

FINLAND

Social inclusion

Location
Ylivieska

Programming period
2014 – 2020

Priority
P6 – Social inclusion & local
development

Measure
M7 - Basic services & village
renewal

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 148 438
EAFRD 62 344
National/Regional 56 406
Private 29 688

Project duration
2018 – 2020

Project promoter
LEADER Rieska

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Young people from Finland and Scotland came together to create a Youth Manifesto outlining ways in which local actors can engage young people in their activities

Summary

Rural areas are suffering from out-migration, especially that of young people. Offering young people a chance to have an impact or influence in their own home area and engaging them in locally important actions can help prevent out-migration and create long-term living opportunities in rural areas.

A transnational cooperation project brought together young people from Finland and Scotland to develop and co-design a youth manifesto that outlines ways in which communities, protected areas and environmental organisations can meaningfully engage young people in their activities. Good practices identified through this work, included the use of Youth Leader funds, establishing youth boards within LEADER groups or youth councils in municipalities. The project promoter is the LEADER association of Rieska (LAG).



Results

The project helped to find ways to respond to the needs of young people as expressed in the Manifesto and to involve them in its development.

The project has already involved more than 40 young people from all over Europe and this number will increase during the actions planned for 2019.

One youth board was established and several more are underway.

Lessons and recommendations:

- If given tools, young people will get involved with rural development. They need simple and flexible tools such as low bureaucracy funding (Youth-Leader), youth boards or other groups to work and be heard through, transnational co-operation and peer-to-peer support to name a few.
- Young people have opinions and ideas for rural development, but they need to be listened to and their needs must be acted on.
- The manifesto is an excellent tool, it enabled us to obtain a shared message from rural youth. It is also an excellent tool for all rural development related to the well-being, impacts, animation and participation of young people.

Context

Rural areas are suffering from out-migration and especially that of young people. Young people are indispensable capital for the sustainability of rural areas and nowadays they are more conscious and willing to take an active role in protecting the environment, nature and their community. However, their opinion is not adequately taken into account in decision-making processes.

Objectives

The objective of this project was to bring together young people from around Europe to share knowledge and experiences of living in rural communities, to discover common themes and to work together to create more opportunities for young people in rural areas.

Activities

The project is a transnational cooperation bringing together young people from Finland and Scotland. The project supported the young participants in developing and co-designing a youth manifesto that outlines ways in which communities, protected areas and environmental organisations can meaningfully engage young people across a range of topics, including:

- training and employment
- transport
- social opportunities
- housing
- natural and cultural heritage
- learning
- capacity building for communities and governance of community organisations
- coordination and communications

Within each of these areas, a number of actions are described that communities, protected areas and environmental organisations could agree to implement and incorporate into their future planning. Reducing carbon emissions is a cross-cutting theme that underpins all of the opportunities proposed in the manifesto.

A first workshop was held from 21st to 25th May, in the Cairngorms, Scotland. 10 Finnish and 10 Scottish young people were joined by 10 additional participants from the Europarc Federation's youth programmes to work together on developing the basis of the Manifesto. The week was all about sharing experiences, proposing ideas and drafting the Manifesto. Participants worked in small groups to identify challenges and come up with solutions

focused on three guiding topics: "living", "learning" and "working" in protected areas and rural communities across Europe.

The second workshop was held between the 17th and 21st June, in Kalajoki, Finland. The same number of young people came together to finalise the Manifesto; learn about Youth LEADER funds, LEADER youth boards and youth councils; and to start to work on a presentation to present their work in September 2018, at the Europarc Conference.

During the summer time the young people worked online to finalise the presentation and also to create videos and speeches, to build a stand and to rehearse a flash mob. They also allocated the tasks to be carried out during the conference between them .

The Europarc Conference took place in the Cairngorms from the 18th - 21st September. The Manifesto was presented as planned and received great interest and enthusiasm. The Cairngorms National Park Authority decided to create their own youth board and the Europarc Federation is promoting the Manifesto all over Europe through their network of parks and rural areas.

In 2019, the group will work on establishing youth boards, building new possibilities for youth funding and strengthening rural youth entrepreneurship through courses and training. They will also try to set up opportunities for communication between rural youth and decision makers in order to reach the Manifesto's goals. To this end three workshops are being organised, as follows:

1. 6.-10.4.2019, Finland (Keskipiste-Leader ry)
2. 25.-29.5.2019, Scotland (Cairngorms LAG)
3. 9.-13.8.2019, Finland (Leader Ravakka)

Later on in September 2019, it is planned that the group's achievements be presented at the LEADER LINC seminar in Estonia.

This LEADER TNC project between Scottish and Finnish LEADER groups and young people demonstrates methods for involving young people in decision making processes and rural development. These methods include Youth Leader funds, which are small amounts of financial support given for youth projects. The projects are written, implemented and reported on by young people themselves. The funding is provided from the municipality part of the LEADER budget in Finland. Youth boards within LEADER groups make decisions on youth funding and are local development promoters. Youth councils are established in municipalities and are a great way to engage young people in locally important actions.

Main Results

Economic benefits:

Offering young people a chance to have an impact or influence in their home area and engaging them in locally important actions is a great way to prevent social exclusion, out-migration and to create long-term living opportunities in rural areas and therefore economic development.

Environmental / climate action benefits :

Following their work on the Manifesto, the rural youth participants are willing to take a more active role in actions related to climate change in the near future and are more aware of organisations they can turn to.

Social benefits:

The project already involved more than 40 young people from all over Europe who worked together despite linguistic, cultural and social differences, on the next important step in rural development; active youth involvement. The number will increase during the actions planned for 2019. Through dissemination activities this work will reach and affect many rural communities, development organisations and young people all across Europe.

One youth board has already been established and several more are underway.

Networking value:

The project is managed by a very active network consisting of four LEADER groups, Rieska-LEADER (FI), Keskipiste-LEADER (FI), LEADER Ravakka (FI), Cairngorms LAG (Scotland) as well as the Cairngorms National Park Authority, the Scottish Natural Heritage, the Young Scot association and the Europarc Federation. All participating organisations share the same interests and strategic goals.



Transferability:

- A youth board has been established in the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Scotland.
- Youth Forum established at Yorkshire Dales National Park, UK to hear the young peoples' needs and ideas.
- Youth Advisory Board set up in Julian Prealps Nature Park, Italy
- Working group established from members of the authority and young people to identify and prioritise ideas in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, UK
- Dutch and Finnish versions of the Manifesto are shared with local municipalities, organisations and authorities by young people representing these countries.
- EUROPARC Youth Representative Laura Peters, on behalf of youth from across Europe, presented the Manifesto to Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director for Natural Capital at the EU Commission Directorate General for the Environment.

Synergies with other EU policies :

The Manifesto brings forward issues that any young person living in a rural area can relate to, in Europe and worldwide. The project's goal is to find ways to respond to the needs of the young people as expressed in the Manifesto and to involve them in this work.

Youth boards have already been formed in Scotland and, via the Europarc Federation, the model has been replicated in Germany and Italy. Youth Leader funds are considered to be a great way to support young people in creating their own projects. It is widely considered to be a valuable tool across Europe. Via the LINC seminar of 2019, the project holders want to disseminate these good practices to LEADER groups across Europe, as widely as possible, and to make youth involvement a common LEADER practice.

"It is so nice to be able to act upon the issues that really effects us and our life" Eveliina, Finland

"...we need to make sure, these rural areas are places of opportunity for young people." Katie, UK

"...The Committee congratulated us on the Manifesto and our presentation, but we were after something more concrete to help move things forward. The Authority now agreed to create a working group....Woop!Woop!" Ethan, Cat & Matthew, UK

Additional sources of information

www.europarc.org/news/2018/12/implementing-the-europarc-youth-manifesto-across-europe/

*This project has been categorised under 'Social Inclusion' by the nominating National Rural Network