



Youth and young farmers' workshop

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Group 6

Involving young people in the development of regional strategies

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Main issues and challenges identified

How can LAGs involve young people?

- ✓ Organising camps and youth groups within which young people can discuss their expectations and needs.
- ✓ Increase the use of social media in communicating with youth groups (Facebook).
- ✓ Local Development Strategies (LDS) should target youth. Establishing youth as a special priority in the LDS can help on this.
- ✓ Involvement of young farmers: for many LAGs the dilemma is if individual young farmers or young farmers' organisations should be involved in the preparation and the implementation of the LDS. The tendency for the next programming period in some countries (such as Greece) is towards working closely with individual farmers and involving also associations.

Sometimes young people do not feel 'listened to' and this lead them to not speak in official consultation meetings. Showing willingness to involve them and gaining their trust can overcome this difficulty.

Main obstacles identified

- ✓ Planning for long periods of time (6 – 7 years) can be an obstacle to the involvement of young people. Young people want to see the changes quickly and they tend not to commit to long-term schemes.
- ✓ Bureaucracy doesn't leave space for young people to participate.
- ✓ The consultation process often does not target young people directly, but instead targets organisations that have some young people as members. Such approaches dilute the voice of younger people.
- ✓ Networks of young people tend to have limited resources, and this can affect negatively their capacity to get involved in the consultation process.
- ✓ LAGs should ideally have a contact person able to engage young people. The absence of such a resource can discourage young people to get involved.
- ✓ Youth LAGs¹ do not have financial support, this limits their capacity.

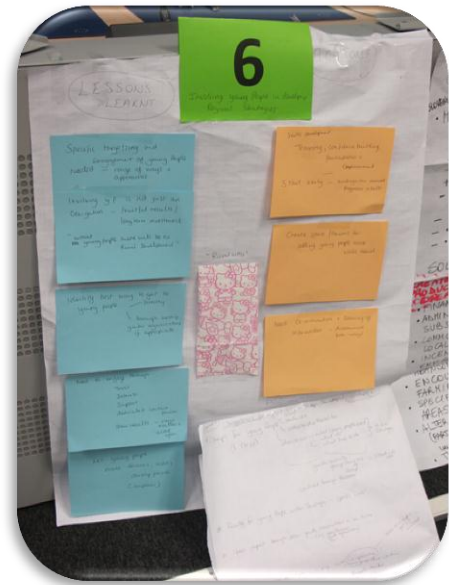


¹ The Youth LAGs are very common in Sweden. The Youth LAG is a structure within the main LAG, formed and run by young people, who decide about the project presented by young people in the framework of a specific scheme (the Umbrella project).

- ✓ Making the involvement of young people obligatory does not have positive effects. They need to be motivated and this can be achieved only with a long-term investment and not by implementing isolated actions.

Support needed

- ✓ Young people need ad hoc training to support involvement. The training should even begin when they are very young (from kindergarten and primary school). The training is to increase awareness about the main issues in rural areas but it will also help to build the capacity and confidence to engage in civic life.
- ✓ The LAGs can better involve youth by appointing a young person as main contact (e.g. youth coach in SE), who knows how to motivate involvement. Directly contacting youngsters is a way to overcome the difficulties encountered in involving them effectively in the consultation process. Motivation has proved to work better than obligations in promoting involvement of young people.
- ✓ Increase information exchange and communication:
 - better use of social media;
 - exchange of experience and the organisation of study visits for young people, including to other countries. Such experiences can be 'eye-openers' for young people living in rural areas and make them appreciate their life style.



Lessons learnt

- ✓ The best ways to involve young people have to be identified. It may be done targeting single people or through already existing organisations.
- ✓ Specific targeting and engagement of young people is needed. Different ways and methods to engage them should be used.
- ✓ Engagement of young people through trust; interest; specific support; dedicated young person; showing results.
- ✓ Let young people make decisions, invest and develop projects (supporting empowerment)

Possible actions

- ✓ Need of coordination between different policies active in the same territory.
- ✓ Create space/for a where young people's voice can be heard
- ✓ Skills development: training, confidence building, participation.
- ✓ Exchange and dissemination of information.