

# YOUTH AND YOUNG FARMERS WORKSHOP: WHAT HAPPENED?

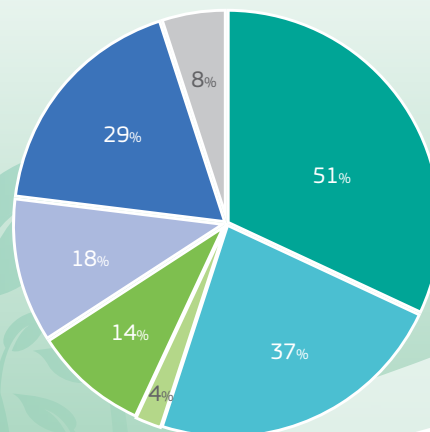
Brussels, 11 – 12 December 2013



## The ENRD connects young people from across rural Europe!

Young farmers and rural citizens from across the EU gathered in Brussels on the 11 and 12 December 2013 at the ENRD Youth and Young Farmers Workshop to share views and experiences about developing engaging youth-focused projects in rural areas. By showcasing real-life examples of successful projects and initiatives and creating the space for a lively discussion the workshop allowed young participants to connect, get inspired and discuss key issues young people face in rural areas.

**161 participants from 28 MS took part in the Workshop**



- Young farmers
- Young rural actors
- Managing Authorities
- National Rural Networks
- Organisations
- EU Institutions
- Other



On the 11 December young participants visited the European Commission and the European Parliament.



## A European “movement” supporting young people to face today’s challenge in rural areas

Young people are key to the sustainable development of thriving rural areas. This is widely recognised across the EU by initiatives and projects at the European, national and local level that are flourishing to provide young people with the support they need: EU programmes and actions for youth and young farmers, initiatives and projects launched by National Rural Networks (NRN), organisations and Local Action Groups (LAG).

At the workshop, participants discovered how the Baltic countries cooperate for increasing youth involvement in society, train and support young entrepreneurs and make rural areas attractive for young people through the flagship project on *Sustainable rural development through youth involvement, innovation and entrepreneurship* (<http://ruralflagship.eu/>). They were also inspired by the direct experience of young farmers from Spain whose stories were told through compelling videos produced by the NRN joint initiative entitled *Young AND farmer...around Europe* (<http://youngandfarmer.blogspot.be/>).

**More information on these and other youth-related initiatives are available online on the ENRD ‘Youth and Young Farmers Gateway’ [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/youth-and-young-farmers\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/youth-and-young-farmers/en/youth-and-young-farmers_en.cfm)**





## How to involve, target and empower rural youth and young farmers through rural development policy

As contribution to this EU-wide movement the ENRD took up the challenge to explore how EU public support coming from the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) is channelled towards rural youth and young farmers. **The ENRD's thematic initiative on Youth and Young farmers in rural areas** ([http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/youth-and-young-farmers/thematic-initiative/en/thematic-initiative\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/youth-and-young-farmers/thematic-initiative/en/thematic-initiative_en.cfm)) gathers experience from EU countries in order to highlight the importance of rural development policy in supporting youth in rural areas and looking into how young people are involved, targeted and empowered by the EU policy.

Participants at the workshop had a good knowledge of on-going initiatives or funding opportunities for youth-related projects in their country with a number among them actively involved in local development or farm development projects fuelled by

public support (even if not always young people are aware from which source the public support comes).

The findings of the initiative were shared with the participants sowing the seeds for the following debate. Selected stories from the ENRD Youth Initiative were presented and discussed in more depth in a dynamic poster session.





# Youth and Young farmers' initiative - Implementation of Rural Development Programmes

## What worked well

### 1. Improving young people involvement

- Inclusion of youth as target group in strategic documents
- Inclusive and open consultation for the definition of the Rural Development Programmes (RDP)

### 2. Targeting young people

- Youth 'mainstreaming' in the policy strategy (Sweden)
- Specific eligibility or selection criteria
- Organization of best practices competitions with a special focus on youth (Estonia, Austria, Finland and Sweden)

### 3. Empowering young people

- Simplified administrative procedures with smaller projects grants / umbrella schemes
- Training in project development and entrepreneurship

## What worked less well

### 1. Improving young people involvement

- Low involvement of young people in the implementation of rural development programmes

### 2. Targeting young people

- Low visibility of RDP among youth

### 3. Empowering young people

- Insufficient project ownership by youth
- Administrative burden, bureaucracy and finance-related problems



## Suggestions and recommendations for the implementation of the future RDPs

### 1. For Policy actors (Ministries, National Rural Networks, Local Action Groups, etc.)

- Target youth in the strategy documents using pro-active and long term approaches
- Ensure close cooperation with other policy levels and youth
- Provide approachable funding, advisory services and information
- Encourage and support projects done by youth, not only for youth
- Listen to youth in local areas

### 2. For young people and youth organisations

- Promote youth topics
- Support networking and experience exchanges
- Improve management and entrepreneurial skills and the capacity to write project
- Support dissemination of information
- Inform policy actors about ideas, needs and challenges



# SHOWCASE

## Stories of youth involvement in rural Europe



© ENRD Contact Point



### JugendMobil – Brandenburg, Germany

In rural areas with low population density, young people without access to a car have serious mobility problems. Many leisure and education facilities stay unreachable if the parents are not willing to drive. For example, often the major problem is to get home to the smaller villages in the evening. The project “JugendMobil/Mobile Youth” - started in 2010 - aims to improve the mobility of youth in selected rural areas within the Bundesland of Brandenburg and to involve them in the local and regional decision-making process. The target group of the project is youth aged 12-18 years, but priority was given to the age category 14-18 years, because of the more compelling mobility issues.

#### Highlights from the discussion

- One of the key success factors of the initiative was the bottom-up approach and the effective mobilisation of young people. Innovative ways were put in place to motivate young people to cooperate, for example through organising bike tours, treasure hunting, skiing activities and also dedicated transports to and from the disco (disco-bus) once a week or once a month.
- These were good ways not only to motivate youth for cooperating and being more engaged with their rural community, but also to encourage the organisation of a centre for youth through which young people are prompted to spend time together and organise collective activities.
- Networking activities were also crucial for the project as to express the real needs of young people towards other local stakeholders as well as to raise awareness of the mobility problem.
- Young people were not only active in expressing their problem and needs but contributed to identify concrete solutions such as the disco-bus, the creation of a flexible ride-sharing system (using modern technology such as mobile applications to share information and invite other young people to share a ride to the city) and the implementation of a 50/50 co-financed taxi ticket and holiday ticket to connect rural areas with the city.
- The initiative showed that rural stakeholders such as local authorities are keen to listen and react to young people's expression of needs when these are presented in a coordinated manner (e.g. through the centre for youth) and linked to concrete proposed solutions.



## GiovaniSI – Tuscany region, Italy

The Tuscany region launched the project GiovaniSI in June 2011 to address the lack of opportunities young people face by implementing effective measures and practical tools. The project is structured around six main areas of intervention, namely internship, housing, civil service, entrepreneurship, employment, education and training. The implementation of the project enhances young people's opportunities to have access to education and training, to create new business, promotes the access to the job market and the possibilities to do work experiences abroad. GiovaniSI is financed by regional, national and European resources and targets young people aged between 18 and 40.

### Highlights from the discussion

- The project focused on young people living in the region, both in rural and urban areas. Nevertheless, a specific focus on youth in rural areas and young farmers is ensured by the inclusion of specific selection criteria referring to GiovaniSI in some measure of the regional RDP, namely: Setting up of young farmers (M112); Modernisation of agricultural holdings (M121) and Diversification into non-agricultural activities (M311).
- Access to information is one of the main obstacles young people face to use the opportunities offered. This problem was addressed with the creation of a website where all possibilities are illustrated; a phone line that provides assistance to possible beneficiaries and 21 info points, 10 of which are 'mobile' info points. The info points cover the whole regional territory

and the mobile ones helped to spread information in rural areas.

- The focus on communication along with the creation of these three main information channels helped to solve a second important challenge, namely matching job offer and demand.
- Young people under 18 are not included in the main target group of the project. Nevertheless, some pilot initiatives consisting on informative days were organised in a number of schools in the region. The scope of these informative days is to improve awareness among kids about what opportunities the region provides. 20 schools were involved in this pilot initiative in 2013 and in 2014 additional 40 schools will be targeted.
- The project is managed by 12 young people who ensure the provision of services to potential beneficiaries and the necessary coordination with the different institutions involved in the implementation of the project.
- The establishment of youth as a clear policy target at regional level along with the flexibility in the implementation of the project represent two important key success of GiovaniSI. In particular, young people are actively involved in the design of the different actions of the project and they provide feedback about the results of the implementation.







© ENRD Contact Point



## Youth Entrepreneurship Support – Latvia

In Latvia an entrepreneurship support programme, introduced by the National Rural Network and the Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre Ltd. (LRATC), helps youth and young farmers aged 18 to 30 to turn ideas into concrete business opportunities. Through tailored educational activities and events, mentoring and coaching programmes, young people learn how to start or develop their business in rural areas. Over two years the initiative contributed to turn around 90 business ideas in concrete plans, out of which 14 new registered companies driven by young people took-off.

### *Highlights from the discussion*

- Personal capacities played the crucial role for the success of the support scheme. LRATC and National Rural Network organised information days, seminars and training session where people from local governments, public authorities, community organisations, schools and universities, entrepreneurs themselves, etc. presented their experiences and study material in both a knowledgeable and engaging manner. This was the best way to involve young people and motivate them about setting up their own business. In addition to the onsite work with young people, LRATC and the NRN provided also consultative, technical and methodological support.
- Constant and targeted communication with young people through social media and newsletters appeared to be an important tool to raise awareness about the project. Even though the businesses/projects are not formally monitored after their establishment, the organisers of this support scheme keep on-going informal contacts with participants.
- The businesses were predominantly connected to agricultural production. However, several business ideas were also from different fields related to the provision of rural services or hand-made/niche products.
- Thanks to the knowledge sharing during the poster session's discussion it was found out that a similar project, targeting high school students, was implemented in Northern Ireland by the NRN.



© ENRD Contact Point





## Integrated winery unit – Pieria Region, Greece

Ioannis Pantoulis is a young farmer who was born, raised and studied in a major urban centre (Thessaloniki) and decided to move to the countryside and become a wine producer. The funding opportunities offered by the local LEADER programme in Pieria region supported him to setup an integrated winery unit aiming at the full vertical integration of production and launch on the market a quality wine coming from his organic-certified vineyards. The project illustrates a successful example of EAFRD support to young farmers in rural areas towards the implementation of their entrepreneurial dream.

### Highlights from the discussion

- The availability of family land offered an important opportunity for self-employment coupled with his family's support for this life-changing project were among the most important reasons that led Ioannis to move to the countryside and become a farmer.
- The proximity to an urban centre (Thessaloniki), the use of modern communication technologies, maintaining a range of activities in the farm and a suitable environment for raising a family were other factors that contributed to make transition towards

the countryside easier. Concretely it meant: better accessibility of facilities and services (such health services and cultural events) and supporting factors to maintain a high level of interest and motivation. Above all, personal satisfaction remains a key motivating factor.

- In terms of production, a major constraint is that part of the land is located in a different region (Halkidiki). This means more time spent in travelling between the plots and higher transportation costs. A possible solution under consideration is exchanging part of the land with a nearby property.
- Organic farming certification and use of short supply chains involving direct sale to taverns, shops, on the farm and online, go hand-in-hand and are central to the success of the activity.







© ENRD Contact Point



© Judit Horváth



## Horváth Farm – Fejér County, Hungary

Judit Horváth is a young farmer with a background in agricultural studies who benefited from the financial support of EU rural development policy for the setting-up of her farm activity in Hungary, Fejér County. Starting from zero, the project took off in 2009 with 20 goats and 0,16 ha of land dedicated to vegetables productions and has since grown both in physical and economic size. Odds were not always in her favour on this journey: finding a market for the products, organising sales, coping with access to land and tax regulation, all required personal investment and energy. But focusing on environmentally-friendly production methods and local resources were key success factors overall and the activity is now expanding and developing, for example through direct forms of selling.

### *Highlights from the discussion*

- Public support was crucial for sustaining the development of the new farm. This however could not work alone without help from the family, personal motivation and the strong belief in the benefits of the project, namely the production of healthy food and the creation of employment (for the promoter herself and others too).
- Cooperation, and not competition is seen as the key for success in the future, and forms of cooperation with other farmers in the areas are now starting. According to Judit it is important to create and maintain networks at the local level in order to sustain and help each other.
- Judit's farm is 'multifunctional' but this is not always perceived as an added value. In fact more activities mean also more decisions to be taken and more issues to be solved or, in her words, "you just have to do more kinds of things."
- Judit is also helping other young entrepreneurs to apply for grants and develop business plans. All revenue from off-farm activities is reinvested in the farm to support continued development and new projects, such as a planned apple orchard.





*“We don’t do it for money, but for pure passion”,*

Martin Holliday young farmer and apprentice.



## Hill farm apprentice scheme – Cumbria, UK

In Cumbria the non-profit company Farmer Network set up a hill farm apprentice scheme in order to encourage, train and provide work experience to young farmers in the English uplands and make them become the next generation of hill farmers in the region. Over an 18-month period the apprentice scheme placed 8 young apprentices (not all with a farming background) in a number of hill farms in order to provide them with different farming experiences. A training programme provided them with a range of skills that, adding to the practical learning-by-doing experience, improved the chance for the apprentices to become self-employed workers with the support and mentoring of the Network. The scheme was supported by private donors and

EAFRD funds channelled through the Cumbria Fells and Dales LEADER Local Action Group.



### *Highlights from the discussion*

- The role of the Farmer Network is pivotal for the success of the initiative. The Network is a grass-root organisation which built up the scheme from real needs and strong connections with local farmers. The selection of apprentices' started locally within the network itself. The network also operated as matching agent by creating the contacts between the young people and the farmers leading the training. The farmers employ the young apprentices but the network takes care of all paperwork, insurance and related payments.
- The main focus of the scheme was on practical experience. That's why young farmers were asked to practice in different farming contexts – mainly extensive dairy farming involving beef and sheep production. In this context the training programme (supported by the LAG funds) is considered a 'by-product' of the initiative with the main scope of providing technical support and encouraging young apprentices in their future steps.
- Although LEADER funds were important in covering part of the costs of the initiative, the availability of private funds were also crucial to the project as they were used to reimburse 50% of the apprentices' salaries to the farmers in exchange of the mentoring services provided, making things, “much easier,” from the administrative point of view – as pointed out by Mr Rawling from the Farmer Network.

All posters are available for consultation on the 'Documentation' section of the event webpage [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/youth-young-farmers-workshop/en/youth-young-farmers-workshop\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/youth-young-farmers-workshop/en/youth-young-farmers-workshop_en.cfm)



# OPEN AGENDA

## Issues that matter to rural youth

Inspired by the stories presented in the morning session, participants were invited to build up the agenda for the afternoon around project ideas, issues and questions relevant to young rural citizens. *Drawing from your experience, what are the issues you would like to share with others in order to act upon them?* Starting from this question, participants put on the table 14 topics that were discussed in small groups, and identified key lessons learnt and action points that were shared with the wider audience.



<b>Topic 1</b>	<b>Topic 2</b>	<b>Topic 3</b>
Generational renewal in agriculture	Access to land for young people	Development in disadvantaged areas
<b>Topic 4</b>	<b>Topic 5</b>	<b>Topic 6</b>
Youth participation in rural areas – Political life	Setting up of young farmers from non-farming origin	Involving young people in developing regional strategies
<b>Topic 7</b>	<b>Topic 8</b>	<b>Topic 9</b>
Financing (rural) projects effectively	Organise a meeting point between rural-urban youth	Conservation and biodiversity projects
<b>Topic 10</b>	<b>Topic 11</b>	<b>Topic 12</b>
Business plans and multi-source financing	Rural cooperative for local inhabitants	Young farmers organisation role in agricultural policy and rural development
<b>Topic 13</b>	<b>Topic 14</b>	
Integration of foreign people in rural areas	How rules and regulations affect production costs	

Find the summaries of each discussion group under the “Outcomes” section of the workshop’s webpage ([http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/youth-young-farmers-workshop/en/youth-young-farmers-workshop\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/youth-young-farmers-workshop/en/youth-young-farmers-workshop_en.cfm))

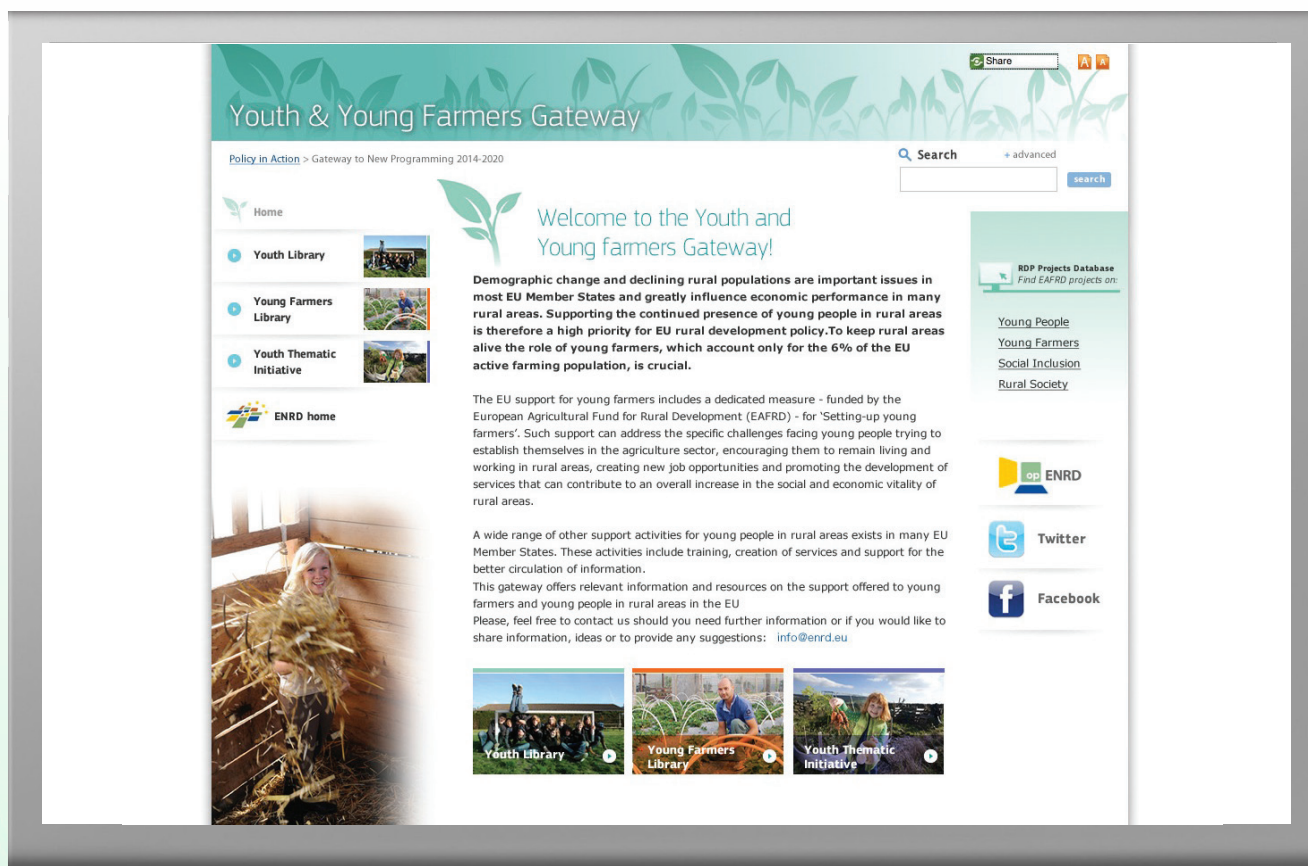
The workshop highlighted that the entrepreneurial spirit and creativity of the younger generation is crucial to smart, inclusive and sustainable development of rural areas – as stressed by **the concluding remarks** of José-Manuel Sousa-Uva, Director at the European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development. Be it through investing in the acquisition of new skills, the added value of agricultural productions, or services to the rural population. Adequate preparation and strong determination are keywords for success but potential also needs to be nurtured and boosted through adequate support of rural youth, which should also be easily accessible.





# Youth & Young Farmers Gateway

*Welcome to the Youth & Young Farmers Gateway!*



[www.enrd.eu](http://www.enrd.eu)