

Country Report Austria



This 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 analysis within the Youth and Young farmers Thematic Initiative.

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

In Austria, a multitude of actors are involved in projects that promote rural youth. Out of the governmental actors, the most important ones are the Ministry of Life, the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, the Federal Chancellery and the various JugendReferat of the regional authorities.

There are numerous civil society organisations involved in youth projects, for instance the LAGs, the Austrian National Youth Council, Rural Youth Austria, Austrian Young Farmers' Organisation, Austrian Economic Chamber, Agricultural Chamber Austria, Chamber of Workers, Austrian Trade Union Federation, and religious youth organisations. Several research organisations and Universities, such as the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna and the Institute for Youth Culture Research are also engaged in rural youth-related projects.



Also the Austrian NRN (Netzwerk Land) and the Interkulturelles Zentrum, which operates Youth In Action, are involved in youth-related projects.

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

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

a. General overview

The Austrian RDP refers to youth in several ways. Youth and young farmers are mentioned in the SWOT analysis, there are measures aiding young farmers and young people are also referred to in the context of equal opportunities and rural tourism.

b. Consultation process for the preparation of the 2007/2013 RDPs

The preparation of the 2007-2013 Austrian RDP started in 2004. A broad consultation process was immediately established. A starting conference with 400-500 stakeholder representatives took place in November 2004. Afterwards, seminars and smaller events, where the Ministry of Agriculture presented the RDP plans, were organised over the course of several months. A specific event (so-called dialogue day) was organised to discuss farm modernisation and young farmers. The information material was also available online, and contributions/comments were welcomed. The programme itself was written in smaller groups, which included all main socio-economic partners. The representatives of Rural Youth Austria (Landjugend) took part in the consultation process.

c. How the RDP targets young people

The Austrian RDP targets young farmers through measure 112 "Setting up of young farmers". This measure was

popular and successful, with 80% of the measure's financial allocation distributed and some 7,000 young farmers supported. Measure 121 'Modernization of agricultural holdings' and Measure 111 'Vocational training and information actions', even though not directly related to youth, were often used to implement actions relevant to young farmers and youth (such as the organisation of workshop, events, etc.). Youth, in general, are targeted locally through LAGs. Namely, some LAGs use promotion of the integration of youth and women into rural areas and improved employment opportunities for them as a selection criterion. Moreover, some LAGs award young applicants more points during the selection process.



It should be noted that, even though not many RDP measures are related directly to youth, a lot of work has been done by the Ministry of Agriculture in close cooperation with the Austrian NRN, in order to address this topic, for example establishing relevant working groups, publishing informative brochures and final report with recommendations, or launching a special Innovation Award contest.

d. Role of the LAGs

The Austrian LAGs are active in involving youth into rural development, as well as promoting youth projects. As already mentioned above, LAGs often give preference in the selection to projects that promote youth integration in rural areas.

According to the Austrian NRN, the LAGs' involvement and capacity to tackle youth issues should be improved by having a person in each LAG who can deal directly with young people or training LAGs' managers on this topic.

In the framework of this study, one LAG, Mühlviertler Alm, was selected to be interviewed. Youth has an important role in the strategy of LAG Mühlviertler Alm. The importance of keeping young people in the region is stressed, as well as the need for projects targeting youth. The LAG has twelve main themes under which it conducts its activities, "youth as an engine in regional development" being one of them. The strategy directly proposes actions that may lead to reduced out-migration. The aim is to concentrate on the transition phase from education to working life, which is crucial for keeping young people within rural areas. This goal may be achieved by the support of self-employment and/or improved vocational training in fields that are demanded. Another goal is to bring youth from being the topic of discussions to be an equal partner in discussions.

So far, LAG Mühlviertler Alm has implemented five youth-related projects, such as the Jugendtankstelle.

JUnique (Jugend ist einzigartig, 'youth is unique')
Jugendtankstelle / Verband Mühlviertler Alm, Austria
EAFRD €18,746, national €19,754, private €38,500



The project aimed at involving young people into the regional decision-making processes and making them partner in the discussions. The scheme consisted of establishment of youth working groups, organisation of seminars and workshops, creation of a regular regional youth magazine and improved networking of youth-related organisations. The working groups, which organised events around the topic, focused on work, politics, leisure activities for girls, cultural activities and consumer issues (fair trade and regional products).

The administrative tasks and project coordination was done by the youth network Jugendtankstelle. Other actors involved in the projects were the Diocese Linz and its ten parishes, youth organisations, youth groups and young people from the Upper Austria region.

3. Role of the NRN in supporting youth

The Austrian NRN has an active role in supporting youth in the rural areas. Young people represent a specific target group under the equal opportunities, together with other target groups, such as women, the elderly and socially disadvantaged people.

The Austrian NRN and the Ministry of Agriculture organised workshops on social diversity in 2009. In 2010, the NRN and the Monitoring Committee launched a working group under the theme 'equal opportunities in rural development'. One of the four meetings of the working group was dedicated to youth issues. The final report of the group pointed out the need for further exploration of the youth topic. In 2011, a new working group on 'youth participation in rural development – LEADER' was launched. Around 20 participants were part of the group representing important actors related to youth in rural areas, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, the Federal Chancellery, the Austrian NRN, LAGs, the Austrian National Youth Council, the Austrian Rural Youth Organisation 'Landjugend Österreich', the Austrian Economic Chamber and the Agricultural Chamber of Austria. The final report of the youth working group provided valuable insights. It gives recommendations for improving youth participation in rural development as well as suggestions for the future programming period.



The Austrian NRN set up an Innovation Award for socially diverse RDP projects in 2012. Youth was one of the award categories. Out of the 26 nominated projects, eight unique youth projects received the award.

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

Austria has a developed and well-organised network of youth and young farmers' organisations. The organisations are active locally and nationally, and they also take part in policy discussions.

The Landjugend Österreich, which represents around 90,000 members in some 1,100 local groups, is vital in addressing rural youth issues. The mission of the Landjugend is to organize leisure activities and training opportunities for its members and to advocate the interests of rural youth. The members of Landjugend are mainly high school and university students from rural areas and prospective/current young farmers. The local activities of Landjugend are funded mostly from local/regional funds. Educational programmes and coordination of mobility programmes are partly funded from the EAFRD and co-financed from national funds. Mobility programmes themselves are financed by the Leonardo da Vinci programme.



The Austrian Young Farmers' Organisation (Österreichische Jungbauernschaft – Bauernbund Jugend) main aim is to advocate the interests of the young farmers at local and EU level. The organisation also organizes projects, training and events for young farmers. The projects are usually directed towards the members of the organisation, but some projects also aim at raising awareness of the general public (e.g. participation in the Vienna City Marathon, publication of a calendar of young farmers and organisation of a "Harvest-home" festival).

5. Preparing the 2014-2020 RDP

The consultations started in 2010 and were conducted similarly to the previous RDP preparation (a large launching conference, online discussions, seminars and some smaller events). By autumn 2013, altogether five consultation conferences were organized (two in Vienna and three in other major Austrian cities). Around 500 people participated in the Vienna conference and 250 in other conferences. The information about the entire process is available in the Newsletter “Ländliche Entwicklung 2014-2020” (http://newsletter.lebensministerium.at/le/2012_12_20.html).

The consultations were accessible so all kinds of youth organisations have had an opportunity to participate, such as the Rural Youth Organisation ‘Landjugend’ and the Austrian Young Farmers’ Organisation.

At the time this research, the RDP drafting was still ongoing.

Youth network and creative workshop “JuWeL” LAG Wels-Land, Upper Austria region RDP measure 321d - Total funding € 114,800

The project aims at strengthening participation of young people in local and regional policy-making, linking different youth organisations and initiatives and supporting municipalities in identifying youth needs and strengthening their youth work.

First, a regional youth study was made and the youth network JuWeL created. Afterwards, conferences, workshops, and events have been organised.



As a result, the so-called “youth teams” were installed in three municipalities. They function as direct contact and knowledge hubs in relation to youth initiatives for local institutions. A handbook on addressing the needs of young people and enhancing youth participation was developed for municipalities.

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.

