS against the projects they had supported to date. A total of five gaps were identified, including projects involving or initiated by young people. The LAG decided for this reason to recruit a Youth Engagement Officer to work on the ground with identified groups to develop projects that would help fill the gaps in the LDS. The main objectives of the youth engagement role were:

providing increased and relevant opportunities that promote enterprise and empowerment for young people; strengthen local rural development projects by encouraging greater involvement of young people in their activities; including the reality for young people from Northumberland Uplands in local, regional and national policy debate and implementation. Thirteen youth related projects were implemented. All of them focused on extending young people's participation in business and improving their possibility to get an employment, by organising activities such as training to acquire new skills, exchange visits for people that have an enterprise focus, etc.

### Engaging young people, Sweden and UK

**Measure 421 - Budget € 84 714 (EAFRD 50%, national public funding 36.8%, other source of funding 12.8%)**

The project was implemented by two LAGs, LAG Leader Linné in Sweden and Northumberland Uplands LAG in the United Kingdom, after some exchanges during which they realised that some common issues they were experiencing in their areas, such as lack of opportunities for young people, could be addressed by a TNC project.

Issues such as absence of training and education opportunities, lack of jobs and careers, or difficulties associated with starting a business, can impact upon those young people who leave rural areas but wish to return, as well as those who want to remain within the rural economy.

The project's overall objective was to enable the exchange experiences, skills and knowledge for young people. Thanks to the project participants (36 young people aged between 18 and 25 years from both areas) had the opportunity to study, participate in training sessions, find work placements and stay with local families and learn about one another's cultures.

This joint approach, which combined international exposure, on-the job learning and mentoring, allow the local youth not only to gain first professional insight and experience, but help them to become more employable in the future.

Following the work placement abroad and training, at least four participants found new jobs and other were guided into local projects.

Young participants maintained contact through a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NULAGyoung?ref=hl>, and posted photos and information on a blog <http://swedenexchange2013blog.tumblr.com/>



Both LAGs encountered some difficulties in implementing youth-related projects. They felt that rural youth and young farmers should be a clear objective within the England RDP to enable LAGs to take action. Furthermore, the sometimes overly demanding administrative process was perceived as an obstacle to the implementation of youth related projects. The administrative process could be proportional to the size of the grant, and be simplified for smaller applications, then this would encourage more young people to apply.



## 3. Role of the NRN in supporting youth

The British NRN works with youth only marginally and does not implement special youth-related projects or activities. Currently the NRN does not have capacity to initiate more youth-oriented activities on its own.

## 4. Role of youth and young farmers' organisations in supporting youth

Youth organisations were not particularly active in the implementation of RDPs in UK. They were not very much involved in the consultation process for 2007/2013 RDPs and consequently not very much involved in the implementation of

## 5. Preparing the 2014-2020 RDP

At the time the research was conducted (summer/autumn 2013) the consultation process had not officially started yet.



*Information included in this fiche is primarily coming from the analysis carried out within the ENRD Initiative on "Youth and young farmers in rural areas". The fiche is compiled by the ENRD Contact Point on the basis of information collected in the EU Member States and Regions. The content does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EU institutions, national or regional authorities.*