

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.

‘Social Animator’ School in Poland



Capacity building and training activities enabled young people to engage in their communities and to actively cooperate with adults to design and implement local development projects.

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

Rural areas are facing more and more depopulation problems. Living in a rural area is not popular among young people. Lack of job opportunities and leisure activities as well as poor involvement in the community life increase their tendency to move from rural to urban areas. In order to mitigate these negative trends and activate rural young people, the Children’s Friends Association (Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci) organized the School for Social Animators in cooperation with the Local Action Group Ziemia Lubawska. The project was intended to complement regular school training, offering the possibility to participants to gain useful management skills, and stimulate young people’s engagement in local communities.

The project targeted young people aged 15 to 24 years old from rural areas in the Warmia and Mazury regions. Two editions of the school were organized in 2012 and 2013, involving some 200 young people. Thanks to the participation in the project, young people acquired practical skills important to work in the local community, increased their self-confidence, learned how to cooperate with other local actors, including adults, to address and solve issues in their rural areas.

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

Young participants were recruited through a public call, posted among the others on the LAG website, and with the help of local schools. Young participants were engaged on training regarding: social economy issues, practical tools needed to work in local communities, teamwork, problem solving and communication skills. During the training young participants were asked to design a development project for their local communities as well as plan jointly a dissemination event. During the second edition of the project, participants were grouped in small teams and worked directly with local partner organisations. Study trips, workshops with local young entrepreneurs and employment advisory services were also organized as part of the training. A final dissemination event – Forum of Young Animators of Warmia and Mazury – was held in Mierkach on 21-23 June 2013. The event was attended not only by young participants, but also by other youth from the region. During three days, some 150 young people coming from the regions involved had the opportunity to meet, network, share experiences and engage on interactive games and workshops (<http://www.tpdmorag.org.pl/?p=3970>).



Although the general project framework was designed by adults, youth were actively involved in defining the content of the training sections and specific actions, such as for instance the dissemination event.

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

In result of participation in the training young people gained new knowledge and particular skills that helped them to engage in their communities. They have also prepared and implemented various small projects in their villages, facilitating the exchange between different actors, finding solutions to address some important issues, and involving in this process also adults.

The success of this project lies in a proper recognition of youth interests and leadership capacities. It was important to stimulate young people not only to be recipients of the training, but also to undertake their own actions within local communities through developing and implementing project ideas. Moreover, liaising with young people as real partners, capable to undertake common actions in cooperation with adults, was an important success factor.



The main difficulty encountered in the implementation was to keep young people focused and engaged during the entire capacity building process, and ensure an ongoing communication between the face-to-face meetings. Involving youth at almost all stages of project planning and implementation proved to be a good strategy to overcome these difficulties.

This project highlighted the importance of building leadership potential in young generation as a trigger to engage them in community life and to foster the implementation of innovative activities. Capacity building projects should be part of local development strategies, as well as young people should be enabled to apply for, with simplified procedures, and run their own development projects.

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.