

This series of informative fiches aim to present, in summary, examples of projects and practices that address or are driven by young people living in rural areas. These examples want to contribute to the understanding of what has worked well and less well in the delivery of the 2007-2013 RDPs in the view of supporting young farmers and rural youth, show how young people can be involved in policy design and implementation, raise awareness about possibilities offered by EU rural development programmes, and finally draw lessons in the view of future improvement of the policy.

'Grow Your Own'



Primary school children learn how to grow carrot, onions, green peas and other vegetables in their own garden and at school, helping them to better establish a link with the nature and better understand agriculture.

1. Background information: why the approach has been put in place

The programme 'Grow Your Own' was launched in 2011 by the Agricultural and Rural Youth Association (AGRYA) in Hungary to draw children up to agriculture and nature. The increased urbanization of the society determines a progressive distance from nature and its resources. Food products can be found easily in supermarkets' shelves and people's links with nature are becoming weaker. In order to contrast this tendency, AGRYA designed and implemented this programme, targeting children at primary school, and indirectly their families.



2. Description of the approach: how it was done in practice

'Grow Your Own' programme started in 2011 and continued also in 2012 and 2013; it was entirely financed by private individuals and companies' donations. The programme consisted of providing primary school pupils with seeds to be planted in their own kitchen gardens or balconies. The five plants selected, namely green peas, radish, red onion, carrot and kohlrabi, can be easily cultivated and they do not require specific knowledge. Schools that want to be part of the programme had to apply on-line, filling in a specific application form. Each school could claim a maximum of 100 seed packs, plus an additional stock given to those schools that wished to have their own garden. In this case, the school garden was divided in small parcels to enable children to take care of their own vegetables. Schools joining the programme were responsible of distributing the seeds among pupils and inform families about the project and its objectives. Even though the plants selected do not need specific skills, children needed some assistance to plant the seeds, thus gardening became also a family activity.



A specific website for the project was created, www.vesdbelemagad.hu, as a space for promoting the aims of the project and for connecting the different actors involved in its implementation. Participant schools had their own access to the website where they could post information about the progress of the work, children's achievements but also reports, photos, drawings or recipes to cook the produced vegetables. Children could also use the website for asking questions and getting advice from experts, in case they encountered

gardening related issues. The website represented an important source of information for broader public and an important mean of dissemination of both aims and results of the project.

3. Conclusions/lessons learnt relevant for the future: what were the results

During the first year of implementation, 2 000 pupils participated from 20 primary schools. In 2012, due also to the interest of the media, the number of participants increased to 21 146 pupils from 339 schools, while in 2013 for the third edition of the project 24 879 pupils participated from 396 schools.

Involving children in activities that have immediate and tangible results as well as the participation of families were key factors for the success of the project. Children showed enthusiasm for this activity, they were eager to undertake extra work and use part of their free time to take care of their gardens. Furthermore, the project helped children increasing their sense of responsibility and contributed to the development of a healthy competition among schools, at local level and national level. Participation in the project stimulated also collaboration between families. Teachers reported that during the project implementation the overall performance of pupils had improved.

AGRYA and the schools would like to continue the implementation of this project through voluntary work. The only issues the project might encounter are related to financial resources, being it dependent from donations. During the first three years of implementation, donations came from university students, retired teachers, young farmers and parents. They were collected by AGRYA through its 'Fiatal Gazdák az

Agrárium Jövője' – 'Young Farmers

and the Future of the Agricultural Sector' Foundation, to keep the use of financial resources transparent. The project received the patronage of the Rural Development Minister and the State Secretary for Education, even though it was entirely realized with private funding.

Increasing the dissemination of information about the project and its results are seen as the main tools to both involve more children and their families and collect financial resources to enable its implementation in the next years.



Information included in this fiche is primarily coming from the case studies 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.