

Current practices across the EU27

This is one of a series of informative case studies about projects and initiatives that address or are driven by young people living in rural areas and that are mainly but not exclusively supported by the EAFRD. The aim is to contribute to the understanding of what has worked well and less well in the delivery of initiatives that support young farmers and rural youth, to show how young people can be involved in policy design and implementation, to raise awareness about the possibilities offered by EU Rural Development Programmes, and finally, to draw lessons for future policy reviews.



Youth Paths - Baia de Fier, Romania

Youth organisations and associations together with LAGs, local schools and interested parents, support the creation of student businesses in the Estonian municipality of Sõmeru in Lääne- Viru County

1. Background

Gorj County was facing challenges related to the **lack of proper promotion of tourism** and the **inactivity of the young population**. Socio-economic factors were also an issue that might have inhibited youth activity. The main objective of the project was to increase the

provision of tourist services in the area while involving local youth, in order to tackle the two identified local issues the region was facing. The inclusion of young people in the project helped them to overcome difficulties and to behave proactively.

2. Project activities

The project was initiated by the youth organisation White Wolf Club and aimed to involve youth in specific tourism promotion activities in the Baia de Fier area, in particular with the creation of a mountain trail. 17 young people were involved, coming from different backgrounds and most of them facing socio-economic difficulties. Young people participated in all four phases of the project, namely planning, implementation, evaluation and dissemination. As starting point, the White Wolf Club involved young participants in outdoor sports activities, such as hiking, with the aim to make them aware of the tourist potential of their region and of the importance of having a healthy lifestyle. In the planning phase of the project young participants decided

on the main features to be implemented, established the schedule as well as logistical and practical details of the project and shared responsibilities. They purchased the material needed and then advertised and promoted the project. In the implementation phase young participants were involved in identifying the best location of the tourist trail, the potentially dangerous area that tourists should avoid and places where protective railings could be built to increase tourist safety. Furthermore they were involved in ecological activities, such as creating and cleaning the trails and cutting dry twigs and branches. They also took photos of the landscape, and used them to select the best places to install benches where rambblers could rest and admire the view. In addition they

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designed and created panels with information about the area to be located along the trail. In order to promote the new tourist trail, youngsters were also involved in the creation of leaflets, to be distributed to tourist agencies and information points. Finally, they were fully involved in the initial, interim and final project assessment process. The project gave the possibility to young people to do something concrete to improve their region, in particular

its tourist potential. The young participants became more aware of the potential of the area and they learned to appreciate and better understand the importance of safeguarding the environment. Furthermore they have now more options in spending their free time and are more conscious about the benefits of having a healthy lifestyle. Being aware that their actions matter, they are more motivated to become involved in their community.

3. Conclusions/lessons learnt

Thanks to the project young people could unite and have a say in their community life. Through the project, they were given a different outlook on life and a chance to live it. The project is a model for other potential initiative groups. The short timeframe for the implementation of the project (August-October), however, was not optimally correlated with working conditions outdoors, and such kinds of projects should be long-term so that there are no delays due to seasonal weather conditions. The project faced a series of difficulties due to economic issues arising from the long interval between the project proposal and its implementation. During this time, costs had significantly increased. Youth programmes should thus be continuous and have a long-term perspective. Needs identification should take into account the specific area and the socio-economic

conditions of young people. Groups should include a small number of members (for the sake of mobility, flexibility and increased reaction), but they should work with a large number of volunteers, who are direct or indirect beneficiaries of the projects. There should be more programmes to stimulate youth independence from an early age, to develop civic consciousness and personal pride, but also to strengthen young people's knowledge of the natural environment as well as their organisational skills. The involvement of family and schools is also very important in order to achieve dialogue and exchange of information without barriers.

Information included in this series of informative case studies is primarily sourced from the case studies carried out within the ENRD Initiative on 'Youth and young farmers in rural areas'. The content does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EU institutions, national or regional authorities.

