

Young Rural Development Opportunities and Challenges Report



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INTRODUCTION

“To the youth of today, I also have a wish to make: be the scriptwriters of your destiny and feature yourselves as stars that showed the way towards a brighter future.”

- Nelson Mandela

In the quiet expanse of rural landscapes, a story of transformation unfolds—a narrative woven from the threads of challenges and opportunities that shape the destiny of our EU. Welcome to the **Young Rural Development Opportunities and Challenges Report**, a culmination of desk and field-based research that delves into the intricate tapestry of rural youth depopulation, demographic dynamics, and the critical role of infrastructure in fostering environments that beckon young individuals to live, work, and thrive.

Across the rural terrains of Ireland, Slovenia, Malta, Spain, and Denmark, the collective expertise of these nations converges to illuminate the pathways of youth and rural development. But each of our area are facing challenges, in many cases climate related. Rooted in a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of both the rural landscapes and young generations, the ACORN partners unite in a concerted effort to explore and understand the essence of change that is reshaping the contours of their societies.

"Opportunities and challenges" are the two sides of the coin that define the landscape of rural development. The phenomenon of rural youth depopulation is not a mere statistic, but a seismic shift that ripples across borders, leaving its imprint on economies, communities, and futures. This report seeks to unearth the nuanced reasons behind this exodus, capturing the aspirations, aspirations, and aspirations of the young minds, and those who work with them as youth workers and educators, seeking to navigate their place in a rapidly evolving world. Demographics, often seen as abstract figures, hold the key to deciphering societal transitions. By dissecting demographic patterns in our rural regions, this report unveils insights that provide a roadmap for informing policy-making and design and delivery of strategic interventions. And of course, in the face of

challenges, opportunities emerge, and this report casts a spotlight on endeavors that hold the promise of turning rural areas into thriving centers of possibility.

As we embark on this journey through the pages of the Young Rural Development Opportunities and Challenges Report, we invite you to engage with the voices, experiences, and aspirations of rural youth—the heartbeat of tomorrow's rural landscapes. With a shared vision and collaborative spirit, these partner nations chart a course toward a more vibrant, resilient, and inclusive rural future, where challenges are met with innovation, and opportunities are seized with determination.

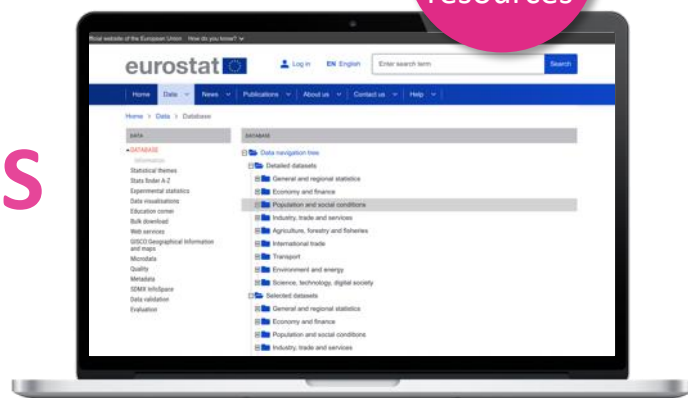
What follows are the perspectives of national research and consultations in Ireland, Slovenia, Malta, Spain and Denmark. We focus on specific rural regions in our countries and present key insights, the demographical context, surveys with our youth, youth /entrepreneurship organizations and policy makers.



01

YOUNG RURAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN IRELAND

CLICK TO [VIEW](#) resources



DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY



Region

Co. Roscommon, Ireland

Short story of the region

County Roscommon is one of five counties in the province of Connacht and has borders with Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Westmeath and Offaly. It is the only county in Connacht that does not have a seashore and Roscommon town is the main County town. Roscommon is the third most rural county in

Total number of inhabitants in the region

64,544

Ireland with 73.2 % of the population living in rural areas. The main centres of population in the County are Roscommon Town (population of 5,693), Castlerea (population of 1,985), Ballaghaderreen (population of 1,822) and Boyle (population of 1,459). The net migration is estimated to be 3,986 over the period.

Municipalities in the region



SPOTLIGHT ON MUNICIPALITIES

Municipality

Strokestown

Number of inhabitants

848

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

Ireland's NEET rate (those aged 15-29) was 13.4% in 2020

Number of inhabitants (<65)

772

Latest unemployment rates

Down to 4.1% for males from a revised rate of 4.2% in April 2023 and May 2022

Down to 3.4% for females from a revised rate of 3.5% in April 2023, and a rate of 4.2% in May 2022.

Number of inhabitants (>25)

663

Young entrepreneurs/leaders

Leo Cox – EDA Cox

John Stapleton- Little Dish



Photos of the region



Link municipality website
<https://www.strokestown.ie/>



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Municipality

Castlerea

Number of inhabitants

2,069

Unemployment rate

Down to 4.1% for males from a revised rate of 4.2% in April 2023 and May 2022
Down to 3.4% for females from a revised rate of 3.5% in April 2023, and a rate of 4.2% in May 2022.

Unemployment rate for women was 12.0%, compared to 13.7% for men. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of jobless men decreased by over 100,000 (37.7%), while the number of unemployed women decreased by 24,050 (16.0%).

Number of inhabitants (>25)

1,645

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

Ireland's NEET rate (those aged 15-29) was 13.4% in 2020

Number of inhabitants (<65)

1,908

Number of entrepreneurs

Teenagers from castlerea community school, participating in student enterprise programme





Photos of the region



Link municipality website
<https://www.visitroscommon.ie/plan-your-visit/castlerea/>



CLICK
TO VIEW

Municipality

Ballaghaderreen

Number of inhabitants

1,899

Unemployment rate

Down to 4.1% for males from a revised rate of 4.2% in April 2023 and May 2022
Down to 3.4% for females from a revised rate of 3.5% in April 2023, and a rate of 4.2% in May 2022.

Unemployment rate for women was 12.0%, compared to 13.7% for men. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of jobless men decreased by over 100,000 (37.7%), while the number of unemployed women decreased by 24,050 (16.0%).

Number of inhabitants (>25)

1,510

Number of inhabitants (<65)

1,750

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

Ireland's NEET rate (those aged 15-29) was 13.4% in 2020

Young entrepreneurs/leaders

Shane Cogan-Rethinking Rural Ireland
Derek Doohan- DNA Coffee





Photos of the municipality



Link municipality website
<https://ballaghaderreen.com/>



CLICK
TO VIEW

Municipality

Roscommon town

Number of inhabitants

5,876

Unemployment rate

Down to 4.1% for males from a revised rate of 4.2% in April 2023 and May 2022

Down to 3.4% for females from a revised rate of 3.5% in April 2023, and a rate of 4.2% in May 2022.

unemployment rate for women was 12.0%, compared to 13.7% for men. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of jobless men decreased by over 100,000 (37.7%), while the number of unemployed women decreased by 24,050 (16.0%).

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

Ireland's NEET rate (those aged 15-29) was 13.4% in 2020

Young entrepreneurs/leaders

Michelle Daly- P&G Cards LTD





Photos of the region



Link municipality website
<http://www.roscommontownheritage.com/>



CLICK
TO VIEW

Municipality

Boyle

Unemployment rate

Down to 4.1% for males from a revised rate of 4.2% in April 2023 and May 2022
Down to 3.4% for females from a revised rate of 3.5% in April 2023, and a rate of 4.2% in May 2022.

Unemployment rate for women was 12.0%, compared to 13.7% for men. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of jobless men decreased by over 100,000 (37.7%), while the number of unemployed women decreased by 24,050 (16.0%).

Number of inhabitants

2,291

Number of inhabitants (>25)

1,823

Number of inhabitants (<65)

2,117

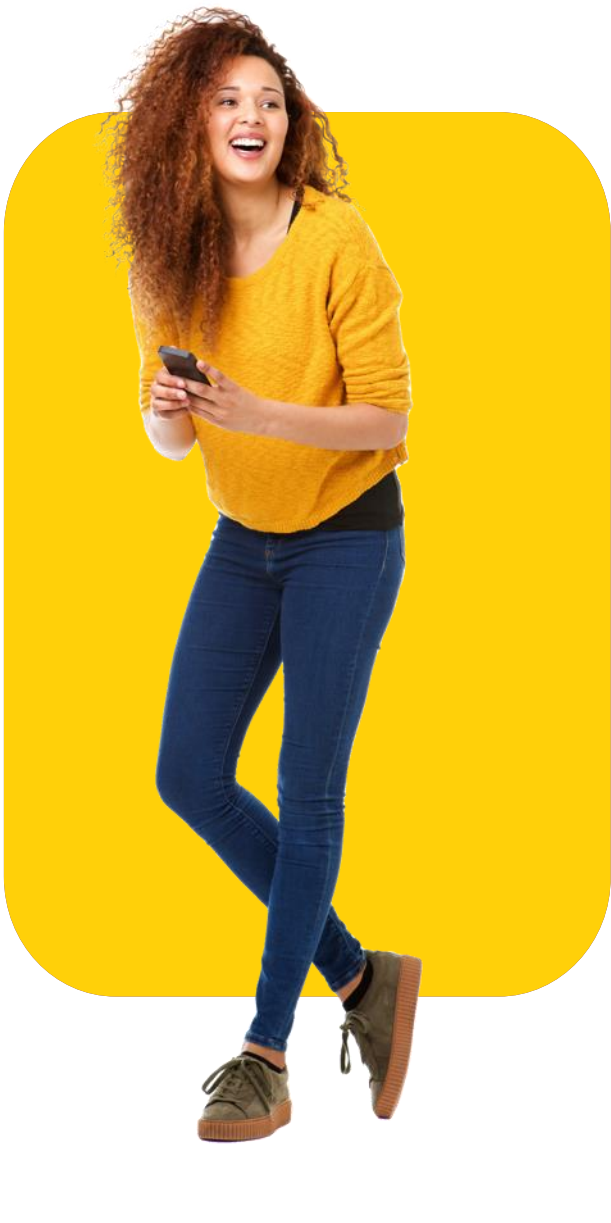
Young people unemployment rate (>25)

Ireland's NEET rate (those aged 15-29) was 13.4% in 2020

Young entrepreneurs/leaders

Ellen Egan – Dimple Design





Photos of the region



Link municipality website

<https://www.enjoy-irish-culture.com/Boyle-Town.html>



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Services for elderly people

Brothers of charity [Brothers of Charity Services Ireland](#)

Roscommon Leader Partnership [Home](#) | [Roscommon LEADER Partnership](#) | [Supporting enterprise and community in County Roscommon \(rosleaderpartnership.ie\)](#)

Roscommon Sports Partnership [Roscommon Sports Partnership – Creating a National structure to co-ordinate and promote the development of sport and physical activity at local level. \(rosactive.org\)](#)

HSE [Older People - HSE.ie](#)

Older Persons Network [Facebook](#)

Older People's Councils [Older Peoples Council's – Main \(agefriendlyireland.ie\)](#)

Mens Sheds [Co. Roscommon](#) | [Irish Men's Sheds Association \(menssheds.ie\)](#)

Roscommon Friendly Call Service [Roscommon Friendly Call Service | Roscommon LEADER Partnership | Supporting enterprise and community in County Roscommon \(rosleaderpartnership.ie\)](#)

Women's Sheds

<https://www.facebook.com/BallaghaderreenWomensShed/>

https://www.strokestown.ie/womens_shed.html

Rural Men's Group [Rural Men's Group – Alzheimer](#)

Dementia Cafe [Roscommon Dementia Alliance](#)

Day Care Centres [Facebook](#)

Family Resource Centres [Locate your nearest Family Resource Centre on our interactive map of Ireland](#)

Alone [Home – ALONE](#)

Services for young people

[Foróige Clubs - Roscommon Youth Service](#) there is no local website only national

[Roscommon Youth Service](#) | [Roscommon](#) | [Facebook](#)
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-QUAD-Ballaghaderreen-youth-club> | [Roscommon](#) | [Facebook](#)
[County Roscommon Foróige](#) | [Roscommon](#) | [Facebook](#)
[Kilbride No Name Club](#) | [Facebook](#)

Roscommon Comhairle Na N'óg [Roscommon Comhairle na nÓg | Comhairle na nÓg \(comhairlenanog.ie\)](#)

Roscommon Leader Partnership [Home](#) | [Roscommon LEADER Partnership](#) | [Supporting enterprise and community in County Roscommon \(rosleaderpartnership.ie\)](#)

CHALMS – Child and adolescent mental health service [CAMHS, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - HSE.ie](#)
JIGSAW [Visit Jigsaw.ie](#) | [The National Centre for Youth Mental Health](#)

Family Resource Centres [Locate your nearest Family Resource Centre on our interactive map of Ireland](#)

TUSLA Family Support Service

[Family SupportTusla - Child and Family Agency](#)

TUSLA Child Protection Service [Child Protection & WelfareTusla - Child and Family Agency](#)

Roscommon Young Carers [Facebook](#)

West Be Well [West Be Well – West of Ireland Suicide Prevention Alliance](#)

Belong To [Roscommon - BeLonG To](#)

Planet Youth [Planet Youth - Growing Up in the West](#)

Roscommon Sports Partnership

[Roscommon Sports Partnership – Creating a National structure to co-ordinate and promote the development of sport and physical activity at local level. \(rosactive.org\)](#)

GAA – local club [GAA Clubs In Roscommon](#) | [Roscommon GAA | Gaelic Games \(gaaroscommon.ie\)](#)

Soccer – [Clubs - Roscommon & District Football League \(pitchero.com\)](#)

Musical/ Drama Groups: [Castlerea Musical Society Facebook](#)

Rugby Clubs & tennis clubs:

[creggs rugby – Creggs Rugby](#), [Tennis Ireland](#) | [Boyle Tennis Club](#)

Athletics: [Facebook](#)

Badminton Clubs: [Club Finder \(badmintonireland.com\)](#)

Handball Clubs: [Connacht](#) | [GAA Handball](#)

Girl guides: [IGG Mote Park Cottage \(iggcottageroscommon.com\)](#)

Swimming Club: [Facebook](#)

Running Clubs: [Roscommon Harriers A.C.](#) | [Ros Comáin | Facebook](#)

ParkRuns: [home](#) | [Strokestown parkrun](#) | [Strokestown parkrun](#)

[home](#) | [Castlerea parkrun](#) | [Castlerea parkrun](#)

[home](#) | [Lough Key parkrun](#) | [Lough Key parkrun](#)

Golf Clubs [Golf](#) | [Explore Roscommon \(visitroscommon.ie\)](#)

[castlereagolfclub.com](#) [strokestowngolfclub.com](#)

[Ballaghaderreen Golf Club](#) | [Ballaghaderreen | Facebook](#)

Variety of Dancing Groups eg Irish, Ballet

[Shannon Academy of Irish Dance](#) | [Roscommon | Facebook](#)

[McDermott School of Classical Ballet & Dance](#)

[\(mcdermottballschool.com\)](#)

[www.peelodance.ie](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Jive Classes Roscommon](#) | [Jiving Lessons Roscommon](#) | [Niall](#)

[Doorhy Dancer](#)

National Youth Supports

Childline [Home - Childline](#)

ISPCC Teen Line Ireland [Teenline - ISPCC](#)

Pieta House [Pieta](#) | [Preventing Suicide and Self-Harm since 2006](#)

Samaritans [Find your nearest Samaritans branch](#) | [Branch Finder | Samaritans](#)

Conclusion

In summary, the exploration of several municipalities within County Roscommon provides insights into the demographics, unemployment rates, and services available across the county for both young and elderly populations.

The town of Roscommon, serving as the county's main hub, supports a diverse population of approximately 5,876. Notably, the unemployment rate has decreased over the years, indicative of the broader trend in Ireland. This trend is mirrored in other municipalities like Castlerea, Ballaghaderreen, Boyle, and Athlone, all contributing to Ireland's rising employment figures.

Each municipality caters to the needs of its young and older citizens. Foróige Clubs, GAA, soccer, and mental health services like CHALMS and JIGSAW form a support network for the youth across these towns. Young entrepreneurs and leaders, like Leo Cox, Shane Cogan, and Ellen Egan, exemplify the drive to foster economic growth within the communities.

Services for the elderly, represented by organizations like Active Retirement Ireland and Brothers of Charity, demonstrate the commitment to ensuring a fulfilling quality of life for the older population. These services, along with community and family resource centres, create a nurturing environment for the elderly to thrive.

As County Roscommon navigates the ever-changing landscape of demographics, employment, and community services, the concerted efforts of local entities, entrepreneurs, and support organizations play a pivotal role in shaping a vibrant and resilient future for its residents.

YOUTH SURVEY FINDINGS





Profile of our survey participants

Our survey was completed by 18 people from across Co. Roscommon between the ages of 12 to 21, with gender balance achieved with 8 female respondents, 9 male respondents and 1 x they/nonbinary respondent. They based all over County Roscommon.

What is it like to live in rural Ireland?

Young people living in rural Roscommon highlighted its peaceful and quiet nature. While many appreciate the close-knit community, there's a desire for more social venues.

Although there's general satisfaction with rural living, some young people find it monotonous and see room for improvement.

What is there to do?

Some young people feel there's limited recreational activity, others highlight a variety of options. Popular activities include walking, biking, and utilizing cycle paths. Tennis, cinema, and games offer social avenues, while others mentioned options like ziplining and go-karting provide adventure. Gaelic Football stands out as the predominant sport, and the country offers various community spaces like parks, playgrounds, and youth clubs. Some also mention farming as a distinct activity. However, there's an underlying desire for more entertainment and social venues.

Are there things you don't like about living in Rural Ireland?

The majority of our young respondents living in rural Ireland feel limited by the lack of variety in recreational activities and often find themselves wanting more than what's available. The absence of public transport and limited resources stand out as challenges, while the need for better socializing venues is palpable. Some appreciate the area's simplicity and scenery, but others point out issues like littering and climate. However, there are also young people who find living in rural Ireland enjoyable and have no significant concerns.

What are the good things about it?

- The blend of tranquility and community spirit. The close-knit nature of communities, where everyone is familiar with one another, fostering a sense of belonging and friendliness
- Presence of local amenities like shops and playgrounds, coupled with recreational options like cycling and youth clubs
- Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) teams and personal growth opportunities,

What are the issues /concerns facing young people living in rural Ireland?

- Social isolation and limited avenues for interaction led to concerns about developing social skills.
- Lack of recreational spaces and youth clubs exacerbates feelings of monotony and the absence of connectivity.
- Safety concerns, such as potential altercations
- Inadequate infrastructure like poor road conditions.
- The influx of new residents and peer pressure, especially around issues like vaping, compound the challenges.
- Academic pressures from school and overarching concerns about mental health further underscore the multifaceted issues confronting rural youth.

Have you any ideas about resources that are needed or services that are required for young people?

When asked about essential resources or services for young people, respondents highlighted a range of needs.

- a significant portion voiced the need for enhanced public transport services.
- the establishment of diverse social and activity groups, tailored to cater to various interests, including more food options. The introduction of sports clubs emerged as a desired addition
- a call for improvements in the health sector, including staffing health centers more effectively.
- a few respondents, however, were unsure or did not specify any particular needs.

Are there any gaps?

In addressing perceived gaps in rural Ireland, respondents identified several areas of concern. Notably,

- Public transport inadequacies and limited employment opportunities for the youth are underscored, alongside the absence of recreational facilities like swimming pools and classes like cooking.
- A call for more inclusive spaces such as LGBTQIAP+ youth clubs.
- Young adults, especially those aged 18-20, feel a lack of activity groups tailored for them.
- Other concerns include inadequate entertainment options, issues with littering, declining healthcare standards, and the closure of local businesses.
- A few respondents were either unsure or did not perceive any gaps.

How could these be addressed?

In addressing the gaps identified, respondents offered varied solutions. Prominent among these was

- An increase in funding for youth and the establishment of coffee shops or evening groups could foster socialization.
- the introduction of recreational venues, including fast-food chains, gyms, football pitches, and even skyscrapers.!!
- Encouraging connectivity among specific age groups, perhaps through targeted events or platforms, was suggested.
- Enhancements in transportation, particularly more dependable bus services, were also emphasized,
- Some underscored the importance of community awareness and practical solutions like litter pick-up and reducing living costs.

Do you envisage time when you might leave your rural home?

When asked about the possibility of leaving their rural areas, respondents had varied opinions.

While some see themselves staying permanently, others consider relocation, especially for employment opportunities.

Outside factors and circumstances seem to play a significant role in their decision-making. However, a consistent thread of uncertainty was also evident, with several respondents expressing ambivalence or a lack of clarity about their future choices.

What are your hopes for rural Ireland?

Our young respondents expressed a mix of hopes for the future of rural Ireland.

- Many wish to see an enhancement in communal activities, entertainment, and resources to make life more enjoyable and convenient for residents.
- There's a clear desire for a preservation of the area's natural beauty, with calls for a stronger appreciation of nature and environmental responsibility, evident in suggestions like litter pick-up.
- Some hope that the rural charm remains intact, while others emphasize the need for improved healthcare facilities, protective services, and an overall elevation in the quality of life.
- Yet, among these diverse opinions, a shared aspiration emerges: a rural Ireland that is vibrant, sustainable, and caters to the needs and joys of its young people.

Is there anything government could do to improve living conditions for young people and their families living in rural Ireland?

- Respondents offered various suggestions on how the government could improve living conditions for young people and families in rural Ireland. A recurring theme was the desire for economic enhancement, with proposals ranging from introducing tourist incentives to boost local economies, to establishing businesses that assist financially struggling families. Moreover, there were calls for the creation of more activities for youth, the availability of larger retail establishments, and the establishment of niche shops, like comic stores. The need for better public transport and measures to reduce the cost of living were also underscored. Some unique points included demands for better waste management, exemplified by the call to pick up litter, and educational reforms such as eliminating homework. However, a few respondents were unsure or believed that no governmental intervention was necessary.

What can be done (at a national policy level) to make rural Ireland a more attractive place for young people to live in and to stay or to return if they do leave?

- Relevant to policy makers, many emphasize the need for expanded job opportunities, particularly for young people, alongside the creation of recreational areas and activities tailored to youth interests. There's a clear desire among respondents for infrastructural improvements in rural Ireland, such as road maintenance and building upkeep.
- Reducing the cost of living and enhancing transportation services also emerged as crucial points.
- While some respondents suggested preserving the natural beauty of the area, others called for increased safety measures.

What would you like to see happening in your community to improve life for young people?

Our young respondents envision a more vibrant community life for young people in rural Ireland.

- They express a desire for enhanced social interactions, including the introduction of specialized youth clubs, such as those catering to the LGBTQIAP+ community.
- There's a significant interest in expanding recreational options, from sports teams like basketball and volleyball to entertainment centres. Improved transport services, with better bus stops and dependable buses .
- Focus on infrastructure, advocating for cleaner surroundings, larger roads, and community services. Monitoring the sale of vapes and expanding community services, such as libraries, are also desired improvements.

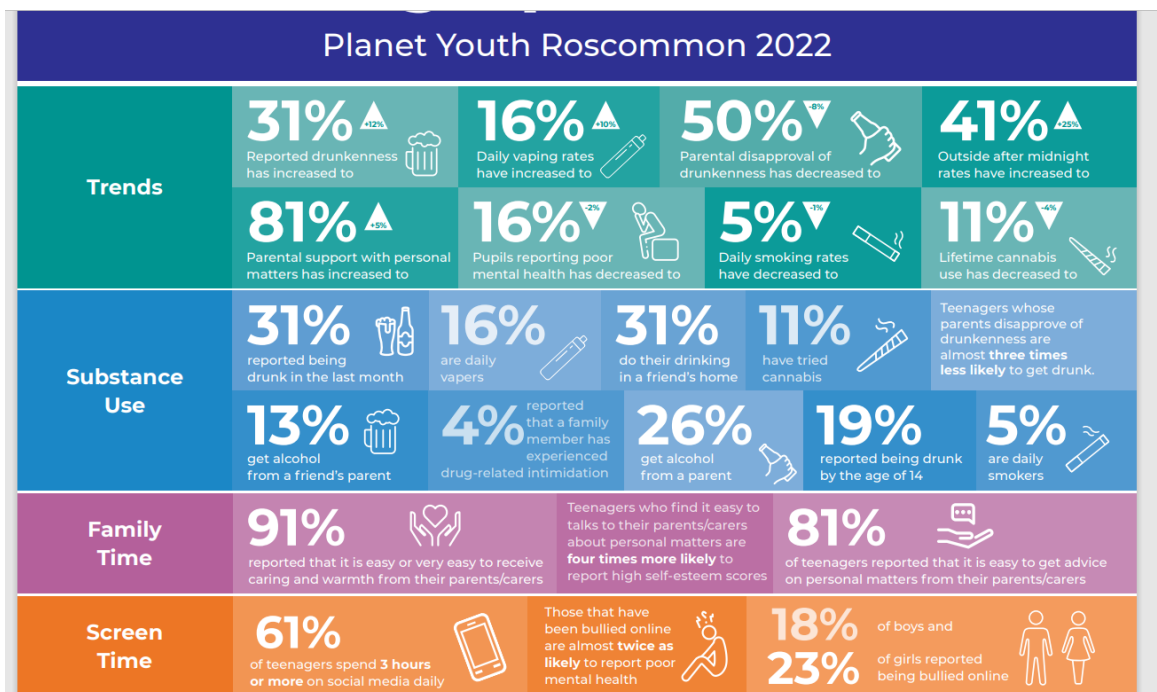
Planet Youth - Innovation

Planet Youth [Planet Youth - Growing Up in the West](#) is an international evidence-based primary prevention model, developed by the Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA) at Reykjavik University. It was initially developed in order to reduce substance use rates amongst young people. The model uses a whole population approach and offers the opportunity to improve health and life outcomes for young people in many areas. It works by directly targeting the risk and protective factors that determine their substance use behaviours and enhancing the social environment they are growing up in.

There are currently three Planet Youth pilot sites operating in Ireland. They are Planet Youth Galway, Planet Youth Mayo and Planet Youth Roscommon. These five-year pilot programmes have been initiated and developed by the Western Region Drug and Alcohol Task Force (WRDATF) with the support of partner agencies in the region. Local steering committees have been established for each of the pilot sites and these consist of funders and strategic partners, all of whom are committed to the development of Planet Youth in the region.

The information contained in the Planet Youth Roscommon 2020 and 2018 county reports provides interesting insights. The 2020 report contains the responses of 568 15 and 16-year-old pupils who completed their Junior Cycle in Roscommon schools in June 2020. The survey was conducted in December 2020 after their return to school and during the COVID19 pandemic. The reports give a comprehensive insight into the lives of our young people and what it's like growing up in Roscommon at the moment. They also show cross-tabulations that examine some of the risk and protective factors in their social environment.

Download the Roscommon Report on [Roscommon - Planet Youth - Growing Up in the West](#)



Conclusions

In conclusion, the survey conducted among young individuals in rural Ireland, specifically in County Roscommon, provides a comprehensive insight into their perspectives and experiences.

The findings reveal a mixed picture of rural life, highlighting both positive aspects and areas for improvement.

Positive Aspects of Rural Life:

- The tranquility and peaceful nature of rural surroundings are appreciated.
- The strong sense of community and close-knit relationships contribute to a feeling of belonging.
- Availability of local amenities, such as shops and playgrounds, adds to the convenience.
- Opportunities for recreational activities like cycling, sports, and youth clubs are acknowledged.
- The presence of Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) teams and avenues for personal growth are seen as positive aspects.

Challenges and Concerns:

Despite the positives, some young individuals find rural life monotonous and lacking in entertainment options.

- A desire for more social venues and recreational activities is evident.
- Challenges related to inadequate public transport and limited resources are noted.
- Safety concerns and issues like littering and climate impact are recognized.
- The influx of new residents and peer pressure, particularly surrounding topics like vaping, compound existing challenges.
- Academic pressures and overarching concerns about mental health add complexity to the issues faced by rural youth.

Youth Involvement and Decision-Making:

A strong majority of respondents believe in the need to involve young people in local decision-making processes. While young people's influence is perceived to be more impactful at the organizational level, they are recognized as important contributors at local decision-making levels.

Desire for Improvement:

The unanimous agreement on the need for better rural opportunities and resources highlights the aspiration to encourage young people to remain in rural areas and actively participate in shaping their communities. In essence, the survey findings underscore the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse needs and perspectives of young individuals in rural Ireland. Balancing the tranquil aspects of rural life with opportunities for recreation, social interaction, and personal growth is vital to fostering vibrant, inclusive, and resilient rural communities that cater to the well-being and aspirations of the youth.

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS SURVEY FINDINGS



In what year did your business start/Initiative?

- 2020 x1
- 2021 x2
- 2022/23 x2

What challenges or difficulties do you face as an entrepreneur?

- Money to start up
- Marketing to the right customers
- Little support in finance and marketing
- Getting everything to come together was challenging

Have you received any grants to help your business?

- Yes x3
- No x2

Other than financial, what/did you get support prior to starting the business?

- None 2x
- Teachers
- Enterprise office
- Family

To what extent did this support meet your needs?

- Very well x2
- Not well x2
- N/A

How did you expect to finance your business startup?

- Loans/grants x3
- Savings x2

Did you manage to raise the finance required to start a business?

- Yes x2
- No x3

How would you prefer to be kept informed of any support available?

- Email x2
- Social media x1
- Support meetings x1

How would you describe your journey to starting a business?

- Started from a hobby
- Starting from school enterprise project X 2
- There was a market with room for the business I wanted
- Difficult – could not get funding for retail business, only got 40% of bank loan due to age.

How prepared were you when you started the business?

- Very prepared - 40%
- Could have been better – 20%
- Not prepared at all – 20%
- Support from teacher - 20%

If you were to start over, what advice would you give yourself?

- Start early
- Deal with one task at a time
- Create a clear plan of time/money allocation
- Stronger focus on internet
- Spend more money on marketing

What were your main concerns about starting up a business?

- Having time/knowledge
- Funding
- Being able to make a wage/success
- Would there be uptake on the business
- Getting good exposure



Conclusions

Initiative Start Year:

There was a distribution of business initiatives starting in different years, with the majority in 2020 and 2021.

Challenges Faced:

Common challenges included

- Obtaining sufficient startup funds and effectively marketing to the right customers.
- Limited support in terms of both finances and marketing was also a noted difficulty.
- Coordinating various aspects of the business to come together was another challenge.

Receipt of Grants:

Some entrepreneurs received grants to support their businesses, while others did not.

Support Prior to Business Start:

Support sources varied, including teachers, enterprise offices, and family members. Some individuals did not receive any support prior to starting their businesses.

Effectiveness of Support:

The effectiveness of support received varied; some found it very helpful, while others did not.

Finance for Startup:

Financing methods included loans/grants and personal savings.

While some managed to raise the necessary funds, others did not.

Preparedness:

Opinions on preparedness varied, with some feeling very prepared and others feeling inadequately prepared. Some received support from teachers.

Major concerns included time and knowledge limitations, obtaining funding, ensuring a sustainable income, gaining business uptake, and achieving good exposure.

The findings suggest a mix of experiences among the entrepreneurs, highlighting challenges related to financing, marketing, and preparedness. While some received grants and

effective support, others faced difficulties in these areas. The advice given for starting over underscores the importance of careful planning, time management, and strategic resource allocation.

RURAL YOUTH ORGANISATIONS SURVEY FINDINGS



Do you think that there is a strong need to involve young people in local decision-making structures & process in rural Ireland?

- Yes – 80%
- No – 20%

Do the decisions that young people are involved in have an influence at?

- A national level – 0%
- A local level - 40%
- An organisational level - 60%

Which issues are children and young people involved in making decisions about through your organisation?

1. **Education:** 80%
2. **Environmental Issues:** 60%
3. **Mental Health:** 60%
4. **Regeneration:** 60%
5. **Community safety/crime:** 40%
6. **Transport:** 40%
7. **Youth Services:** 40%
8. **Physical Health:** 20%
9. **Housing:** 20%
10. **Leisure/Recreation:** 0%
11. **Social Services:** 0%

Do you find it hard to reach specific groups of children and young people?

- Yes – 60%
- No - 40%

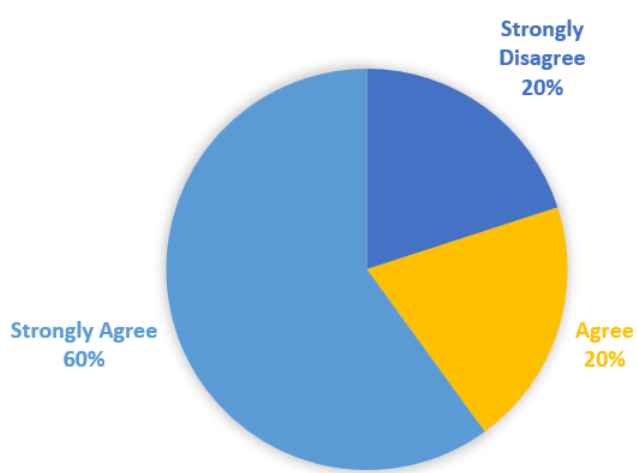
If yes, which groups?

- Marginalised
- Teenagers

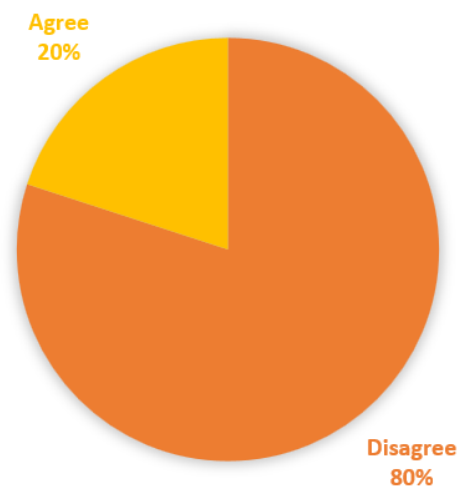
Do you think that better rural opportunities and resources are needed to encourage young people to remain in rural areas and get involved in local decision-making structures (Local Authorities, LDCs, LCDCs, PPN, local community groups)?

- Yes – 100%

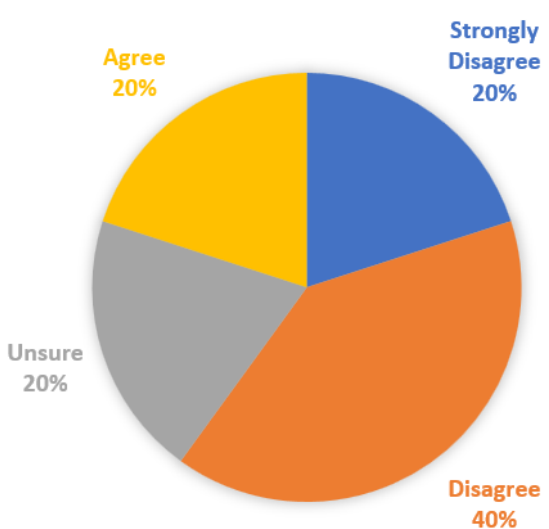
Young people have a right to be involved in public decision-making.



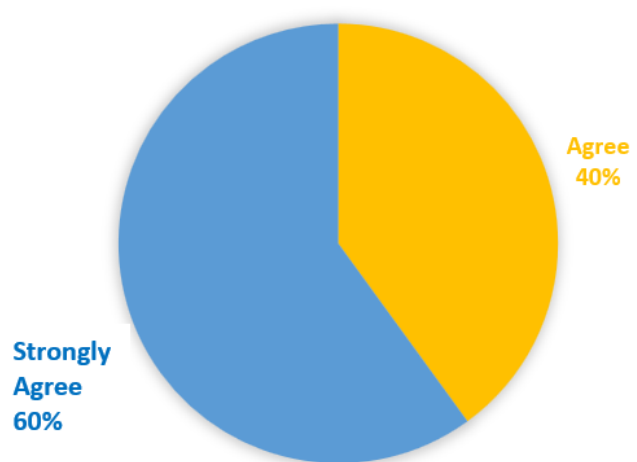
It is too difficult to involve young people in decision-making.



Young people should only be involved in decision-making where there is clear evidence about the benefits of their involvement.



There are no decisions which young people cannot be involved in, providing they are properly supported.



There are some decisions which young people cannot be involved in.



Conclusion

Based on the gathered responses, the overall conclusion of the findings is that there is a strong recognition of the importance of involving young people in public decision-making processes. The majority of respondents strongly agree that young people have a right to be part of these processes. While there might be varying degrees of influence young people's involvement has on different decision-making levels (national, local, organizational), it is evident that many acknowledge their contribution.

The issues young people are actively engaged in deciding about predominantly include education, environmental matters, mental health, and regeneration, showing their concern for social well-being and sustainability. However, there's room for further engagement on other topics such as community safety, transport, youth services, physical health, and housing.

It's noted that reaching specific groups of young people, particularly marginalized individuals and teenagers, can be challenging. This highlights the importance of tailored outreach strategies and inclusivity in decision-making processes.

The unanimous agreement that better rural opportunities and resources are needed to retain young people in rural areas and involve them in local decision-making structures underscores the desire for more vibrant, supportive, and inclusive rural communities that cater to the needs and aspirations of the youth.

DECISION MAKERS SURVEY FINDINGS



Do you think there is a strong need to involve young people in local decision making in rural Ireland?

- Yes: 80%
- No: 20%

What level do you think the decisions that young people are involved in have an influence on?

- At national level – 0%
- At local level - 40%
- At organisational level - 60%

Which issues are young people involved in making decisions about through your organisation?

- Education: 80%
- Environmental issues: 60%
- Mental health: 60%
- Regeneration: 60%
- Community safety: 40%
- Transport: 40%
- Youth services: 40%
- Other (music/water): 40%
- Physical health: 20%
- Housing: 20% Leisure: 0% Social services: 0%

Do you find it hard to reach specific groups of children and young people?

- Yes : 60%
- No: 40%

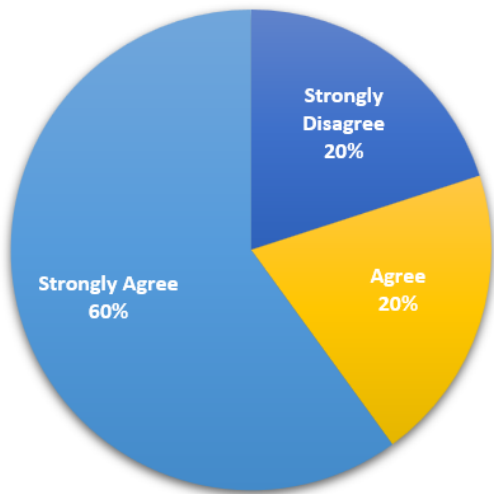
Which groups are hard to reach?

- Marginalised
- Teenagers

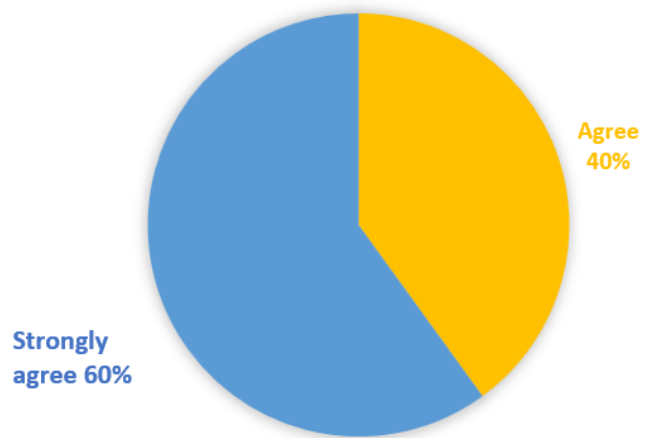
Do you think that better rural opportunities and resources are needed to encourage young people to remain in rural areas and get involved in local decision-making structures?

- Yes: 100%

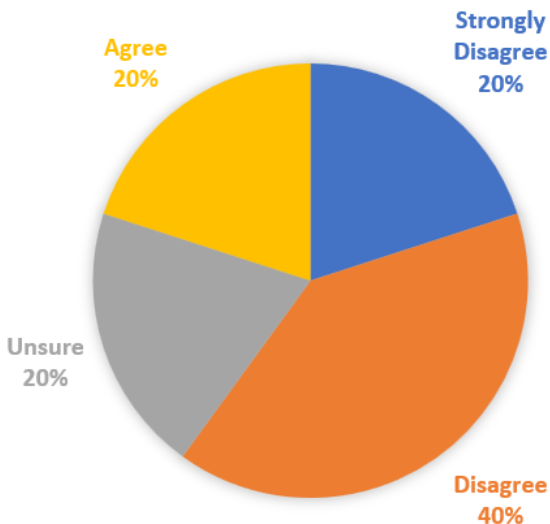
Young people have a right to be involved in public decision-making



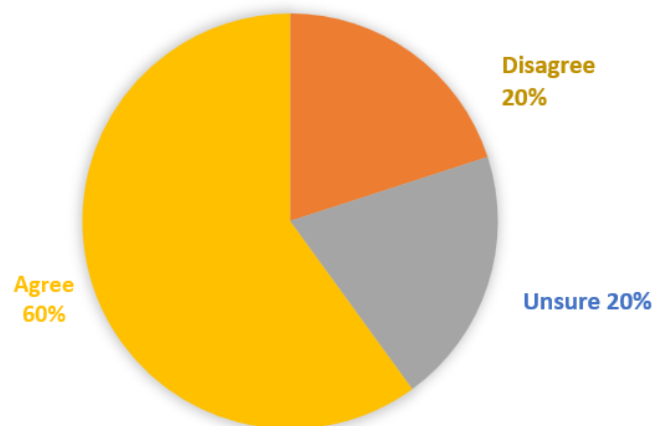
There are no decisions which young people cannot be involved in, providing they are properly supported



Young people should only be involved in decision-making where there is clear evidence about the benefits or their involvement



There are some decisions which young people cannot be involved in



It is too difficult to involve young people in decision-making

- Agree: 20%
- Disagree 80%

Conclusion

There is a strong consensus among respondents that involving young people in local decision-making within rural Ireland is crucial. This is supported by 80% of respondents agreeing that there is a significant need for young people to be engaged in these processes.

While young people's influence on national-level decisions is perceived as limited, a substantial portion (60%) believe that their involvement does hold sway at an organizational level, and 40% believe their influence extends to local decision-making.

The areas where young people are actively participating in decision-making through their organizations include education, environmental concerns, mental health, regeneration, and other specific issues like music and water. While education is a dominant focus, there is also a notable involvement in addressing environmental and mental health matters.

Reaching specific groups of children and young people is recognized as a challenge by 60% of the respondents. Among the challenging groups, marginalized individuals and teenagers are identified.

An overwhelming consensus (100%) emerges regarding the need for improved rural opportunities and resources to encourage young people to both remain in rural areas and engage more actively in local decision-making structures. This finding underscores the importance of enhancing rural environments to make them appealing and supportive for young individuals, and consequently fostering their active participation in shaping their communities.

Overall Conclusions- Ireland

Insights from Young People of Rural Roscommon: General Perspectives on Rural Living:

Young inhabitants of rural Roscommon mostly treasure the serenity that the region provides. The close-knit nature of the community is cherished, acting as both a source of comfort and occasional monotony. There's an evident dichotomy in their perspectives – while the peace and community-centric nature of rural living are appreciated, there's a palpable yearning for more vibrant social and recreational avenues.

Challenges and Concerns of Rural Youth:

- 1.Social Aspects:** The primary concern emerges around social isolation. Limited interaction avenues have not only made rural life feel monotonous for some but have also sparked concerns about potential impediments to social skill development.
- 2.Recreational Gaps:** A glaring deficiency in recreational spaces, including the absence of youth clubs, amplifies feelings of monotony. The young population craves diverse entertainment and engagement avenues.
- 3.Safety and Infrastructure:** Issues range from safety concerns, like potential altercations, to infrastructural challenges like inadequate road conditions.
- 4.Peer Pressure and New Residents:** The challenges of adapting to an influx of new residents and navigating peer pressures, especially concerning trends like vaping, become evident.
- 5.Academic and Mental Health Concerns:** Academic pressures, coupled with overarching mental health concerns, paint a complex picture of the multi

-dimensional challenges facing rural youth.

Addressing the Gaps:

- 1.Transportation and Employment:** Two core concerns are the inadequacy of public transport and limited job prospects for young individuals.
- 2.Recreational and Learning Avenues:** The desire for enhanced recreational options, such as swimming pools, cooking classes, and youth clubs catering to diverse groups including the LGBTQIAP+ community, emerges strongly.
- 3.Inclusivity and Age-Specific Needs:** There's a noticeable gap felt by young adults aged 18-20, who yearn for activities tailored for their age group.
- 4.Healthcare and Local Economy:** There are growing concerns about the standard of healthcare and the closure of local businesses. Improving healthcare staffing and infrastructure becomes a priority.

Potential Solutions Offered by Respondents:

- 1.Fostering Socialization:** Increasing funds directed towards youth-centric projects and initiatives like coffee shops or evening groups can act as catalysts for increased social interaction.
- 2.Expanding Recreational Facilities**
- 3.Enhancing Connectivity:** Encouraging interactions among specific age groups through targeted events or platforms could bridge the existing social gaps.
- 4.Transportation and Community Initiatives:** Improved and reliable bus services, community-awareness programs, litter pick-ups, and strategies for cost-of-living reductions were underscored.



Conclusions- Ireland

Findings from Young Rural Entrepreneurs:

1. Financing the Business: Financing stands out as a primary concern. With only 40% of the surveyed entrepreneurs being able to successfully raise the requisite capital to start their business, it's evident that young entrepreneurs in rural Ireland are navigating a challenging financial landscape. The data accentuates the need for more supportive financial instruments and platforms tailored to assist budding entrepreneurs.

2. Challenges Faced: While raising capital emerged as a significant challenge, it was by no means the only one. Entrepreneurs expressed concerns about targeted marketing, highlighting the need for resources and skills that can help them reach their desired audience. Additionally, a palpable lack of support in the realms of finance and marketing was noted, pointing to potential gaps in the current support ecosystem. Finally, the intricacies of weaving together various business aspects were felt acutely, emphasizing the importance of mentorship and guidance in the startup journey.

3. Self-Advice for Starting Over: The entrepreneurs displayed introspective acumen in their advice for hypothetical do-overs. Central to this was the mantra of early initiation coupled with detailed and focused planning. A clear inclination towards the digital was observed, with entrepreneurs advocating for a more robust online presence. This underscores the growing importance of the digital realm, even in rural settings. Furthermore, a tangible desire for a more generous allocation of resources to marketing was expressed, reiterating the earlier theme of targeted outreach challenges.

4. Main Concerns About Starting a Business:

Diving into the psyche of these young entrepreneurs, a spectrum of concerns emerged. From personal limitations in knowledge and time to the very real challenges of securing funds, there was a clear blend of personal and external anxieties. Furthermore, trepidations about earning a sustainable wage, the viability and acceptance of their business, and the overarching challenge of gaining visibility in a competitive market underscored the complex web of considerations these entrepreneurs grapple with.

NEXT STEPS

- ACORN is helping the youth in Co. Roscommon contribute to the development of the County's Local Economic & Community Plan and the next LEADER programme.
- This is a very positive development as it allows for the perspectives and ideas of young people to be taken into account when shaping the future of their community



Planning County Roscommon Together





02

YOUNG RURAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN SLOVENIA

Resources:

Data analysed in the research is based on data gathered by SURS (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia), acquired from the SiStat database. Statistical data is accompanied by survey findings used to prepare the Strategy for the Youth of the Municipality of Idrija 2022-2026 (2020).

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY



INTRODUCTION

The **municipality of Idrija** is one of 212 municipalities in Slovenia with 11,729 inhabitants (SURS, 2022), the centre of which is the town of Idrija, which has half as many (5,797 inhabitants). It is a part of the Goriška Statistical region located in Western Slovenia. Spanning 293.7 km², it is the 8th largest municipality by area but only 46th by population. In 2022, Slovenia had an average of 104 inhabitants per square kilometre. In contrast, in the Municipality of Idrija, the average was only 40 inhabitants per square kilometre, making it a sparsely populated area even by Slovenian standards. We find the main reason for that in the geographical characteristics of the area.

Despite the poor natural geographical conditions, the region is densely populated in the valleys. Still, the area allowed only the development of two settlements with more than 1,000 inhabitants, Idrija and Spodnja Idrija, which lie in slightly extended parts of the Idrijca valley. Other smaller compact villages and hamlets developed mainly on the plateaus, from 600 to 1000 meters above sea level, and on isolated farms on the steep banks of pre-Alpine valleys.

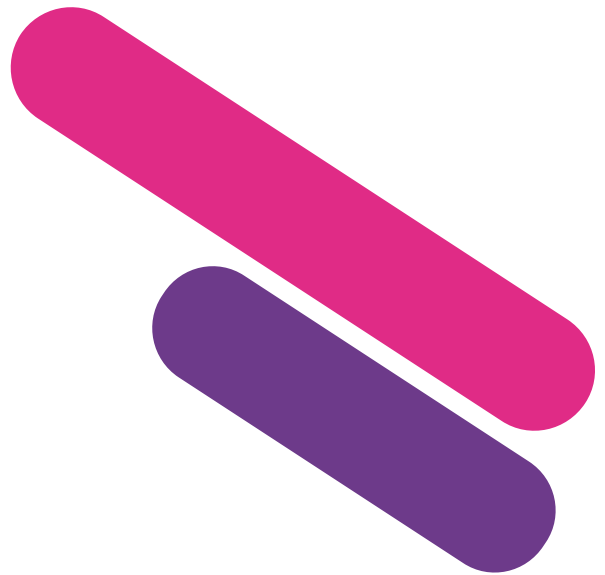
The territory of the municipality is divided into ten local communities: Idrija, Spodnja Idrija,

Vojsko, Črni Vrh, Godovič, Kanomlja, Krnice-Masore, Ledine, Dole and Zavratac; all indicated on the map below. Some of the data gathered in the research also refers to these units.

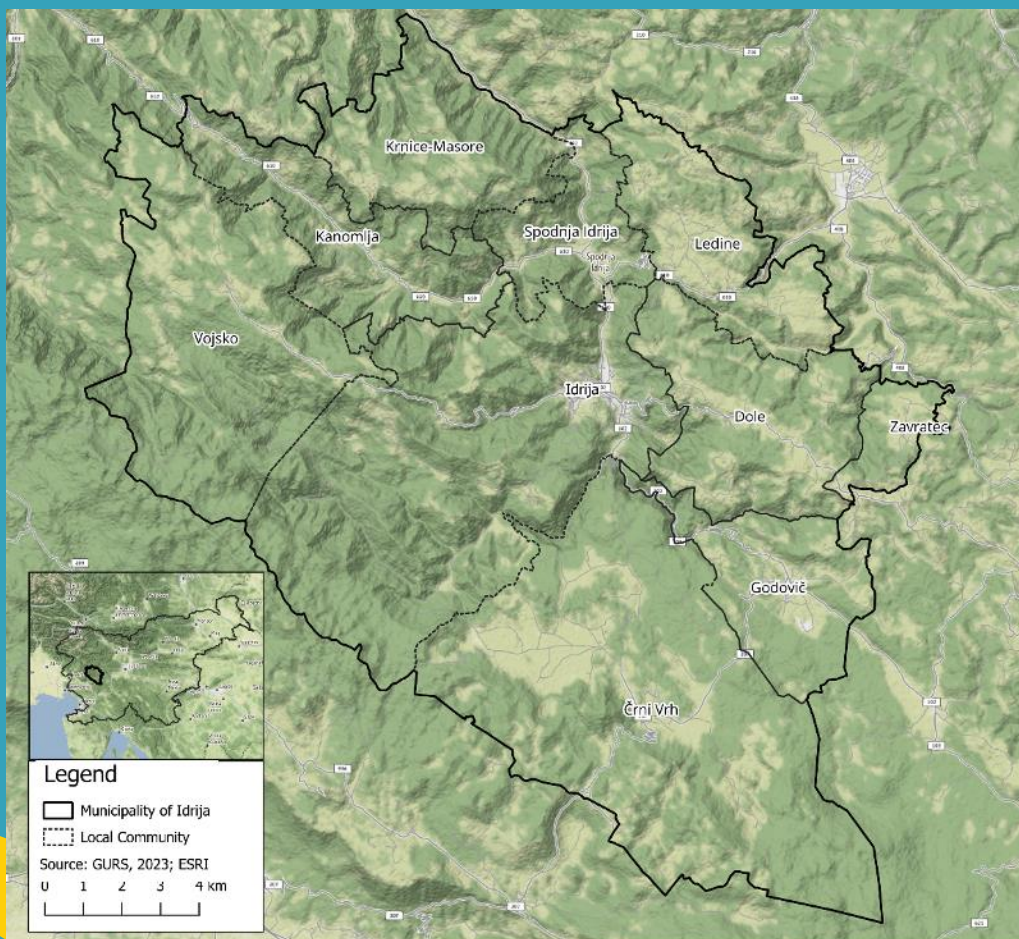
Several public institutions are dealing with the youth, associations, and other organisations in the Municipality of Idrija. There are three primary schools (Idrija, Spodnja Idrija, Črni Vrh) with three additional other units (Ledine, Godovič and a school for children and adolescents with special needs in Idrija). There is a grammar school in Idrija with two additional programs for vocational training. Several other institutions manage different youth programs, the Idrija's public library, Centre for Social Work Northern Primorska-Unit Idrija and Idrija Labour Office, to name a few. There are eight bigger youth associations. Youth organisations in the Municipality of Idrija have strategically important advantages such as a generally high level of development in the municipality and program/age diversity. However, they also have weaknesses, including problems recruiting and keeping active young people and unreliable funding.



As pointed out in the Strategy for the Youth of the Municipality of Idrija 2022-2026, despite the relatively good statistical indicators for unemployment, average income or education level, the youth faces problems when reaching for independence and transitioning from education to employment. There is a significant lack of diverse job opportunities in the municipality, as the two leading employers in the municipality (Kolektor and Hidria) mainly look for technical professions. There is also a lack of available housing for rent or purchase. Both problems force the youth to look for opportunities outside the municipality.



The historical development of the municipality, today mainly noticeable in the town of Idrija, is primarily acknowledged in tourism, as it is the site of a former mercury mine. It is recognised as the second largest mercury mine in the world and, together with Spanish Almaden, a part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Map 1: Municipality of Idrija

Region

Municipality of Idrija

Short story of the region

The municipality of Idrija is part of the Goriška Statistical region in Western Slovenia. Part of a mountainous area, the municipality is sparsely populated even by Slovenian standards and counts 11,729 inhabitants. Despite the poor natural geographical conditions, the region is densely populated in the valleys. Still, the area allowed only for developing two settlements with more than 1,000 inhabitants, Idrija, the municipality's centre with 5,797 inhabitants and Spodnja Idrija. Both lie in slightly extended parts

Total number of inhabitants in the region

11,729 (SURS, 2022)

of the Idrijca Valley. Other smaller compact villages and hamlets developed mainly on the plateaus, from 600 to 1000 meters above sea level, and on isolated farms on the steep banks of pre-Alpine valleys. Despite its unfavourable geographic positioning and difficult access, Idrija has always been well-developed by economic standards (low unemployment rates, average incomes). In the past, due to the second largest mercury mine in the world and today, due to two main technological companies.

Municipalities in the region

- Municipality of Idrija



INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

Municipality of Idrija

Unemployment rate

3.8% (SURS, 2022)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

2671 (SURS, 2022)

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

17 unemployed between the ages of 15 and 24 (1,7% of all inhabitants aged 15-24) (ZRSZ, January 2023)

Number of inhabitants

11,729 (SURS, 2022)

Number of inhabitants (<65)

2821 (SURS, 2022)

Number of entrepreneurs

635 independent entrepreneurs and 12 self-employed in culture (AJPES, May 2023)





Link municipality website



CLICK
TO VIEW

Services for young people

Institutions and other organisations:

- Primary schools in Idrija, Spodnja Idrija, Črni Vrh with three other units (Ledine, Godovič and a school for children and adolescents with special needs in Idrija).
- Gimnazija Jurija Vege Idrija (secondary school)
- Mestna knjižnica in čitalnica Idrija (Public library)
- Center za socialno delo Idrija (Centre for Social Work)
- Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Employment - Labor Office Idrija

Associations:

- Zveza društev Mladinski center Idrija (Youth Centre Idrija)
- Idrija Students' Club
- Idrija 2020 Association
- Zveza prijateljev mladine Idrija
- Scout association Rod srebrnih krtov Idrija
- Scout association Rod kranjskega jegliča Spodnja Idrija
- Association of the rural youth Vrsnik – Ledine
- Association Zakonctedna

Services for elderly people

- Retirement home Idrija - also hosting an Intergenerational Center (currently still not operating due to restrictions during COVID-19) and offering care for the elderly at home. There is a second unit Marof, Retirement home Črni Vrh.
- Retiree association Društvo upokojencev Idrija
- Medobčinsko društvo invalidov Idrija – Cerklno (Intermunicipal association of disabled people)
- Sopotniki (free transport service for the elderly)
- Mobilna učilnica (mobile classroom) funded by European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development - LAS s Ciljem (Local Action Group)

Photos of the region



YOUTH SURVEY FINDINGS

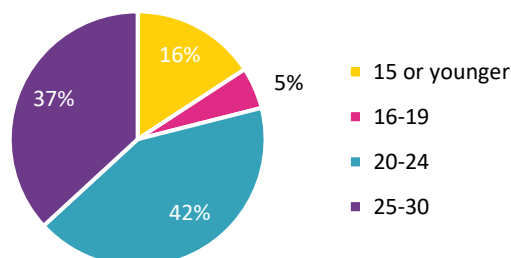


Number of respondents

19

The age group of respondents

Out of 19 respondents, three were 15 or younger, 1 was between the ages of 16 and 19, 8 were between 20 and 24, and 7 were between 25 and 30 years.



Place of residence

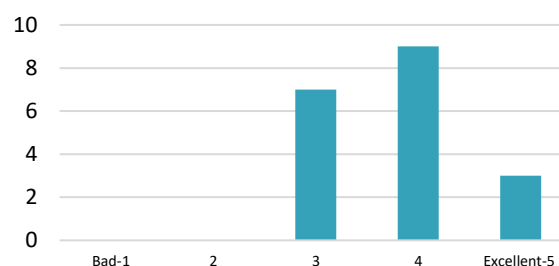
18 respondents are from Idrija, and 1 is from Črni Vrh nad Idrijo.

Gender

8 respondents are female, and 11 are male.

Rate how it is to live in the municipality of Idrija (on a scale of 1- bad to 5 - excellent).

7 respondents rate their life in the municipality as average, 9 as good, and 3 as excellent.



Think about what life in the municipality of Idrija offers you. List at least 5 things (e.g. diverse leisure activities, choice of workshops, business development...).

- Leisure activities, student work, hanging out with friends, walks in nature, and parties.
- Horse riding, rollerblading, swimming, concerts, workshops, and lectures.
- Good employment opportunities, access to nature, and rich cultural heritage.
- The possibility of employment in my profession, activities in nature (mountains, rivers), good places to socialise, a sense of security, and good company.
- Festival Čipkarija (student festival), walking paths, swimming in nature (Lajšt), Godbeno društvo rudarjev Idrija (The Idrija Miners' Band), lacemaking festival.
- Opportunities for recreation in nature, workplace, apartment with parents, and interaction with people who think differently.
- Entertainment and cultural events (concerts, cinema, museum, lectures/presentations...) Possibility of a job in the industry (Kolektor, Hidria,...). Many opportunities for recreation in nature (mountains). Participation in a band. The compactness of the municipality enables quick access to most resources. Recently, cycling has been developing strongly (bike park, pump track, various tours).

- Sports activities in nature, participation in various events, cooperation with different associations/entrepreneurs..., attendance at multiple workshops and training activities.
- Activities in nature (good access from the town-Idrija), a solid selection of sports activities, other leisure activities such as scouts and similar groups, Pr' Golitu (public living room) offers great opportunities for conducting workshops, relaxing and socialising, the Youth Center also offers many workshops and courses for young people of all ages, which I think is great.
- Running, cycling.
- Cultural events: Exhibitions, literary evenings, concerts. Sports: Football and basketball matches, cycling, jogging, relaxation in nature, mountain climbing.

- Music school, Elementary school, High school (grammar school).
- Running, mountain climbing, tennis, football, indoor sports
- It offers many sporting activities, natural sights that are beautiful to see, swimming pools, walking trails...

What do you miss in the municipality of Idrija?

- Membership in voluntary organisations, summer vacation in Idrijska Bela (landscape park-protected area), bicycle rental, watching movies in the cinema, and workshops in the MCI-youth centre.
- Diverse opportunities for sports participation, the possibility of secondary school education, diverse opportunities for student work, the possibility of connecting with larger corporations, the diversity of cultural activities and opportunities for involvement in culture.
- Godbeno društvo rudarjev Idrija (The Idrija Miners' Band), Students club (KIŠ), Bela (landscape park-protected area).
- Possibilities for creating leisure activities. Openness and support from other active youth organisations. In the last five years, the orientation of certain institutions and organisations and some municipal bodies have been explicitly aimed at young people. This is also reflected in the increasing number of workshops, seminars and similar events. I can't comment on entrepreneurial development since I don't participate in this spectrum or follow it enough to give constructive criticism.
- Many opportunities for outdoor activities, a calm life, contact with nature, opportunities for quality socialising, and involvement in associations.
- Apartments for young people.
- Socializing of the young people.
- A larger selection of bars for young people, a Super special rally through the streets of Idrija, and a quality concert hall.
- Faster access to the highway, social gatherings and activities (not related to sports).
- More events/concerts throughout the year and not only in summer. Various events could also be organised outside the centre of the municipality, even in the surrounding settlements.
- Cultural events and media where you would find out about cultural events. Hospitality industry/services.
- As in most Slovenian municipalities, in Idrija, I miss better accessibility of housing, apartments/houses...even if an apartment is available, it is probably too expensive for someone just entering a job market. This is perhaps the biggest reason why deciding to live in the municipality is difficult. I am willing to accept several locations outside of Idrija if I can get affordable accommodation there.

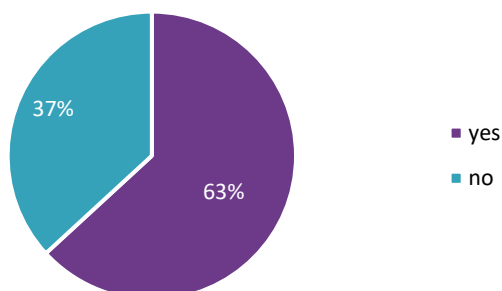
- Music/concert events, the possibility of various sports activities (volleyball, guided exercises, etc.) or good advertising, apartments, restaurants. More job opportunities.
- Miss activities in the direction of entrepreneurial development. I also miss job opportunities outside of the two big companies.
- Volleyball court, swimming pool.
- Restaurants open every day of the week, multi-purpose space for various events such as concerts, shows, gatherings, parties, and weddings. Housing.
- Greater interest of people in events, better management of some spaces in the surroundings of Idrija (repainting of fences, Lajšt in Idrijska Bela).
- The possibility of taking a driving test.
- Fewer traffic lights in all directions (due to roadworks).
- In the previous question, I stated that several trainings or workshops are taking place. But I think that the youth are still not connected enough. Despite establishing scouts in Idrija, I do not know what could be done in this direction. Maybe more fun bonding events or a different approach in schools. I don't know, as I don't have a broad enough view.
- More events for young people.
- Swimming pool, McDonald's, maybe Chipotle.
- Swimming pool.
- Some spaces for entertainment activities.
- "Life workshops", e.g. how to fill in various forms, what I can apply for, what is a good real estate, how to get a loan, etc.
- Parties, attractive topics for lectures.
- Entrepreneurship courses.
- I suggest a dance class, karaoke nights and similar.
- Massage courses, dance courses in pairs, sports activities (group cycling, hikes, volleyball,...), jam sessions, arts and crafts, drawing workshops,...
- Even more workshops for young parents as an active demographic.
- Perhaps I would suggest the organisation of research papers/themes for diploma and master's theses. In this way, we would connect with students and retain young, educated people who could significantly contribute to the cultural and industrial development of the municipality. Better job opportunities and salaries are currently opening up in larger cities, so many people decide on their future outside of Idrija.
- Courses/workshops/round tables with different topics (e.g., financial and organisational development). Young people will be involved in many projects and events, but unfortunately, no longer without payment :).
- Activities in the direction of entrepreneurial development and better employment. I think that lack of job prospects is the main reason why people leave Idrija.
- /

What content do you think is still necessary for young people in Idrija? Think primarily about activities and content (e.g. workshops, courses, training...)

- Youth campaigns, such as cleaning the surroundings, painting the fence...
- There are many activities, only young people often do not participate.
- Courses and training activities based on the employment opportunities described above in various fields.
- I don't even know, sorry.
- It is challenging to say which content would be necessary for young people, even though I belong to this group. I have been employed for three years and have different needs.
- Parties, language courses.
- More music lectures.
- How to become independent (bills, mortgage, leasing, instalment payments, loans). We don't learn about this in school, and I'm sure such information would be useful for everyone.
- Several workshops based on the type of work you want to do.

Do you see your future (life, work) in the municipality of Idrija?

7 respondents do not see their future in the municipalities, and 12 do.



Explain your decision based on your previous answer.

- There are no job positions which I would want to do.
- There are no offers in my field of work.
- It mainly depends on employment opportunities, but otherwise, Idrija is in a fairly good location for working in Ljubljana and living in Idrija.
- I have a family in Idrija, a guaranteed job thanks to a local company's scholarship and a house I can move into after my studies. In addition, my girlfriend agrees to move to Idrija.
- I will probably get a job elsewhere.
- I have a stable job. Otherwise, I am not greatly interested in the municipality itself.
- During my student years, I experienced living and working in larger cities, which otherwise offer a wide range of work orientations and an even larger range of leisure activities after work/university...but this lifestyle no longer suits me. At the moment, I appreciate more the pulse of a small town, where I have just as many activities at my disposal (it's a little different in terms of jobs), many times of higher quality. Everything you need for your stay is nearby, and you avoid traffic jams in a small town. Music also ties me to the city of Idrija.
- I see myself in the municipality of Idrija when my life is somewhat settled (job, home, family). Due to accessibility to various infrastructures, nature, and many activities - everything is within reach as far as time and transport are concerned. At the moment, however, I cannot see myself in the municipality of Idrija.

- I have lived in Idrija since I was little and know the city and people well, which suits me. I like living in a small place where everything is accessible in a few minutes. I would leave Idrija only for better job opportunities and career development opportunities elsewhere.
- It seems possible to me.
- -Because I like it here, I have friends and family here. The city is close to my heart because of its nature and small size.
- Peaceful environment for the family, wide employment opportunities in the immediate vicinity and in the town itself.
- The profession I want to do is not in Idrija.
- I think I can add something to the local environment if my life and personal preferences keep me in Idrija. I always find some idea to create, and even now, my friends "keep" me here.
- There are no job opportunities for my education.
- Because there are not enough options for my type of education.
- Considering my current work and being part of a dynamic team, I hope to work and live outside Idrija.
- It's nice to live in Idrija, and whatever I decide to study, I can take advantage of companies in the municipality of Idrija (Kolektor, Hidria).

Do you have 5 minutes to present your idea to the mayor/municipal council? What would you suggest?

- Promoting the rental/sale of empty apartments.
- I do not know.

- Comprehensive transformation of Kajzer Park (former mining shaft) into premises for associations, a common hall, a restaurant, etc. However, I am aware of the role of money, which the municipality does not have for such a project.
- Tunnel to Godovič :) (for better accessibility to central Slovenia).
- More activities for young people and involving young people in projects.
- I would return to the problem of the lack of accommodation for young people.
- Suggest more musical events (even smaller, not-yet-known authors), as this definitely attracts people. The more events there are, the more people will get used to it, and the more people there will be. I also suggest the revival of Idrijska Bela, more precisely the bar - the rearrangement of the house, especially considering how many people visit it + lowering the parking price. I also hope the idea of a bar in Mejca (city park) will be feasible because it is already alive - picnic blankets on the floor, wooden crates, and music. I also suggest more cooperation between the associations, which can do a lot for the municipality of Idrija if they come together.
- Meetings and workshops that could help young people get better job opportunities in our town.
- Construction of a swimming pool.
- Purchase of older buildings and renovation. Apartments for young people.
- Better care for the environment

- Opportunities for education/professional engagement in expanded areas in the locality.
- I do not know.
- At the moment, I am busy with the scouts, and I have no ideas for the future. But within a month, if I gave up with the scouts, I would think of something. I'll be happy to hear from you then.
- Better acknowledgement of young people.
- The pool, because the pool in Cerkno is always closed.
- Swimming pool.
- Some kind of climbing park or something similar (swimming pool, go-karting...)

Regarding content for the activities, they propose “life workshops” (taxes, loans, searching for real estate) not taught in the formal education system, entrepreneurial courses, employment opportunities, and other diverse and engaging activities meant primarily for the youth.

More than half of the respondents see their future (life and work) in Idrija. They are attached to the area and the people that live there (family, friends). They enjoy the slow pace of life, access to nature and activities. Those that do not see their future in Idrija point out the lack of housing and appropriate job opportunities.

Conclusions

The survey respondents are mainly satisfied with their life in the municipality of Idrija and recognise the offer of leisure activities (sports, cultural events), access to nature, youth and other organisations. On the other hand, they need better access to housing and more diverse job opportunities. They also pointed out the need for more bars/restaurants, some specific infrastructure (like a swimming pool) and the organisation of cultural events.

The answers varied immensely when asked what issue/project they would present to the municipality’s mayor if given a chance. In a few cases, the housing issue was stressed again, as well as the transformation/adaptation of some specific areas in the municipality (places of socialisation and leisure activities).



ENTREPRENEURS SURVEY FINDINGS

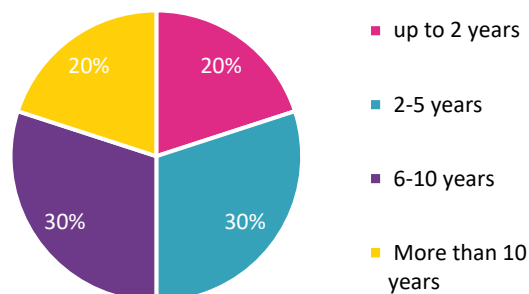


Number of respondents

10

How many years have you been an entrepreneur?

Of 10 respondents, 2 have been entrepreneurs for less than 2 years, 3 have been entrepreneurs for 2-5 years, 3 respondents for 6 to 10 years and 2 for more than 10 years.



Why did you decide to become an entrepreneur?

- The desire for a creative and dynamic workplace, which is not possible in already established companies or is at least very difficult to achieve. At the same time, due to a lot of project work, I have always been looking for some highly self-initiated work.
- Because of flexible working hours, being dependent only on yourself and taking responsibility, being able to decide for my future, the possibility of unlimited creation.
- Mainly because of the desire for an independent business path. My parents, who have always been entrepreneurs, had a great influence on this as well.
- It was my desire from a young age.
- Possibility for the realisation of own ideas.
- Because the employer, where I previously worked as a student, offered me a job for 4 hours and a minimum wage which I was not willing to settle for, I decided on my path.
- Flexible working hours; the possibility of performing several "vocations" simultaneously.
- Because of the desire for independence and no other jobs suitable for my education.
- Because I enjoy personal challenges. I thought it was a good idea and a market niche for the things I sell.
- Partly out of necessity, partly because I wanted to be the one who manages how I spend my time. I work in linguistics and tourism, where most of the work is based on need, not within the framework of a stable employment relationship.

What skills and knowledge are vital to starting an entrepreneurial career?

- Teamwork, self-initiative, entrepreneurial mindset (problem-solving), hard work, stubbornness. Nowadays, the following are also crucial: digital literacy (online tools, computer programs) and English language.
- Vision, clear goals, persistence, positive attitude, self-confidence (determination).
- What is important above all is the desire for success and the ability to face the various challenges of entrepreneurship. We acquire knowledge and skills during work and learn from mistakes. Persistence is also very important, as is networking with other entrepreneurs and organisations, also organisations helping entrepreneurs.
- Speaking.

- Sales, financial planning, and project management.
- Communicativeness, patience, and resourcefulness.
- Self-initiative, flexibility, and persistence. Many bureaucratic things are not described on any business portal. It helps if you have friends who started entrepreneurship before you, and you can ask them for help - because even the advisers at FURS (Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia) sometimes give advice one way or another.
- Courage, creativity, desire to learn, responsibility.
- Willingness and ingenuity, flexibility and willingness to work.
- Above all, determination and flexibility are essential. Negotiation skills are also important (for better payment terms or the sale of your products).

What main things should young people pay attention to when starting an entrepreneurial journey?

- They need to control their expectations. They must not look at other successful entrepreneurs and see themselves in their shoes. Successful entrepreneurs have also walked a difficult path, which is mostly not talked about and discussed - we only see the results of hard work, often without realising how much work has been done behind the scenes. It can give us the deceptive feeling that success is more easily attainable. At the same time, the world is moving so fast these days, so there is no point in imitating someone successful, as by the time we get there, the success will be obtained differently. Therefore, we need to learn from others and already start at a higher (their) level.
- Setting realistic goals, determining term plans, short-term, medium-term and long-term goals, and having sufficient start-up capital.

- The ability to obtain current information in the field we deal with. Following global guidelines and examples of good business practice.
- Correct tax calculation.
- Having an idea that does work as a business model.
- You have to be very self-initiative. Inform yourself of the paperwork needed to run the company. The initial investment is always higher than you expect.
- Take enough time to establish the business infrastructure. Opening a company takes one day, but you need much knowledge, starting with accounting.
- Just without fear and much confidence in your ideas and wishes.
- Basic knowledge of accounting. Having a well-thought-out idea that you can then be implemented as best as possible.
- Above all, have a clear goal of an entrepreneurial story and be deliberate in your decisions.



What are the main areas in which you see the potential for an entrepreneurial path in the municipality of Idrija?

- 1. Anything that takes advantage of the technical knowledge of the local population. There is great potential for developing successful family enterprises (SMEs) embedded in supply chains in various industries. To achieve this, it is only necessary to release human capital and develop an entrepreneurial (and not just artisanal/craftsmen) mentality. 2. Creative industries, including but not limited to the digital world. Digitisation of everything, with global business models and not limited by geographic location. 3. Tourism.
- Tourism.
- In Idrija, tourism and related offers have great potential; the industry in the Municipality of Idrija also offers many possibilities. Artificial intelligence also offers increasing potential, which will change people's daily habits in the future.
- Transport.
- Cultural heritage, tourism, agriculture, forestry.
- Work with people.

- Tourism, intellectual services.
- Craftsmanship.
- Technical professions or services, tourism.
- Tourist experiences; makers; technical skills.

Conclusions

The survey respondents have mostly ventured on an entrepreneurial path due to its flexibility (working hours, taking the initiative and responsibility for themselves, developing an idea). Some also point out that the decision was (at least partly) made due to necessity (no other suitable opportunity in the municipality). They think entrepreneurs should take the initiative, be flexible, persistent, hardworking and eager to learn. They should also have some basic accounting skills and pay attention to the bureaucratic aspect of the company. The respondents pointed out the necessity of making long-term plans and having a business model. As perceived by the survey respondents, the three main potential options for an entrepreneurial path in the municipality of Idrija are connected to the industry (technical professions, SMEs, craftsmanship), tourism and creative/digital solutions.



RURAL YOUTH ORGANISATIONS SURVEY FINDINGS



Organization type

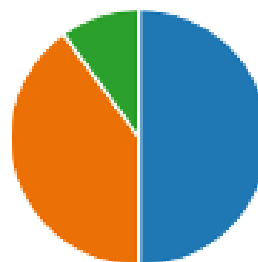
Cross sector responses from the following organization types:

- Public sector (5)
- Non-government sector (4)
- Private sector (1)
- Other (0)

1. Vrsta organizacije

[More Details](#)

● Javni sektor (javni zavodi, občins...	5
● Nevladni sektor (društvo, zavod ...	4
● Zasebni sektor (podjetje, samost...	1
● Other	0



How do you work with young people? What kind of support do you offer them?

- Entrepreneurship clubs in schools, entrepreneurial training, help to prepare seminars and diploma theses, entrepreneurial consulting.
- Providing student and volunteer work in organising activities: acquiring competencies, learning about working with citizens of all ages, and conquering street work.
- Opportunities for learning and new experiences
- I work with young people in several areas. One of the areas is the promotion of entrepreneurial competencies among young people by running entrepreneurial circles, offering mentoring support to interested young people and conducting workshops at primary and secondary schools, as well as individual support if necessary. I also partially work with young people in the framework of other projects, where this is possible - or by involving them so that they can express their wishes and actively participate.
- Public interest in the field of the youth sector is realised by ensuring normative and other conditions for the development of areas of youth work and by including the youth aspect in strategies, policies and measures that affect young people and by financial support for youth programs and programs for young people, including support for youth infrastructure. Co-financing of the programs and operations of the Youth Center Idrija, the Day Center for Children and Youth, the Association of Friends of the Youth of Idrija, projects for youth associations through a public tender, addiction prevention programs at GJV Idrija and the Shadowing at the workplace program. Support also with the urban living room program Pr Golitu.

- We work with young people on several levels. Young people are involved in the preparation of our content. They are the preparers, the target group and the participants. We offer them support in the form of in-depth mentoring in the implementation of projects. In terms of content, we offer them support for current topics or challenges they face - for example, the development of entrepreneurship, mental distress, and educational content in the field of acquiring informal competencies... in short, in terms of content, the support is adapted to the current needs of young people or perceived challenges, which we identify through analysing the environment in which we operate.
- As part of the Idrija Youth Center, we offer them various informal activities through which they acquire new knowledge in multiple fields. We try to include them in the decision-making processes at both the micro and macro levels. Through projects, we involve them in the co-creation of the community. Through international exchanges, they gain many new experiences and knowledge as they get to know other cultures, thereby teaching them acceptance. We also offer them spaces for informal socialising, where they can get to know themselves and others in a safe environment. We also offer them various workshops to strengthen their skills and learn something new. With a mobile youth centre and field street work, we also enter the countryside and try to appeal to young people with fewer opportunities both in the countryside and in the city itself.
- Help with the organisation of youth exchanges and the organisation of events.
- I lead the department for social activities; that is, I perform administrative tasks in the youth work field and implementation of the municipal budget, which means regulating relations with the Idrija Youth Center, participating in preparing strategies, public tenders, contracts, etc.
- In addition to the regular program for younger audiences, the Idrija Film Theater also offers organised school screenings for educational institutions, the Day Center for Children and Youth of Idrija and the Association of Friends of the Youth of Idrija. From 2023, we also offer the possibility of playing games from the Playstation 5 console on the big screen.

During the summer months, we cooperate with various co-organizers (KUD Sloga ČV, MCI) to organise a cinema under the stars, offering free equipment (screen, projector) and advice on selecting films. In the cinema, we also have student work (box office, ticket agent, cinematographer), where some students come into contact with cinematography.

What are the ADVANTAGES of youth work in the municipality of Idrija?

- The active Youth Center of Idrija, a dynamic association of students, the community is still quite well connected (compared to larger urban centres), and the youth in the countryside is even more connected. Young people have the opportunity to join various associations and groups.
- Direct contact with citizens and recognition of the importance of working in the local environment to improve the city's living quality.
- A small environment where you know many organisations and quickly come to an agreement, close connections, ...
- I think that youth work is perfectly developed and supports young people from organisations involved in diverse areas. But for me, the advantage is an excellent connection with schools, which allows me to support young people with my knowledge, and organisations are interested in offering something more to young people.
- Stimulating environment and high-quality programme of the Youth Centre Idrija, presence of GJV high school in Idrija.

- High activity level of youth associations and associations working in the field of young people. Geographical remoteness results in greater youth engagement. A supportive environment from the local community. The positive attitude of the local population towards young people.
- Proximity to the countryside allows activities to move outside the city centre.
- A well-established organisation with potential.
- A significant advantage is that the youth organisations joined the Union of Youth Associations, the Youth Center of Idrija, so young people are very self-organised and transfer knowledge and skills to younger generations.
- As long as young people decide to work for larger employers (Kolektor, Hidria) or work in a shop in the municipality of Idrija, they have no problems with this. Young people connect to various clubs based on their interests (drama club, mountaineers, firefighters), but these do not provide career opportunities.

What are the WEAKNESSES of youth work in the municipality of Idrija?

- I don't remember this area well enough to know.
- Insufficient attention in the past for work in the field of social work, insufficiently developed network of organisations that would offer youth work in the area of social content. The situation has been gradually improving in recent years with the work of non-governmental organisations with the municipality's support.
- Small environment – often the same participants, which can be demotivating for all new and old participants.
- Maybe the small size of the environment, and I guess occasionally lower interest than expected.
- Too few qualified youth workers, too little engagement among young people.

- Lack of funding. A distinctly ageing population shrinks the "pool" of young people and weakens the number of volunteers. The departure of young people to other cities (less presence of young people during the week). Large employers in the municipality are reducing the personnel potential for working in the youth sector, where salaries are entirely uncompetitive.
- The smallness and decline of young people in the municipality of Idrija.
- The passivity of young people.
- There are significant problems in mobilising young people. Getting candidates to participate in the Commission for Youth Issues is difficult, and the youth centre is also trying to activate the youth.
- If they decide on a career that is not tied to the largest employers or work in a store, we often witness the outmigration of young people. For example, even some existing jobs in the municipality of Idrija are less valued than elsewhere, so a particular segment of young people leaves. Unfortunately, Idrija is geographically embedded in a basin, and below it, there is a mine, as a result of which we are witnessing the subsidence of certain slopes, which does not allow Idrija to develop and expand in such a way, for example, Ajdovščina. The lack of empty apartments is also a problem; if there are, they are not available for rent or purchase. In other words, they are bought by workers from the south who work for one of the largest employers in the municipality. In other words: cheap labour in Idrija, young and more educated.

What are the opportunities for further development of the youth sector in Idrija?

- As many activities as possible that would connect young people, obtaining financial resources for the implementation of activities, involving young people in the life of the local community
- In greater participation of young people in local decision-making processes, which will influence the development of their possibilities for realising projects, entrepreneurial ideas and youth activities.
- Greater connection to youth tourism and international volunteering, a greater focus on advocacy and youth participation, and greater integration with broader topics (ageing society...).
- Otherwise, the youth sector is very well developed compared to other municipalities, but I think a few improvements are still possible. Above all, it would be good to include rural youth and other groups of young people currently not involved in all activities and encourage them with new content, co-creation of content and the like.
- Establishment of several different ways of participation of young people in decision-making processes and active involvement in youth projects, more qualified youth workers.
- The renovation of the MCI would mean acquiring a modern centre where young people would be even happier to co-create. Establishment of an international department for exchanges, training, and volunteering. Greater integration of societies and organisations to pool human capital and knowledge. Actively addressing the problem of an ageing society is one of the critical problems of the present and future for the youth sector.
- Connecting organisations working with young people and cooperating more with the formal education sector.
- Big ones. The very basis, how the organisations are set up and what kind of reputation they have, shows that with the participation of the community, the youth sector would come to life. Connecting all youth organisations that would encourage young people to actively participate in local engagement from the "early" years.

- We still have many tasks in many areas, starting with housing.
- More housing for young people and more diverse employment opportunities.

Do you think that young people in the municipality of Idrija are skilled in leading enterprises?

- Yes (5) ● Da 5
- No (5) ● Ne 5



Why do you think young people in the municipality of Idrija are/are not entrepreneurial?

- Some are, some aren't, just like with other things. I believe this is based on the response we receive through implementing our activities for young people.
- They recognise the various possibilities of developing projects and entrepreneurial ideas, which are not tied only to the central industrial branch in the municipality of Idrija, and decide to go their way.

- Too often, they choose the easier way - working in large manufacturing companies
- I work primarily in entrepreneurship, and during workshops, start-up weekends, and mentorships, I notice that young people have well-developed entrepreneurial skills or desire to develop only these. This is also evident in their interest in the workshops and in producing great ideas and products. There are also some examples of young people who tried to continue their entrepreneurial ideas from the concept onwards.
- The innovations and entrepreneurship of the J. Vega Idrija High School students, who are primarily inspired by the field of technology and mechanical engineering.
- Entrepreneurial spirit, ideas and even individual good practices exist. At the same time, young people focus on "easier" jobs because these options are available. Why should a young person embark on a thorny entrepreneurial path when there is an open door in a large company for an 8-hour workday?
- With more entrepreneurial content in all municipal schools to develop entrepreneurial competencies and support for young people who want to go into entrepreneurship.
- Providing regular support for young people with new, creative ideas and providing mentors to develop these ideas.
- There are not enough workshops and incentives. I doubt that the problem of a monotonous economy can be solved only in small steps. Let's take tourism as an example - young people could develop their potential within this sector, but at the same time, a larger financial (start-up) investment from the local community would be required. So in an ideal world: - determine the direction in which the investment will be made - not too scattered, but targeted - determine a clear goal, a timeline and sufficient funds to see a result in the medium term

In your opinion, how could the entrepreneurship of young people in the municipality of Idrija be improved?

- By encouraging curiosity, the desire to acquire knowledge, finding solutions to various problems, networking, teamwork, implementing entrepreneurial content...
- With more significant involvement in local decision-making processes, with more active action through the bodies available to them (e.g. youth commissions), with the establishment of a participatory budget through which they would acquire knowledge and competencies in the development of projects from idea to implementation and positive experience with democratic processes, by developing entrepreneurial strategies for young people through various development agencies, ...
- For example, when the status, income and reputation of entrepreneurs are greater than those who are not
- More information, holding workshops where entrepreneurship is introduced to young people, where they are guided through the process and offered help with their ideas.
- They already have many opportunities, but they seem (in general) to be a little too passive. The activation of young people begins at home and continues in schools.
- New entrepreneurial initiatives may be encouraged by the examples of those who have started entrepreneurship.
- We have the Zgornja Idrijca Landscape Park. Another public institution Landscape Park Ljubljana Marshes, employs many people through European projects. The Society for the Observation and Study of Birds of Slovenia is also successful, but you need people with vision, ambition and goals who will write such projects. Unfortunately, our natural wealth is not only cinnabarite ore.

Until local decision-makers know how to look beyond this, our environment will not have new and more diverse personnel. One way to improve young people's entrepreneurship is for major employers (Kolektor, Hidrija) in the municipality to prepare a call for young people with innovative ideas every year. If the tender committee understood a good business story, they would financially support the project and thereby give it a go, as was the case with Smart Optometry (an already successful company).

Conclusions

The youth workers in the municipality of Idrija support young people in different fields, including entrepreneurship, organising activities, mental health, and educational content. Their work is adapted to the current needs of young people or perceived challenges, which they identify through analyses and research. Young people can also prepare their own . municipality includes youth aspects in strategies, policies and measures and supports youth infrastructure.

They see advantages in working with young people in the municipality of Idrija in a well-connected community, good connections with schools, and a supportive community with well established Youth Centre Idrija.

The main weaknesses of youth work are recognised in the insufficiently developed network of organisations, small environment (often a limited number of participants) and lower interest than expected, too few qualified youth workers, passivity, lack of funding and ageing population/outmigration of young people to bigger cities.

The improvement can be seen in the greater participation of young people in the decision-making process, more focus on advocacy and youth participation, greater integration with broader topics and better connection to youth tourism and international volunteering. Many rural youth groups are not equally involved in the activities as participants from urban areas. There should be more cooperation with the formal education sector.

Respondents have mixed opinions about the young people's readiness for the entrepreneurial path. They mention that participants often choose the easier way and work in manufacturing. On the other hand, many young people show interest in the workshops and produce great ideas and products. The situation can be improved by encouraging curiosity and networking, involving young people in decision-making, establishing a participatory budget and providing more entrepreneurial content in schools.

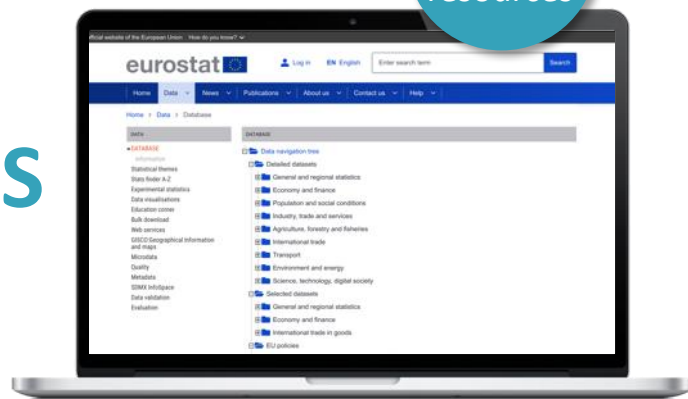




03

YOUNG RURAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN MALTA

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DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY



INTRODUCTION

This section provides a picture of rural youth population and demographic trends in Malta. The desk-based research presented here has relied on statistical databases from Eurostat, the World Data Bank and the National Statistics Office (NSO) in Malta to construct a socio-demographic profile of rural regions in Malta and rural youth population trends in the country. The Eurostat 'Statistical Atlas' web tool and NUTS map viewer from JRC and European Commission, Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy is the main source for maps illustrating the degree of urbanisation in Malta. These are based from populations grids from 2011 and Local Administrative Units information from 2018. The SMARTA rural shared mobility report on Malta was also consulted along with the Regional Statistics Malta report published in 2022.



Region

Malta

Short story of the region

Malta is the most densely populated country in Europe with 1595.1 persons per km² (Eurostat, 2022). The total population of Malta, as of 2022, is of 520,971 distributed along three of the seven islands that belong to the Maltese archipelago (Eurostat, 2022). Malta, is the largest of the three inhabited islands with 246 km², followed by Gozo with 67 km², and Comino 3.5 km². The majority of the population resides in Malta, while Comino is the less populated of the

Total number of inhabitants in the region

520,971 (Eurostat 2022)

three. Overleaf, in Table 1 we show the number of people in Malta by age range and sex in the entire country, in the island of Malta and the islands of Gozo and Comino. As it is visible in the table, by 2020 the majority of the population is between 30-39 years old, followed by the 20-29 age group. The table shows a larger male population across the country across most age groups, except for ages above 60.

Municipalities in the region

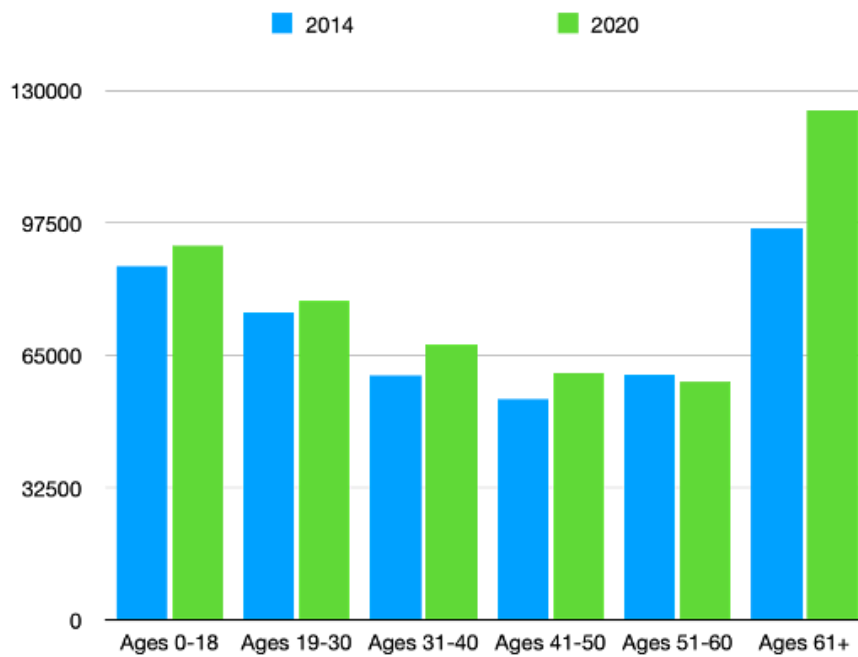
- Northern Harbour
- Souther Harbour
- South Eastern
- Western
- Northern
- Gozo
- Comino

The total population per region is as follows:

- Southern Harbour 84901
- Northern Harbour 171606
- South Eastern 74831
- Western 62927
- Northern 87272
- Gozo&Comino 34563



Chart 1. Population by Age range in 2014 and 2020.



Source: NSO (2020). Created from NSO statistics database

This table displays population changes from 2014 to 2020 according to age range. The population over 61 displayed the largest increase, followed by the population ranging from ages between 31-40.

RURAL PROFILE

This map (Figure 1) illustrates the degree of urbanisation on Malta according to Eurostat's typology. The classification system used by Eurostat identifies cities as densely populated, towns and suburbs as intermediate areas and rural areas as regions of low density population. While the map appears to contradict Malta's characterisation as the most densely populated area in Europe, the figure illustrates that not all of Malta is equally populated and there are areas where most of the population is located in contrast with areas of lower population density. In accordance to the data presented above, the highest population density in Malta resides in the Northern Harbour region and covers the southern Harbour, including Valletta.

Figure 1. Map of degree of urbanisation in Malta



Degree of urbanisation

- Cities (Densely populated areas: at least 50 % of the population lives in urban centres)
- Towns and suburbs (Intermediate density areas: less than 50 % of the population lives in rural grid cells and less than 50 % of the population lives in urban centres)
- Rural areas (Thinly populated areas: more than 50 % of the population lives in rural grid cells)
- Data not available

In 2020, percentage of rural population in Malta amounts to 5%. According to the data from the world bank, the rural population in Malta decreased from 10% in 1990 to 5% in 2020, indicating a trend towards urbanization.

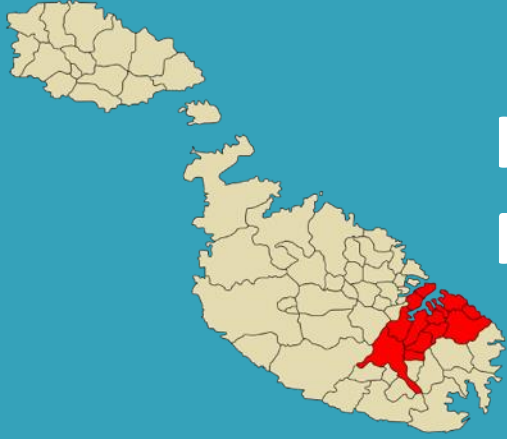
The total amount of rural population from the 1960s until 2020. In 1990, the rural population was 34,068 people. By 2021, the rural population had decreased to 26,912.

This trend towards urbanization may be a result of several factors, including economic opportunities and better access to services and infrastructure in urban areas. It is also worth

noting that the rural population in Malta remains relatively small compared to the urban population.

This means that policies and programs aimed at rural development may not receive as much attention or resources compared to urban areas.

Combined with demographic changes, rural youth are facing challenges, explored from different contexts in the survey findings that follow.



INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

Southern Harbour

Unemployment rate

310 people registered for unemployment in 2021 at the Southern District (NSO 2022)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

7,648 people ages 10-19; 11,196 people ages 20-29. The total number of youths in Malta is 104,762, which represents approximately 20% of the total population (NSO 2023)

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

The percentage of youth who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Malta is 9.5% (Eurostat 2020)

Number of inhabitants

84,901 (NSO 2021)

Number of inhabitants (<65)

25097 (NSO, 2022)

Number of entrepreneurs

There are no statistics on this matter in Malta. However, according to a report from the European Commission published in 2019 there is a total number of 32,168 SME's in Malta, employing 119,316 people.



INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

Northern Harbour

Number of inhabitants

171,606 (NSO 2021)

Unemployment rate

271 people registered for unemployment in 2021 at the Northern District (NSO 2022)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

12,179 people ages 10-19; 24,321 people ages 20-29. The total number of youths in Malta is 104,762, which represents approximately 20% of the total population (NSO 2023)

Number of inhabitants (<65)

37,098 (NSO 2022)

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

The percentage of youth who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Malta is 9.5% (Eurostat 2020)

Number of entrepreneurs

There are no statistics on this matter in Malta. However, according to a report from the European Commission published in 2019 there is a total number of 32,168 SME's in Malta, employing 119,316 people.





INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

Northern District

Number of inhabitants

87,272 (NSO 2021)

Unemployment rate

180 people registered for unemployment in 2021 at the Northern District (NSO 2022)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

8,025 people ages 10-19; 12,906 people ages 20-29. The total number of youths in Malta is 104,762, which represents approximately 20% of the total population (NSO 2023)

Number of inhabitants (<65)

19,426 (NSO 2022)

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

The percentage of youth who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Malta is 9.5% (Eurostat 2020)

Number of entrepreneurs

There are no statistics on this matter in Malta. However, according to a report from the European Commission published in 2019 there is a total number of 32,168 SMEs in Malta, employing 119,316 people.





INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

South Eastern District

Number of inhabitants

74,831 (NSO 2021)

Unemployment rate

191 people registered for unemployment in 2021 at the Southern District (NSO 2022)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

7,529 people ages 10-19; 10,723 people ages 20-29. The total number of youths in Malta is 104,762, which represents approximately 20% of the total population (NSO 2023)

Number of inhabitants (<65)

18,290 (NSO 2022)

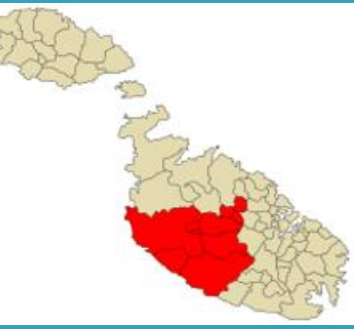
Young people unemployment rate (>25)

The percentage of youth who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Malta is 9.5% (Eurostat 2020)

Number of entrepreneurs

There are no statistics on this matter in Malta. However, according to a report from the European Commission published in 2019 there is a total number of 32,168 SME's in Malta, employing 119,316 people.





INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

Western District

Unemployment rate

107 people registered for unemployment in 2021 at the Southern District (NSO 2022)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

5,980 people ages 10-19; 8,251 people ages 20-29. The total number of youths in Malta is 104,762, which represents approximately 20% of the total population (NSO 2023)

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

The percentage of youth who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in Malta is 9.5% (Eurostat 2020)

Number of inhabitants

62,927 (NSO 2021)

Number of inhabitants (<65)

25,097 (NSO 2022)

Number of entrepreneurs

There are no statistics on this matter in Malta. However, according to a report from the European Commission published in 2019 there is a total number of 32,168 SMEs in Malta, employing 119,316 people.





INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

Gozo & Comino

Unemployment rate

108 people registered for unemployment in 2021 at the Southern District (NSO 2022)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

3,350 people ages 10-19; 5,044 people ages 20-29. The total number of youths in Malta is 104,762, which represents approximately 20% of the total population (NSO 2023)

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

The percentage of youth who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Malta is 9.5% (Eurostat 2020)

Number of inhabitants

34,563 (NSO 2021)

Number of inhabitants (<65)

11,542 (NSO 2022)

Number of entrepreneurs

There are no statistics on this matter in Malta. However, according to a report from the European Commission published in 2019 there is a total number of 32,168 SMEs in Malta, employing 119,316 people.





Services for young people

1. LEADER Programme: This program provides support and funding for rural development projects, including those related to youth entrepreneurship. It aims to support rural areas by promoting sustainable development, empower local development initiatives, and capacity building in rural communities. Local Action Groups are responsible for managing and implementing the programme at the local level. The initiative is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) (SEM, nd)

2. The Malta Youth in Agriculture Foundation (MaYa) is a foundation based in Qormi, Malta that aims among others to “protect and ensure the best interests of young farmers in the Maltese islands on legislative, competitive and marketing fronts and to foster cordial relations among young farmers, in Malta and in the EU” (MaYa, nd).
3. Merill Rural Network is a network of “farmers, breeders and artisans” that develops initiatives in rural tourism, promote local agriculture and support rural communities by aiding in the diversification of economic activities. (Merill, nd).

Services for elderly people

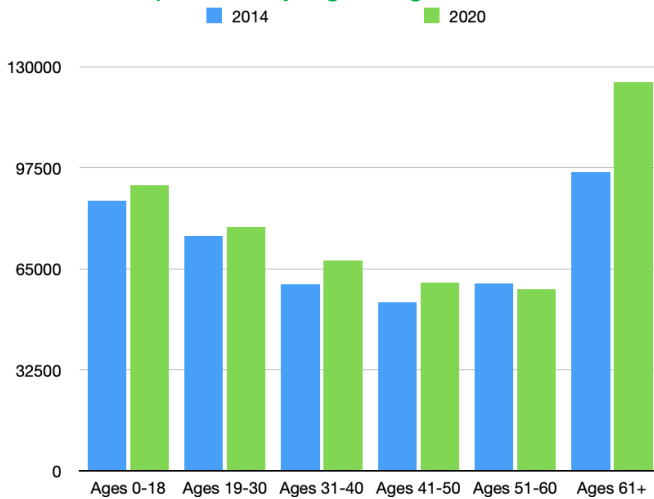
1. Active Ageing Centres
2. Carers at Home
3. Community Geriatrician Service
4. Elderly Services
5. Handyman Service
6. Continece Service

Photos of the region



Conclusion

Chart 1. Population by Age range in 2014 and 2020.



Source: NSO (2020). Created from NSO statistics database

Chart 1. displays population changes from 2014 to 2020 according to age range. The population over 61 displayed the largest increase, followed by the population ranging from ages between 31-40, however Malta’s youth population amounts for 20% of the population. Most youths live in the Northern, Southern and South Eastern Districts and face an unemployment rate of 2.9 that is below the European average of 6.1 (Eurostat 2023). According to the European Commission’s description of the labour market in Malta, the Maltese government has introduced initiatives on “work exposure, traineeships, work placement schemes, youth guarantees, investing skills, and access to employment” (European Commission 2023).

Most regions in Malta are considered to be either predominantly urban or areas of intermediate density. The map on Figure 1. Illustrates the degree of urbanisation on Malta according to Eurostat’s typology. The classification system used by Eurostat identifies cities as densely populated, towns and suburbs as intermediate areas and rural areas as regions of low density population. While the map on figure 1 appears to contradict Malta’s characterisation as the most densely populated area in Europe, the figure illustrates that not all of Malta is equally populated and there are areas where most of the population is located in contrast with areas of lower population density. In accordance to the data presented above, the highest population density in Malta resides in the Northern Harbour region and covers the southern Harbour, including Valletta.

Figure 1. Map of degree of urbanisation in Malta



Degree of urbanisation

- Cities (Densely populated areas: at least 50 % of the population lives in urban centres)
- Towns and suburbs (Intermediate density areas: less than 50 % of the population lives in rural grid cells and less than 50 % of the population lives in urban centres)
- Rural areas (Thinly populated areas: more than 50 % of the population lives in rural grid cells)
- Data not available

In 2020, percentage of rural population in Malta amounts to 5%. According to the data from the world bank, the rural population in Malta decreased from 10% in 1990 to 5% in 2020, indicating a trend towards urbanization. Similarly, Figure 4. Illustrates a trend towards urbanization in the country. It displays the total amount of rural population from the 1960s until 2020. In 1990, the rural population was 34,068 people. By 2021, the rural population had decreased to 26,912.

This trend towards urbanization may be a result of several factors, including economic opportunities and better access to services and infrastructure in urban areas. It is also worth noting that the rural population in Malta remains relatively small compared to the urban population. This means that policies and programs aimed at rural development may not receive as much attention or resources compared to urban areas.

YOUTH SURVEY FINDINGS



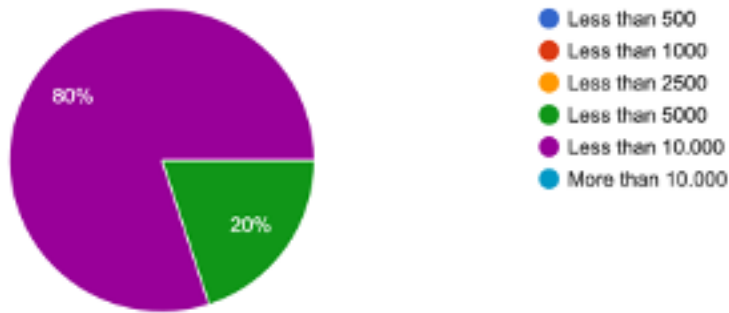
Profile of our survey participants

Our survey was completed by 10 young people from across Malta between the ages of 20 to 25.

Inhabitants of your municipality

Respondents spanned population bases of less than 5,000 (20%) and less than 10,000 inhabitants (80%).

Number of inhabitants in your municipality
10 responses



Are you happy living in this place?

80% of our respondent young people are happy living in their place, with just 10% citing they were not happy and a further 10% happy but needing to move for greater opportunities.

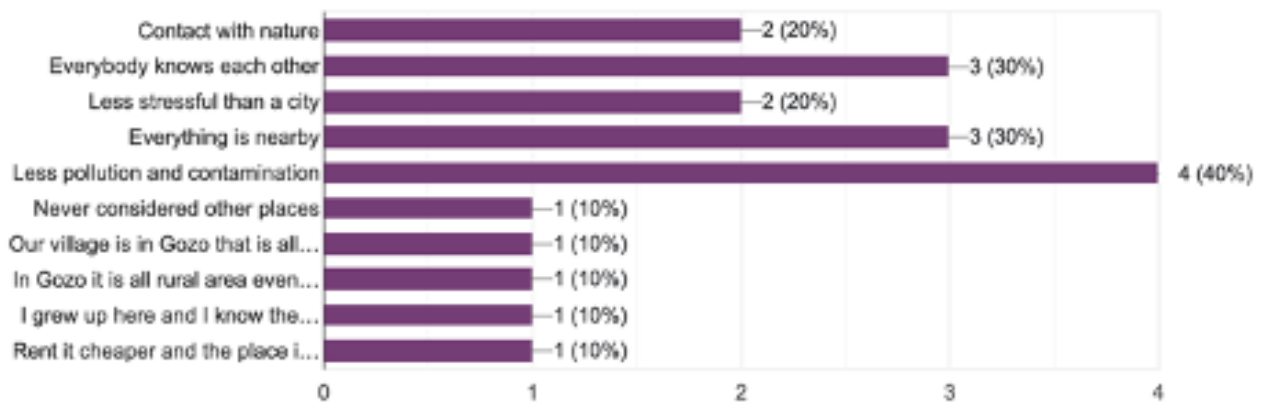


What do you value most about living in a rural area?

Variety of insightful responses: Contact with nature, Everybody knows each other, less stressful than a city, everything is nearby, less pollution and contamination, never considered other places, our village in Gozo is an island so it is a big rural village, In Gozo it is all rural area even if I live in the largest town, I grew up here and I know the environment. Rent is cheaper.

What do you appreciate of living in a rural area?

10 responses

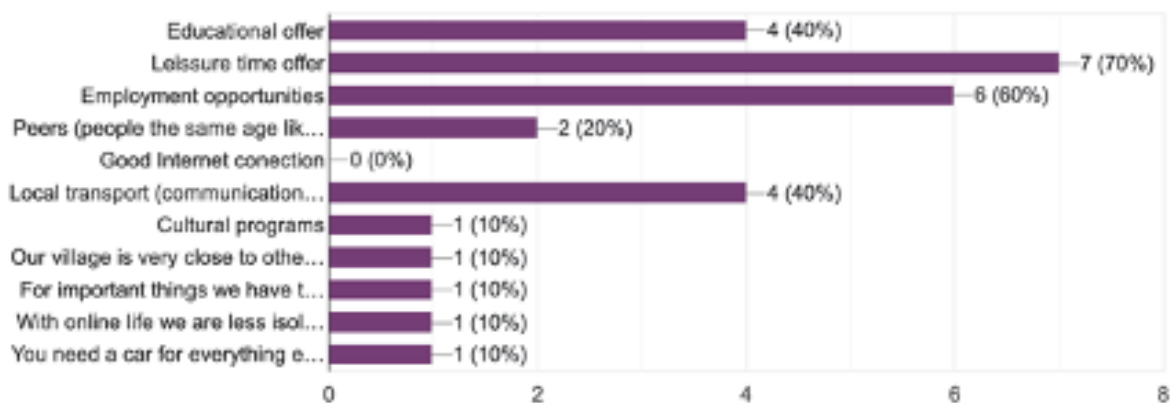


What do you miss living in a rural area?

The most dominant response was the leisure time offering in the rural area with seven out of 10 young people citing that they missed out. The next most dominant answer was the lack of employment opportunities followed by the education offer and local transport/communications. Thereafter 20% cited that they lacked missed peers/ people of their same age group and one in 10 cited that they missed cultural programmes and felt more isolated because so many aspects of life are now online.

What do you miss living in a rural area?

10 responses

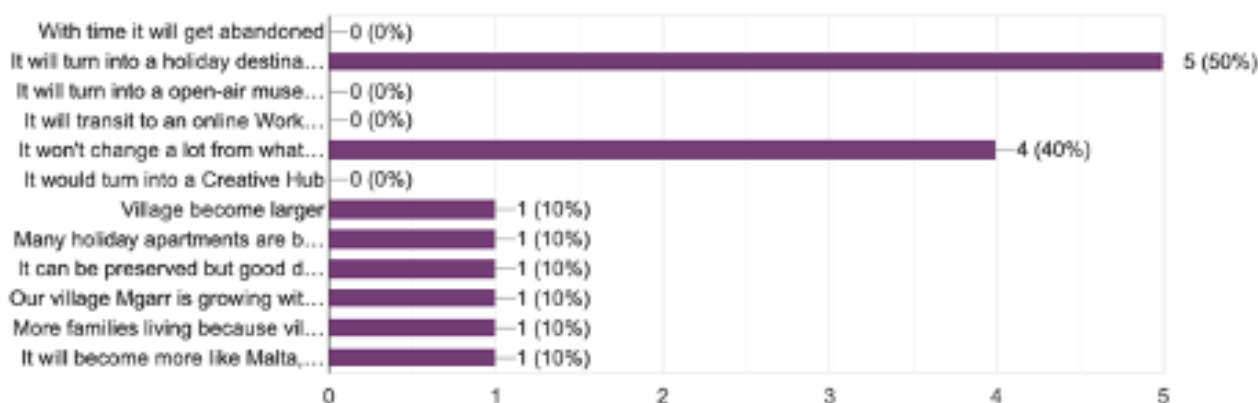


How do you see the future of your municipality?

- 50% responded that it will turn into a holiday destination
- 40% responded that it won't change a lot from what it is right now
- Other responses included Gozo respondents' opinion that it will become more like Malta. Gozo is growing (more families), it can be preserved but good decisions are needed

How do you see the future of your municipality?

10 responses



Do you think you will live in a rural area when you grow up?

- Yes 60%
- Maybe 40%

Would you encourage other young people your age to live in a rural area?

- Yes 60%
- I don't know 30%
- No 10%

Would you motivate other young people to live in a rural area at some point of their life?

- Yes 60%
- I don't know 40%
- No 10%

What would you ask/ask the politicians of your municipality?

Interesting responses, including:

- To protect character of our village, to bring more opportunities for work in Gozo, more Connectivity to Malta will help people live in Gozo where there is more countryside,
- Help farmers and encourage remote working, better transport connection and promotion of the village for visiting
- Preserve Gozo and Gozitan life-style, provide more employment opportunities,
- Create more jobs for young people

Conclusions

Most respondents have an experience of at least 5 years working as entrepreneurs, with 54.5% working in the tertiary sector and 45.5% in the primary sector. Most of the challenges they face relate to a lack of infrastructure, such as adequate roads, as well as lack of funding for new entrepreneurial ideas. The majority have received no grants to fund their businesses although almost half of them would like to receive a grant. These entrepreneurs face a wide range of needs from better infrastructure, to high competition, limited support for farming, high costs of bringing products into the island, tourism dependency and high seasonality that affects businesses during wintertime, as well as very hot summers and not enough training on water management. 54.5% of the respondents would be interested in marketing and social media management training, while a large majority would also be interested in courses related to introduction to entrepreneurship and financial management.

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS SURVEY FINDINGS



In what year did your business start/Initiative?

This survey was completed by 11 young people from across Malta involved in rural entrepreneurship.

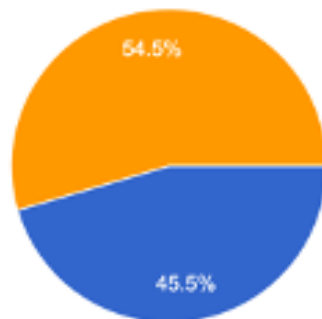
- 9% have been in business for less than a year
- 9% have been in business for one to three years
- 27% have been in business for three to five years
- 38% have been in business for more than five years and
- 18% of have been in business for more than 10 years

Sector of your business

The sectors that they are in business in reflect the Maltese economy with 54.5% are involved in agriculture fishing exploitation of resource is while 45.5% are involved in the transportation distribution and tourism and entertainment sectors.

In which sector does your business/initiative operate?

11 responses



- Primary sector (Agriculture, Livestock, Fishing, Exploitation of resources, Forestry, Mining)
- Secondary sector (Metal working and foundry, Automotive production, Textil...)
- Tertiary sector (Transportation, Distribution, Tourism, Entertainment, F...)
- Quaternary sector (Information technology, Scientific research, Cultur...)
- Option 5

What exactly is your business?

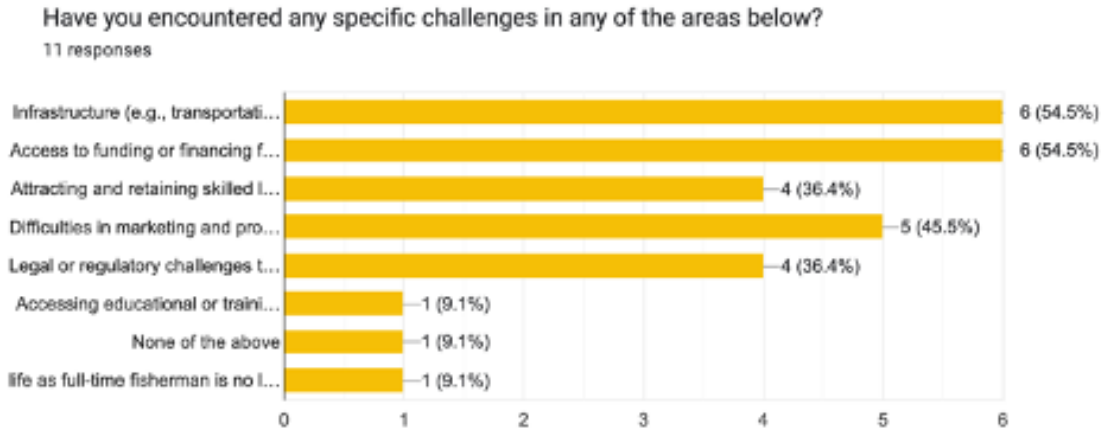
Their roles were cited as

- Bar owner-Fisherman
- Restaurant, Farmer
- Livestock
- Farming
- Restaurant-Tourism
- Souvenir Shop
- Dive Shop



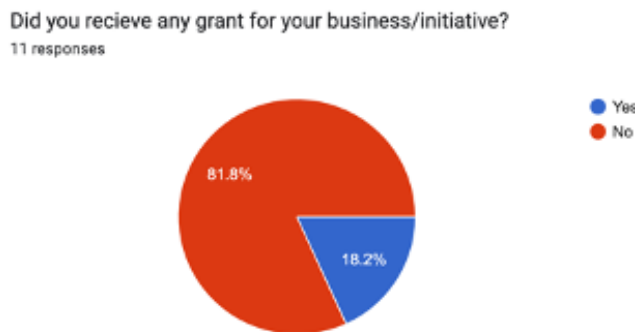
What challenges or difficulties do you face as an entrepreneur?

The key challenges faced by more than half of our young entrepreneurs in rural areas include infrastructure including transportation and access to funding and financing. This is followed by difficulties in marketing and promotion (45%) and then by attracting and retaining skills staff (36%) and the legal and regulatory challenges faced in business (36%). Accessing education and training was cited by less than 10% of our respondents as a challenge.



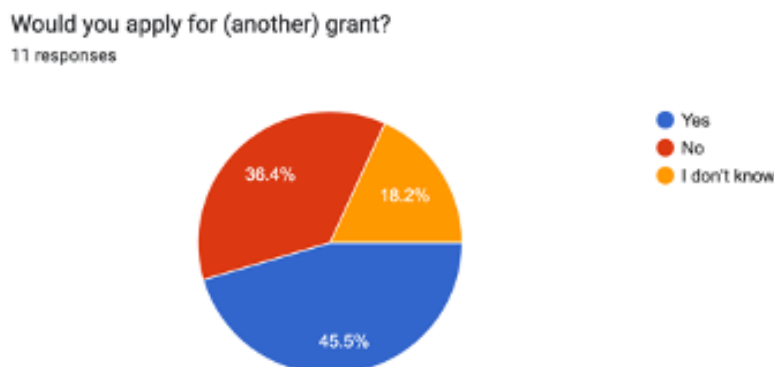
Have you received any grants to help your business?

Of our respondents, 18% received a grant, while 82% did not.



Would you apply for a grant or (another) grant?

Of our respondents 45.5% would apply for a grant, 38% would not and 18% did not know.



Do you have any other need that you want to share as an entrepreneur?

Wide scoping responses to this question including

- Better infrastructure
- Attracting customers beyond the tourism sector; competition is high in the island
- Government support for farming and organic farming, very hot summers causing challenges
- Funding is limited
- Transportation can be an issue between Malta and Gozo, bringing product in is more costly;
- We are dependent on tourists, it's difficult in the winter
- Marketing and seasonality
- Water management

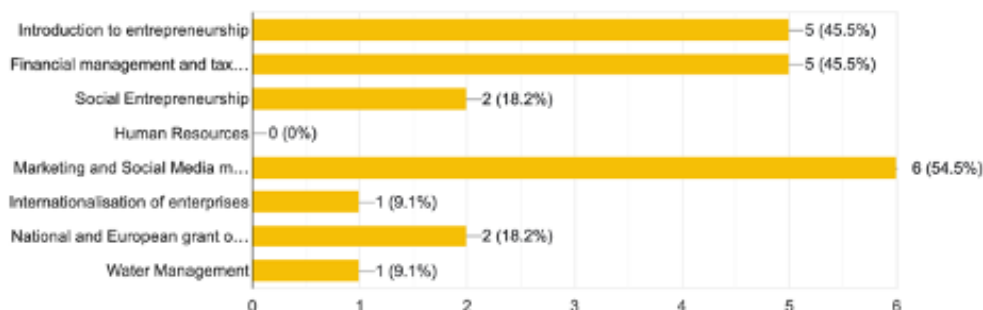
What kind of training would you be interested in doing?

It is interesting to review the preferences of our respondents to training they are interested in

- Marketing and social media 54%
- Introduction to entrepreneurship 45%
- Financial management and taxation 45%
- National and European grant information 18%
- Social entrepreneurship 18%
- Internationalization of enterprises 9%
- Waste management 9%

What training course would you be likely to follow?

11 responses



Conclusions

Most respondents have an experience of at least 5 years working as entrepreneurs, with 54.5% working in the tertiary sector and 45.5% in the primary sector. Most of the challenges they face relate to a lack of infrastructure, such as adequate roads, as well as lack of funding for new entrepreneurial ideas. The majority have received no grants to fund their businesses although almost half of them would like to receive a grant. These entrepreneurs face a wide range of needs from better infrastructure, to high competition, limited support for farming, high costs of bringing products into the island, tourism dependency and high seasonality that affects businesses during winter time, as well as very hot summers and not enough training on water management. 54.5% of the respondents would be interested in marketing and social media management training, while a large majority would also be interested in courses related to introduction to entrepreneurship and financial management.

RURAL YOUTH ORGANISATIONS SURVEY FINDINGS



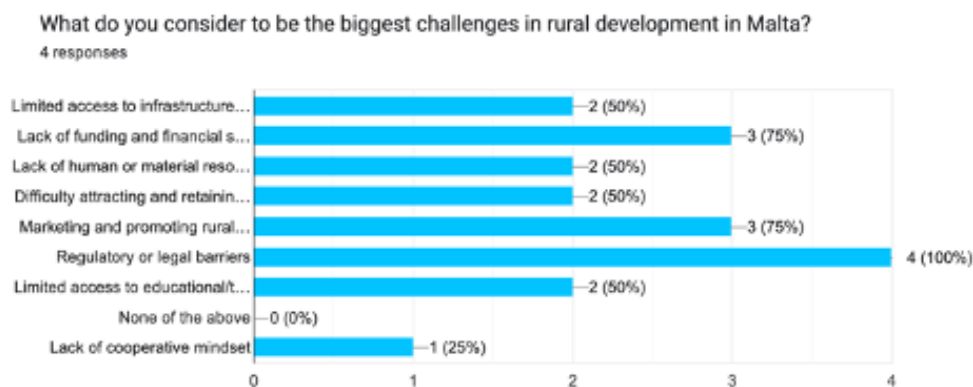
Our respondents

4 private organisations working in youth development, who offer training courses, Information Services, visibility support/ marketing, physical spaces in terms of co- working, event management/ access to events and access to shared knowledge. None of our respondents offer grants as part of their work.

What are the biggest challenges in rural development in Malta?

Our respondents were clear in the barriers in the challenges faced by rural development in Malta. The most prevalent barrier is regulatory and legal considerations with 100% of respondents citing same. This was followed by marketing and promotion rural development (75%), lack of funding and financial support (75%) and the lack of human and material resources (75%).

Difficulty attracting and retaining staff and access to education and training are cited as challenges to 50% of respondents. It is worth noting that this rating is much higher than reported by our youth respondents. The lack of a cooperative mindset at 25% is also an interesting perspective.



What other challenges or difficulties do you encounter when supporting the venture?

- Competing with larger organisations and sometimes public authorities, which of course have access to more resources, and some of which projects are simply greenwashing ones.
- Summertime in Malta is too hot to spend time in rural areas. Lack of trees/shade
- Lack of willingness to support rural development

Are there any specific areas where you believe more support or resources are needed for rural development in Malta?

- Education across all ages and sectors. Mostly to instill cooperation.
- More supportive government entities
- More support and grants should be available for small scale businesses and sole proprietors.
- More funding for initiatives

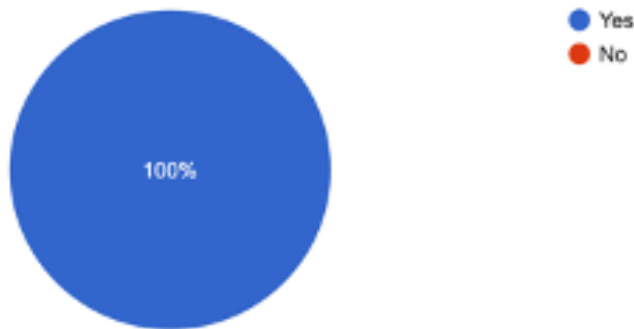
How would you improve your work?

- Harness better the availability of local and direct funds in order to reach our goals. To do that we need to either employ skilled people directly or collaborate with agents.
- Would be better if I had more time dedicated to it
- By having a brick and mortar shop
- To improve my networking skills

Have you witnessed any positive changes or improvements in rural development initiatives in Malta over the past few years?

Have you witnessed any positive changes or improvements in rural development initiatives in Malta over the past few years?

4 responses



Have you come across any good practices in your region related to support for entrepreneurs? If yes, please provide a short description of what that good practice entails.

There are more networking sessions and better outreach to match the right funding to the right projects/beneficiaries.

The good practices I've witness are by small scale farmers who take it on themselves to produce organic vegetables and work the land with full respect to their environment and surroundings.

Conclusions

All respondents work for NGO's and highlight several challenges in rural development, such as limited access to infrastructure, lack of funding, lack of human or material resources, difficulty attracting and retaining customers, marketing, regulatory or legal barriers, limited access to education and training and limited cooperation mindset. Moreover, they highlighted extra challenges such as Competing with larger organisations and sometimes public authorities, which of course have access to more resources, and some of which projects are simply greenwashing ones.

Additionally, summertime in Malta is too hot to spend time in rural areas and there is a lack of trees/shade.

Finally, there is an overall lack of willingness to support rural development.

They believe more support and resources are needed in the following areas: Education across all ages and sectors. Mostly to instill cooperation. Furthermore, there is a need for more supportive government entities along with more support and grants for businesses and sole proprietors. In general, they argue that more funding initiatives are required for rural development.

The organisations represented offer a wide range of support to rural entrepreneurs ranging from training courses, information, visibility support, physical spaces for work, access to shared knowledge and event preparation.

The respondents would harness better the availability of local and direct funds in order to reach our goals. To do that they need to either employ skilled people directly or collaborate with agents.

However, they have also experienced positive changes in rural development and highlight the following best practices: There are more networking sessions and better outreach to match the right funding to the right projects/beneficiaries. Moreover, small scale farmers are producing organic vegetables and work the land with full respect to their environment and surroundings.



04

YOUNG RURAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN SPAIN

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY



INTRODUCTION

In the **Tiétar Valley** region there are 24 municipalities. Spread over 643, 76 km² the municipalities have a inhabitants range from 116 (Fresnedilla) to 6465 (Arenas de San Pedro). Most of them belong to the province of Ávila, the rest (seven of them) belong to the Toledo' province. Total number of the valley inhabitants is of 36.158.

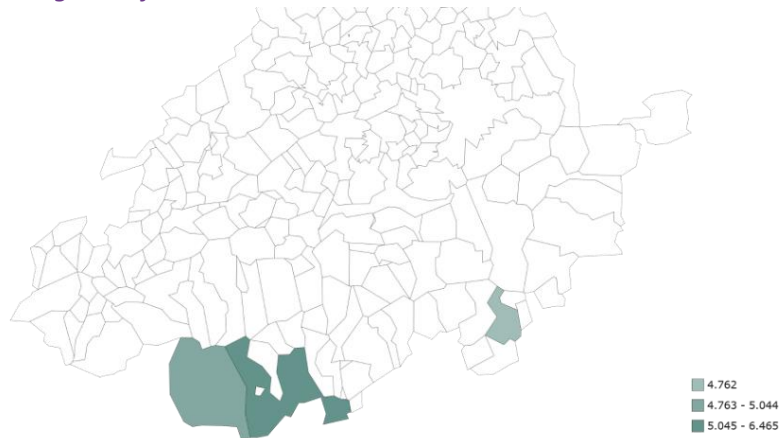
The Tiétar Valley is a natural area in the south part of the Sierra de Gredos. Its privileged climate, the variety of land, flora and fauna, and the proximity of large cities such as Madrid or Talavera de la Reina makes the valley an important tourist destination. It is a mountain area with high biodiversity and cultural traditions is dedicated partly to cattle raisins, to agriculture (mainly olives, figs, chestnuts and cherry plantations). The rest of the land is covered by wild forest and mountains. A challenge to manage.

Tiétar Valley

In the region, there are four secondary education centers located in 3 towns (Arenas de San Pedro, Candeleda and La Adrada), which also include some VET trainings offer. Almost all municipalities have a primary school. The smaller ones function as CRIE combining several ages in the same class due to low number of children.

In Arenas de San Pedro and Candeleda there is a Day Care and Training Center for people with mental disabilities. Those are supported by the local and ACORN study, we focus on the three largerst municipality of the Tiétar Valley: Sotillo de La Adrada, Arenas de San Pedro and Candeleda, as they represent well the reality of the region.

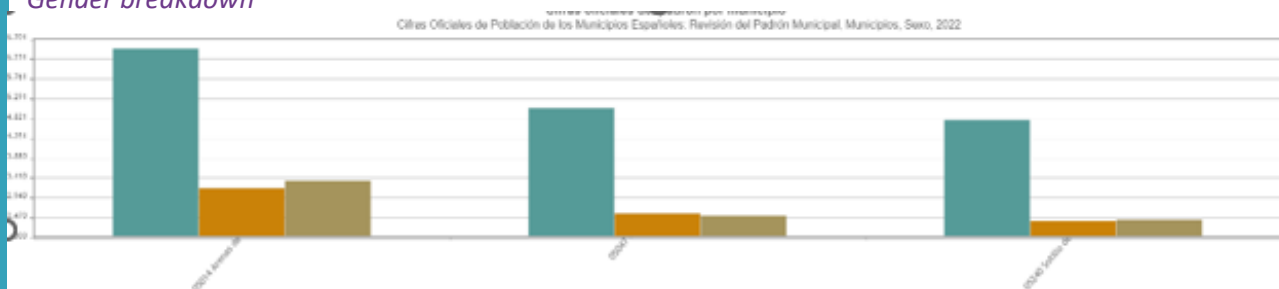
Map of Ávila and the three villages we focus on



Population of the three villages:



Gender breakdown



Region

Tietar Valley

Short story of the region

Tiétar Valley is located in the south of the Sierra de Gredos mountains of the Central Mountain Range between Madrid and the Portuguese border. Its 36.158 inhabitants are divided among 24 municipalities with only two of them with more than 5.000 inhabitants.

An important part of the Valley is part of the

Total number of inhabitants in the region

36,158

Regional Sierra de Gredos Parc, which means it is a protected area from the ecological point of view. The Parc and its surroundings is used for cattle raising and agriculture (mainly olives and fruit trees).

Tourism is one of the main economic pillars of the region.

Municipalities in the region

- 24



INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

Arenas de San Pedro

Unemployment rate

459 (11.5%) (National average 12.8%)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

1,288

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

39

Total population working: (1%)

Btw 15-25 (6.8%)

Btw 20-24 (13.7%)

(National average 29.5%)

Number of inhabitants from 25 (<65)

3,416

Number of entrepreneurs

605 (National average 9.35%)

Number of inhabitants

6,465

Working age 15-64

3,988

Btw 10-25

862

Btw 20-24

283

Btw 15-25

572



Services for young people

- **Public spaces:**
A football field, 2 Padel fields, 2 Tennis fields and 1 Sport center, natural swimming pool, Cultural Center Josefina Carabias, Language School EEI

ACTIVITIES

- **Municipality:**
Football, Tai Chi, Yoga, a Library, Municipal Music school, cinema
- **Semi private:**
Fundación Matías Gómez - dance and painting activities
- **Private initiative:**
Gym Sport - pole dance, zumba, latin dances, burlesque
2 traditional gym spaces for work-out
Nayana - yoga
Club de Karate
Tennis Club
Kickboxing
- **Non-profits:**
AJS - non formal education
Gredos Mountaineering Club
Sala el Balcón – Cultural Association
Housewives club
Arenas Arcoiris – LTBIQ+ Association

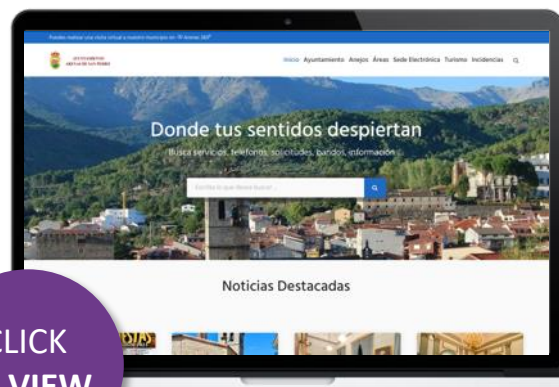
Photos of the region



Services for elderly people

A Day Care Center + 2 residenciales

Link municipality website



CLICK
TO VIEW

INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

Sotillo de la Adrada

Unemployment rate

391 (12,7%)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

1,172

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

35

Total population: (1.13%)

Btw 15-25 (7.08%)

Btw 20-24 (15.9%)

Number of inhabitants from 25 (<65)

2,586

Number of entrepreneurs

401 (8.42%)

Number of inhabitants

4,762

Working age 15-64

3,081

Btw 10-25

774

Btw 20-24

220

Btw 15-25

494



Services for young people

- **Public spaces:**
A football field, a Padel fields, 1 Tennis fields and a Sport center, Library, natural swimming pool, Cultural Center La Pasada

ACTIVITIES

- **Municipality:**
Football, Municipal Music school, cinema
Private initiative:
Yoga, painting, theater Club
- **Non-profits:**
ASAJA - association for young farmers
Estacion del Arte – Artisans & artist organization
ACTUA – Environmental organization

Services for elderly people

3 nursing homes

Link municipality website



CLICK
TO VIEW

Photos of the region



INFORMATION PER MUNICIPALITY

Municipality

Candeleda

Unemployment rate

306 (9.68%)

Number of inhabitants (>25)

1,020

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

13

Total population: (0.41%)

Btw 15-25 (2.96%)

Btw 20-24 (6.07%)

Number of inhabitants from 25 (<65)

2,722

Number of entrepreneurs

513 (10.17%)

Number of inhabitants

5,044

Working age 15-64

3,161

Btw 10-25

653

Btw 20-24

214

Btw 15-25

439



Services for young people

- **Public spaces:**
A football field, Padel fields, Tennis fields and 1 Sport center, natural swimming pool, Cultural Center El Matadero, Aula de Naturaleza La Lagunilla. Language School

ACTIVITIES

- **Municipality:**
Football, Tai Chi, Yoga, a Library, Municipal Music school, cinema, Aserpádel, ecological activities for young
- **Private initiative:**
2 traditional gym spaces for work-out
Club de Karate
Tennis Club
La Galana: Dancing and holistic health workshops
- **Non-profits:**
ADISVATI - people with mental diseases
CAND JOVEN – Youth DJ organization

Services for elderly people

1 nursing home

Photos of the region



Link municipality website



YOUTH SURVEY FINDINGS



Our Respondents

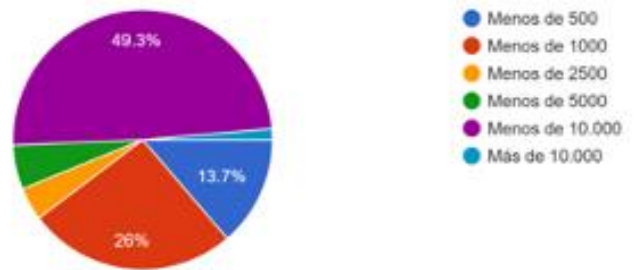
73 young people born between 1990 to 2009

Inhabitants of the municipality

The majority of our respondents live in three sizes of population

- Less than 500 (13.7%)
- Less than 1000 (26%)
- Less than 10.000 (49.3%)

Habitantes de tu municipio:
73 responses

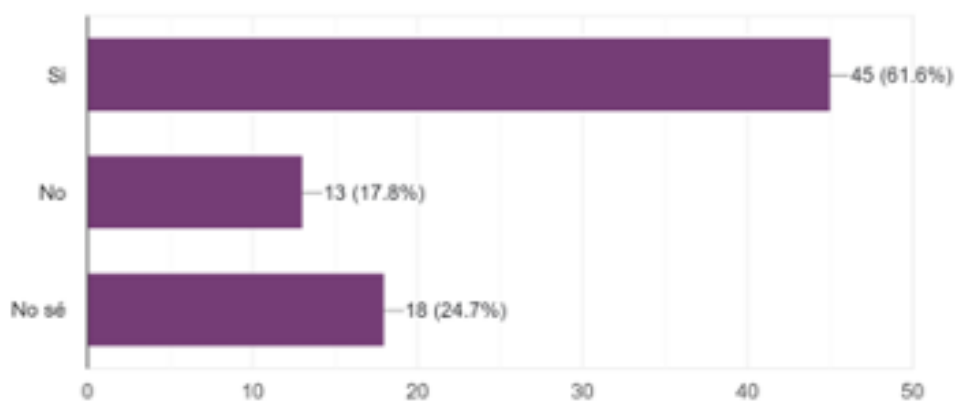


Are you happy living in this place?

The majority of our young people (61.6%) are happy living in the area, 17.8% are not, while a sizeable 24.7% don't know.

¿Eres feliz viviendo en este lugar?

73 responses

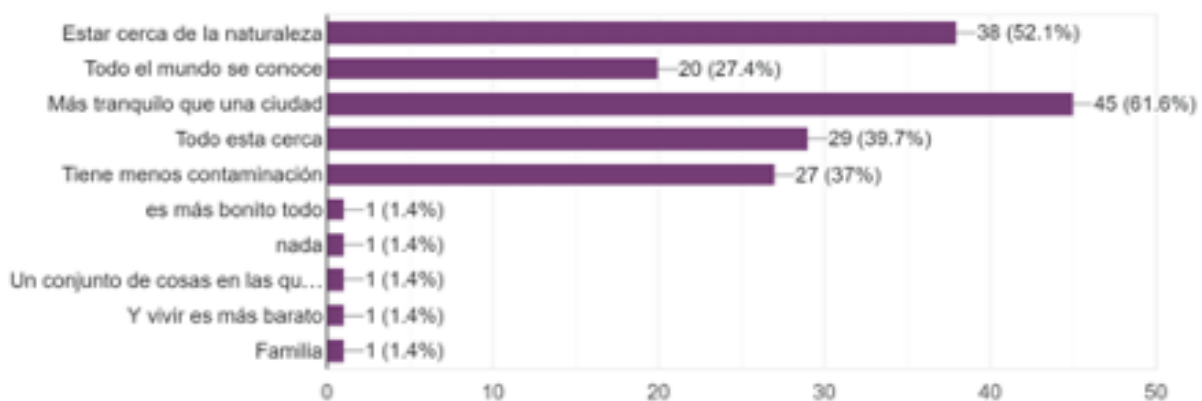


What do you value most about living in a rural area?

- Its close to nature - 38 (52.1%)
- Everyone knows each other- 20 (27.4%)
- Everything its nearby – 29 (39.7%)
- Everything is nicer – 1 (1.4%)
- Nothing – 1 (1.4%)
- A bit of every option – 1 (1.4%)
- Life it's cheaper – 1 (1.4%)
- Family – 1 (1.4%)

¿Qué valoras más de vivir en una zona rural?

73 responses

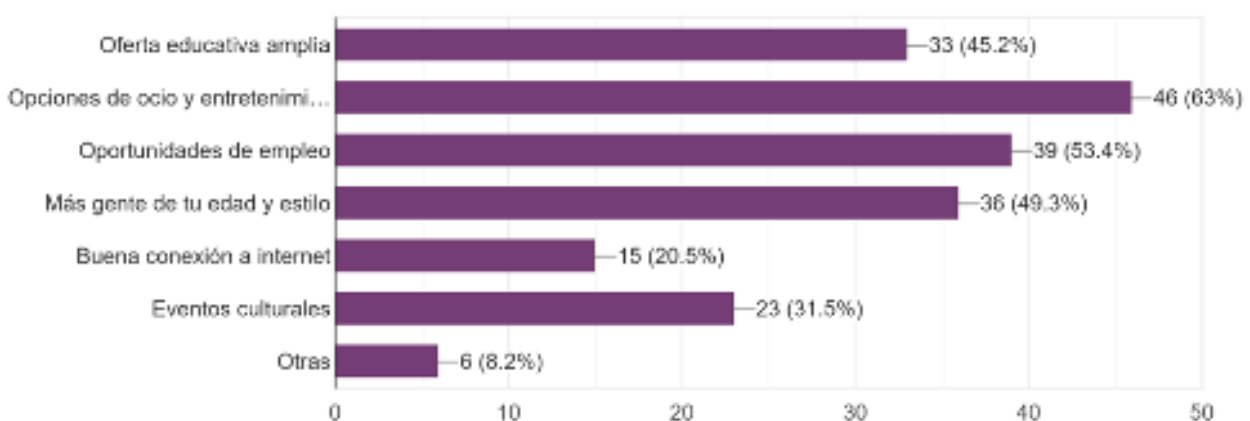


What do you miss in the area where you live?

- Leisure and fun options (63%)
- Opportunity to find employment (53%)
- More people of my age and style (49%)
- Opportunity for different studies (45%)
- More cultural events (31%)
- Good internet connection (20%)

¿Qué echas de menos en la zona en la que vives?

73 responses

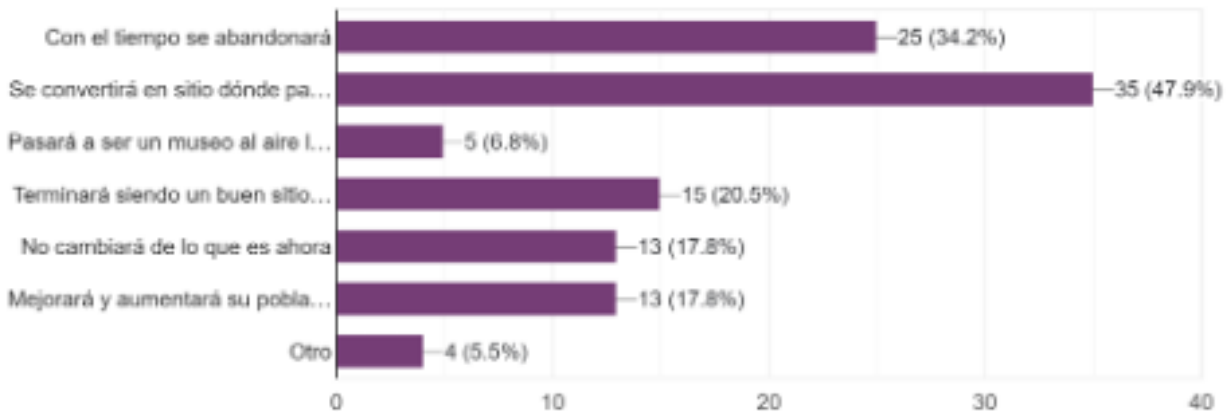


How do you see the future of your municipality?

- With time, it's going to disappear (34%)
- It's going to be a place to spend holidays (48%)
- It can be a good place where you can work online (20%)
- It going to stay forever like it is right now (18%)
- It will improve and increase the population (18%)
- It will become an open-air museum (7%)

¿Cómo ves el futuro de tu municipio?

73 responses



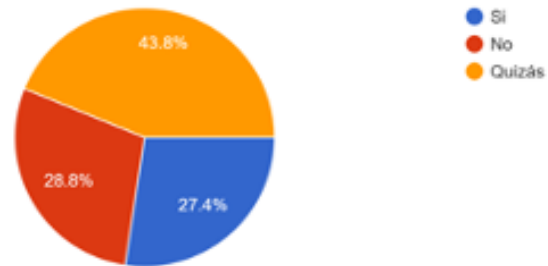
What other future do you see for your municipality?

- I feel that there will be no changes since those who promote them do not have support, the people of the area always adapt to what is there and prefer their comfort, or that things do not change, before offering new things
- If employment is not generated or an attractive place is made for families that telework, it will be a vacation town and retirement retreat
- Rural holidays destiny
- It going to stay like it is right now
- If we all work together, we can transform it in a beautiful place full of opportunities, quiet so then have the best of cities and villages
- With less population, people will move to other places
- No one will live here
- We will lose our young people
- Good and happy
- That it will grow

Do you think you will live in a rural area when you grow up?

- Yes 27.4%
- No 28.8%
- Maybe 43.8%

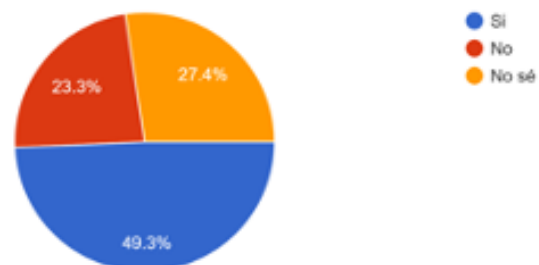
Crees que vivirás en una zona rural cuando seas mayor?
3 responses



Would you encourage other young people your age to live in a rural area?

- Yes 49.3%
- No 23.3%
- Maybe 27.4%

Motivarías a otros jóvenes de tu edad a vivir en una zona rural?
3 responses



What would you ask/ask the politicians of your municipality?

- More extracurricular activities that are different of the traditional ones
- To create more spaces for young people and to stop removing the trees and to create more green areas.
- More study and entertainment options for young people
- To listen more to teenagers
- To put themselves in our place and understand us better
- A youth center and places to be, activities that are of interest of young people,
- Create communication channels between the town hall and young people
- To support our initiatives and proposals,
- To improve the information about summer activities
- More leisure options
- To improve our town

- A good laboratory
- More entertainment
- Think more of the young
- Culturalize the area more and offer more activities for young people
- Do you know that there are people between 18 and 12? Incredible true?
- That they really listen to the initiatives to improve the town and that we all work together to achieve a better municipality,
- To dialogue more with young people. Without us there is no future for the villages,
- Don't be so selfish and instead of thinking about yourself, think about the people,
- What ideas do you have to convince young people to stay living in the villages?
- Free Wi-Fi
- More employment opportunities
- Stop stealing
- A place of leisure where young people can be, instead of being in the street getting cold
- A shopping center and a hospital
- Initiative
- Let there be more job opportunities
- Improve the area we are living in,
- Encourage young people to be active,
- More things for people and especially for young people
- Let them fix the streets
- Don't know
- Let them think of the young more
- More culture and entertainment.
- Fix the streets and grant more places for young people.
- Facilitate things, don't make it everything so difficult. Less bureaucracy.
- A youth center
- Improve the health system with more staff
- Better transport connections with neighboring villages
- I would tell them to risk more, to move and wake up if they really care about us or their environment...
- Think ahead so the villages won't get abandoned!
- Work close with people and work for people
- Promote the image of the town and publicity is given on the web pages. The improvement and maintenance of essential services in the town (clinic, school, lighting, sewage) in addition to local shops (very important) and leisure spaces.
- That they favor the creation of employment or condition the town to be able to telework there and access all the basic resources without moving.
- More events for young people, cultural, leisure and offer for tourism
- More opportunities for young people and a broader cultural offer, taking into consideration the young population.

Conclusions

The majority of the answers are from teenagers and maybe that is why some of them are contradictory. More than half of them is happy with the fact of living in a rural area. Although a two-third of them expresses the wish to live in an urban area in the future, more than half of them would motivate other young people to live in a rural area.

Over 30% is happy with the cultural/sport offer they get in their municipalities, despite that, many miss a Youth Center and other spaces that are meant for young people. They don't feel that the politicians are taking them seriously, they lack knowledge of how to get in contact the politicians and they are convinced that their ideas wouldn't be taken into account.

Over 30% have nothing to say to their politicians, which shows lack of active citizenship culture and critical thinking competence. This goes very much in line with very academic and based on memorisation education they get in schools.

Some of them are aware that there is no future for the villages if all young people wish to move to urban areas. The majority is convinced that their villages will turn soon in nice places to spend their holidays but not places where people live. Hardly anybody believes, that the number of inhabitants will grow in the villages.



ENTREPRENEURS SURVEY FINDINGS

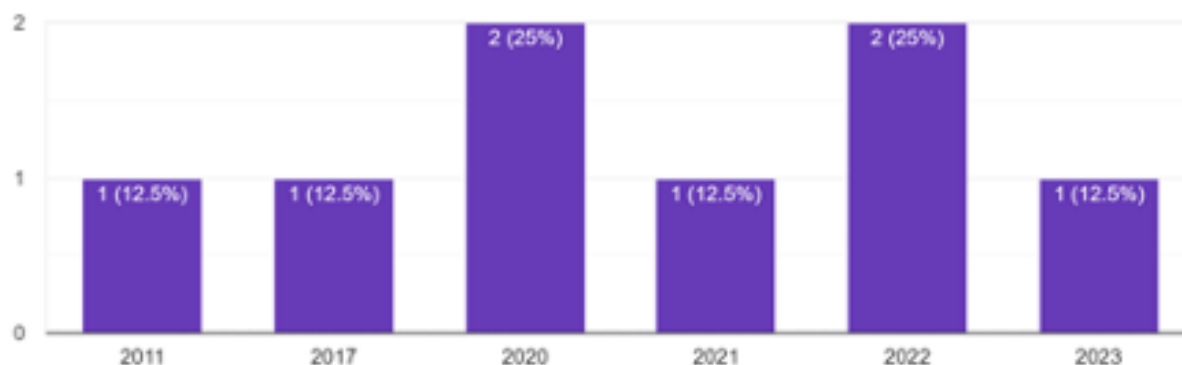


Profile of our respondents

We secured the involvement of 13 young rural entrepreneurs, of whom 62.5% started their business between 2020 and 2024, 12.5% started their business in 2023, while 25% started their business from 2011- 2017.

En que año comenzó tu negocio/ Iniciativa

8 responses



Type of your business

The type of business established ranges from tourism including accommodation hospitality and culture, manufacturing, wellbeing and the creative industries.

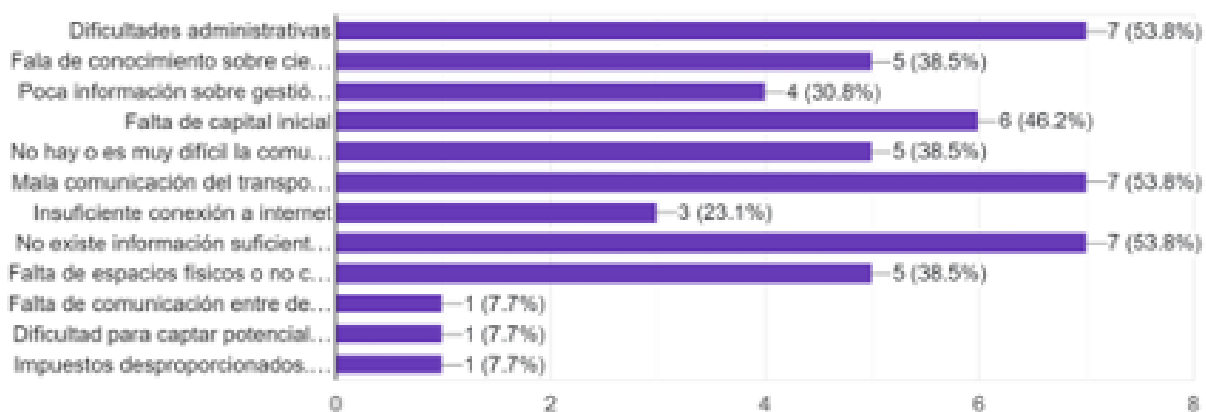
- Dance school and fitness activities
- Accommodation
- Rural Cultural Platform
- Rural house with wooden cabins and yoga and sustainability experiences
- Astrotourism, hospitality
- Sale of products from Avila, both food and crafts and literature.
- A platform to teach and learn NoCode, AI and other digital tools.
- Restoration and conservation of Cultural Assets, Material Heritage: furniture, art, decorative objects.
- In therapeutically accompanying people through Gestalt Psychotherapy, Coaching, Art Therapy, Meditation and Yoga in their personal transformation processes.
- Sound recording and editing, musical arrangements, original music composition, session musician, music teaching.
- Rural accommodation and rental of space for training, meetings, celebrations and retreats
- Leather craft workshop.

What challenges or difficulties do you face as an entrepreneur?

- Administrative difficulties (54%)
- Poor public transport communication (54%)
- Lack of knowledge about certain subjects of my business (54%)
- There is no or very difficult communication with local authorities (31%)
- Insufficient internet connection (23%)
- Little information about financial management of my business (38%)
- Lack of start-up capital (8%)
- There is insufficient information on support for entrepreneurs (8%)
- Lack of physical spaces or do not meet my needs (8%)

¿Qué retos o dificultades confrontas como emprendedor/a?

13 responses

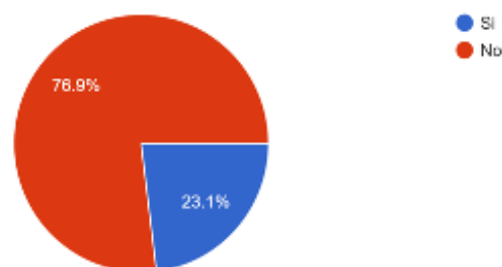


Have you received any grants to help your business?

- Yes 23%
- No 77%

¿Has recibido alguna subvención para ayudar a tu negocio?

13 responses

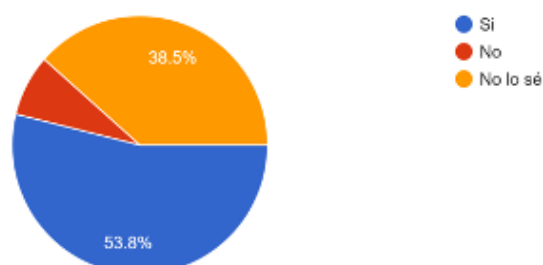


Would you apply for (another) grant?

- Yes 54%
- No 7.5%
- Don't know 38.5%

¿Solicitarías (otra) subvención?

13 responses



Do you have any other need that you want to share as an entrepreneur?

- There is a lack of specific regulation for small businesses...in general you have to comply with the rules and expenses as if you were a large company
- Raise awareness that when an idea seems great to you, it is more beneficial to collaborate with it, than to try to copy those ideas of others and do them individually, because that way instead of growing we make each other small
- When we went to ask for an support funds, we were not taken seriously because we had nothing. When we bought the land, our application were denied again because we had started the business already and we could only qualify for help as SMEs. A real shame!
- I currently have applied for a grant that has forced me to invest €2,000 and I still don't know anything about it. The need for flexibility and closeness on the part of the organizations that grant subsidies (in my case the Junta de Castilla y León) is imperative.
- A manager specialized in freelancers. Even some meetings to share experiences and ways to solve it.
- Have spaces in which to establish contacts with people who can enhance my business
- I need a local for sale to the public, with a glass display, bathroom, heating and lots of light.
- Create spaces to carry out personal growth activities
- Free advertisement spaces for effective advertising. The city town should allow publicity to be placed in the main streets

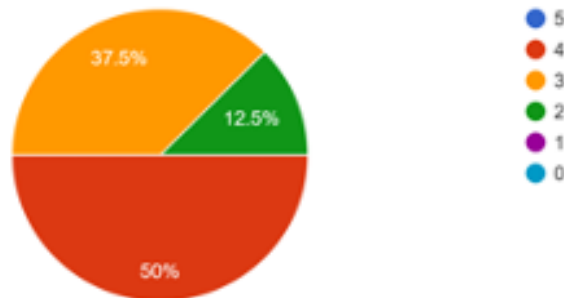
What kind of training would you be interested in doing?

- Introduction to entrepreneurship – 0 (0%)
- Economic management and tax obligations – 9 (69.2%)
- social entrepreneurship – 3 (23.1%)
- Human R
- Marketing and social networks – 9 (69.2%)
- Internationalization of companies – 4 (30.8%)
- Opportunities for entrepreneurs at national and European level – 5 (38.5%)



How prepared were you when you started the business to run a business? (5 very prepared and 0 not at all prepared)

¿Cómo de preparad@ estabas cuando iniciaste el negocio para dirigir un negocio?
preparad@ y 0 nada preparad@)
8 responses



If you were to start over, what advice would you give yourself?

- Enjoy the road
- Organise yourself better
- Sell first, then build
- Believe in yourself and do not try to find partners to fly.
- Do it with fear but do it, you will learn as you go along
- I've only just started, so I haven't gained perspective yet to answer.
- Previous area and market analysis
- Set a schedule (and stick to it) and set yourself a minimum salary to get every month

Conclusions

The majority of entrepreneurs in Tiétal Valley are self-employed and one-person businesses. Many of them start with a very low capital and risk everything they have. Their success is limited from the very beginning due to their low investment capacity, lack of good transportation means in the area, administrative and bureaucratic difficulties and low support and thus interest of the local/ regional politicians in small businesses.

Despite the fact that the majority of them consider to have been well prepared before starting their business, the entrepreneurship

road is long and hard. A thing in common is that most of them are good in what they do (the product they offer) but have no or little knowledge related to financial literacy and marketing. In summary, it is definitively difficult to be a young entrepreneur with hardly any money in combination of being in a poorly connected rural area. Having said, entrepreneurs are particularly active in the services sector and tourism related activities, the most important economic pillar in the region. However, those who exploit those services are not the locals, but people and enterprises registered in Madrid.

ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT SERVICE SURVEY FINDINGS



Organization type

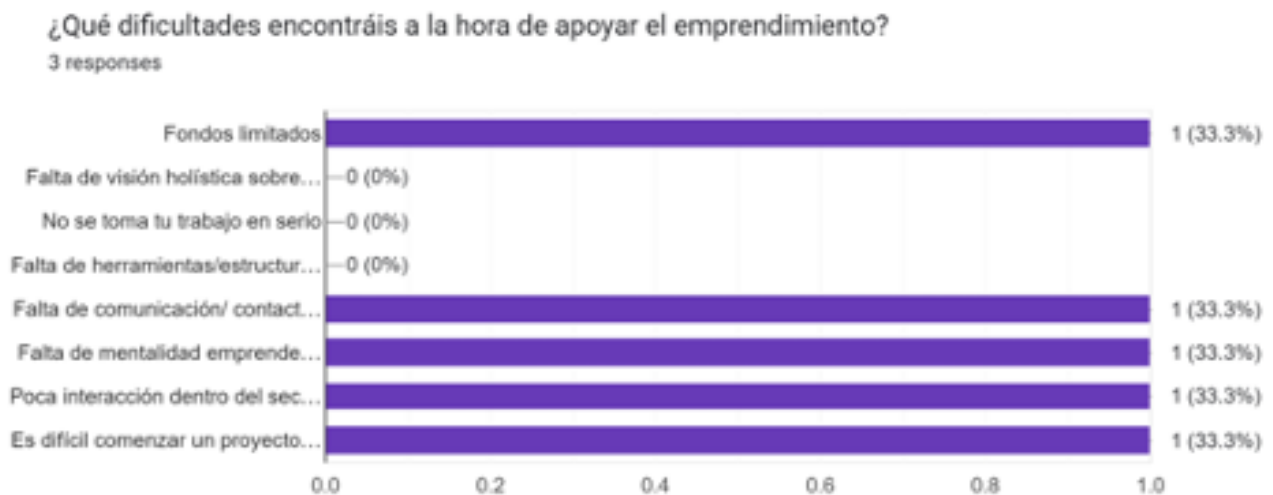
Organisations working in youth development including a public institution, a private entity, and an NGO/ Foundation providing space for businesses to rent, information on subsidies, self-employed advice, helping to prepare a business plan and accompaniment in the early stages, and training, coordination and communication supports.

Web pages



What difficulties do you find when it comes to supporting young rural entrepreneurs?

- Limited funds (33%)
- Lack of communication/contact with local entrepreneurs (33%)
- Lack of entrepreneurial mindset in the community in which you work (33%)
- Little interaction within the sector (33%)



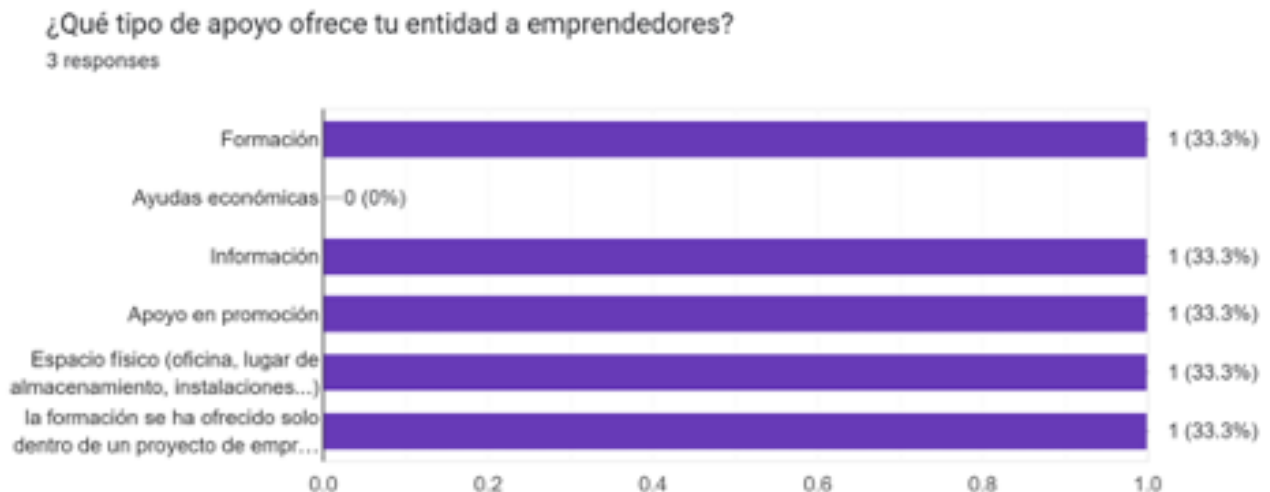
What other challenges or difficulties do you encounter when supporting the venture?

- Financing and contacts
- Some grants or subsidies require experience in the processing and, of course, the delay from when the grant is requested until the grant is received.
- Empathy and interactions



What type of support does your entity offer to entrepreneurs?

- Training
- Financial aid
- Information
- Support in promotion
- Physical space (office, storage place, facilities)



How would you improve your work supporting entrepreneurs? If possible...

- Offering workspaces at affordable prices
- I think that, in my case, it would be better to have a technician specialized in advising entrepreneurs. Due to the frequency of the service that I offer, I think it would be worth one technician for every 5,000 or 10,000 inhabitants.

Do you know of any good practice examples? A case of entrepreneurship that makes a positive impact on society and please describe them briefly.

- Cabritos Maribel (El Raso), La Quesería de María (Lanzahíta), Javi and Ana, beekeepers with a shop (Lanzahíta), Julio Carbonero, 100% young farmer from Arenas de San Pedro, Grabadyarte (El Barco de Ávila), La Guaña (Poyales), Montealijar goat cheeses (Las Navas del Marqués), El Quesero (Candeleda), Caracoles de Gredos (Arenas), Andrés Reyes, resin maker in San Esteban del Valle...
 - And the sweetest is, without a doubt, bombondehigo.com, in Almoharín, Cáceres, with 25 workers, most of them women.
 - I don't know any

Conclusions

The mere fact that we couldn't get hardly any surveys from public workers who are, in theory, responsible for local development and thus of supporting local entrepreneurs says a lot.

Lack of staff, funds and thus interest is undeniable. Not mentioning clerks responsible of youth policies. We couldn't find any! The few we were able to talk to agree that the only support they can offer is some information, some trainings opportunities and limited grants. They admit to have little to no contact with local entrepreneurs, they are not very much aware of their needs and even if they are there are no funds to support the effectively.

The mentioned requirements and bureaucracy by entrepreneurs and by the technicians states out the gap between the supporting structures and the real needs of entrepreneurs. In conclusion, the versions of the technicians and the entrepreneurs confirm each other: the technicians feel they cannot realise their work properly and the entrepreneurs feel that they are very little supported.

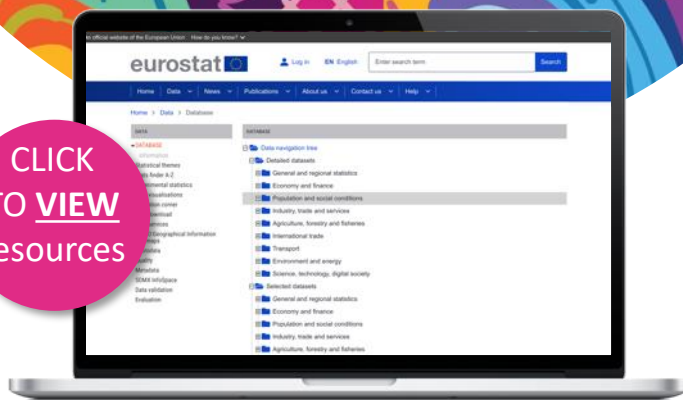




05

YOUNG RURAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN DENMARK

CLICK TO VIEW resources



CLICK TO VIEW resources



DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY



Municipality

Dragør

Unemployment rate

Around 2% as of 2021

Number of inhabitants between 17 - 64

7,982

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

It is estimated to be around 3.6%

Number of inhabitants

14,638





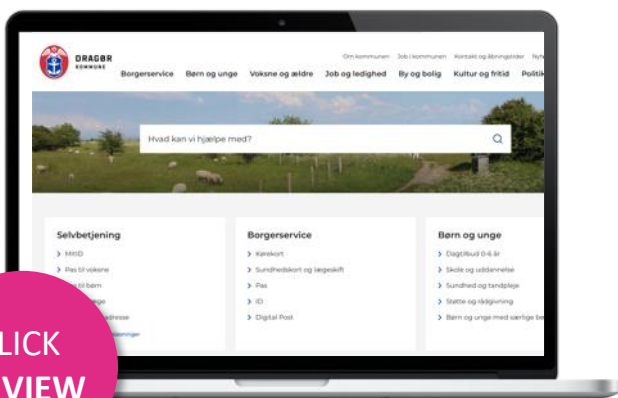
Services for young people

- School of Music and Culture
- Scouts

Services for elderly people

- Enggården Care Home
- Dragør Activity Centre for Seniors

Link municipality website



Photos of the region



Municipality

Albertslund

Unemployment rate

As of 2021 it would be around 3%

Number of inhabitants between 17 - 64

17,136

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

It is estimated to be between 4.2% to 5.6%

Number of inhabitants

28,000





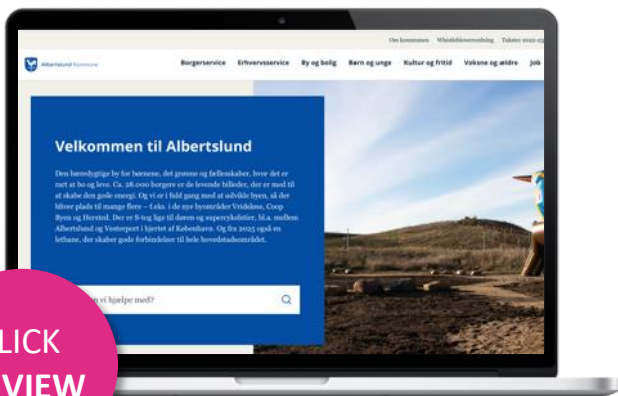
Services for young people

- Leisure Clubs
- Albertslund Youth Club

Services for elderly people

- Dam Farm Garden
- Cycling Without Age
- The Open Activity and Training Offer
- Visited Day Care Centres

Link municipality website



CLICK
TO VIEW

Photos of the region



Municipality

Læsø

Unemployment rate

5.6%

Number of inhabitants between 17 - 64

898

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

As of 2021, the unemployment rate would sit at around 10%

Number of inhabitants

1,897





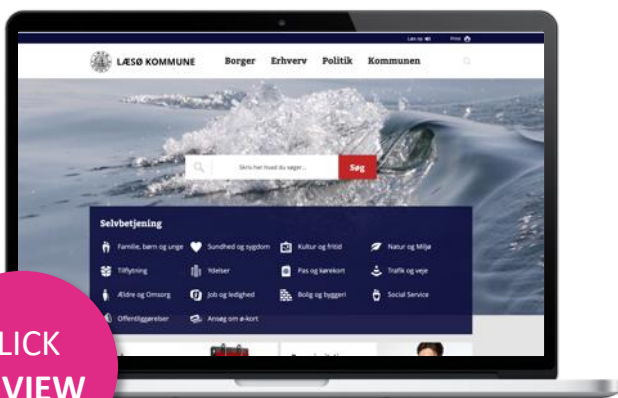
Services for young people

- Sports and Facilities Centre (Includes Riding Lessons)
- Youth Clubs

Services for elderly people

- The Cozy Corner – Day Centre
- The Activity Centre
- The Senior Club

Link municipality website



CLICK
TO VIEW

Photos of the region



Municipality

Samsø

Unemployment rate

Approximately 2.7%

Number of inhabitants between 17 - 64

1,983

Young people unemployment rate (>25)

As of 2021, the rate is approx 5.4%

Number of inhabitants

3,889





Services for young people

- Samsø Music School
- Leisure Pass – Subsidy for payment
- Youth Club

Services for elderly people

- Samsø Kitchen (prepares meals for the elderly)
- Care Centre Kildemosen
- Food for Men Club
- Conversation Club

Photos of the region

Link municipality website



CLICK
TO VIEW



FINAL CONCLUSIONS

SMALLER AND MORE RURAL AREAS (E.G., LÆSØ, SAMSØ):

- **Higher Unemployment Rates:** The data shows higher unemployment rates in some of the smaller and more rural areas. Limited industry diversity and fewer educational opportunities might contribute to this trend.
- **Dependence on Specific Industries:** Smaller regions might be more dependent on specific industries, such as agriculture or tourism. Fluctuations in these industries could lead to higher volatility in employment, affecting young people disproportionately.
- **Potential for Higher Youth Unemployment:** If we apply the general assumption that youth unemployment is higher than the overall rate, this trend might be more pronounced in rural areas due to factors like limited access to higher education and specialised job training.

TRENDS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Migration Trends:** Young people in rural areas of Denmark may be drawn to cities for education and job opportunities, possibly inflating rural unemployment figures.
- **Government Initiatives:** Denmark's focus on education, vocational training, and social welfare might moderate some of these trends, though regional variations likely still exist.
- **Economic Fluctuations:** Rural areas that depend on specific industries may be more susceptible to economic downturns, affecting youth unemployment more severely.

Conclusion

The available data and understanding of Danish society suggest that urban areas likely experience lower unemployment rates, possibly including youth unemployment, compared to more rural regions. These trends are influenced by the complex interplay of educational opportunities, industrial diversity, governmental support, and economic stability.





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