

Compendium of 20 European Best Practices in Inclusive Youth Rural Development

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INTRODUCTION

While many young people are contributing to the development of their community and are involved in the economic development of their rural areas, a greater percentage of the youth population are faced with different social and development challenges. Recognition by society, policymakers, and those wielding influence is imperative: young people must have a voice in decisions that shape their lives. This involvement fosters vital skills crucial for their future prospects in education, livelihoods, and societal engagement.

The compendium is made up of 20 best practices of inclusive rural development within Europe. These projects have been carefully chosen for their approach and impact in supporting and engaging youth fulfil their potential via rural regeneration and deal with the causes and consequences of social and economic disadvantage or poverty in our regions. Our Best Practices showcase different transferable approaches including rural youth forums, platforms, programmes, network and events that involve young people in rural development, leadership and active citizenship.

This Compendium is for organizations and individuals working alongside youth or in rural areas, to try promote a more inclusive community. You are committed to making lasting changes in your region, ensuring it is stronger, more connected, resilient and more prosperous places for rural youth. The compendium is intended to provide real examples of different groups in other areas. It is a guide on how we can replicate the best practices in other areas to benefit our young people in rural areas.

We invite you to study and apply the learning from the 20 Acorn best practices presented.



“The faces of young people are the faces of our past, our present and our future. No segment in the society can match with the power, idealism, enthusiasm and courage of the young people”

Kailash Satyarthi



01

COMPENDIUM OF BEST PRACTICES IN IRELAND

Name of Youth Focused Rural Development Initiative



1. HUB NA N'ÓG

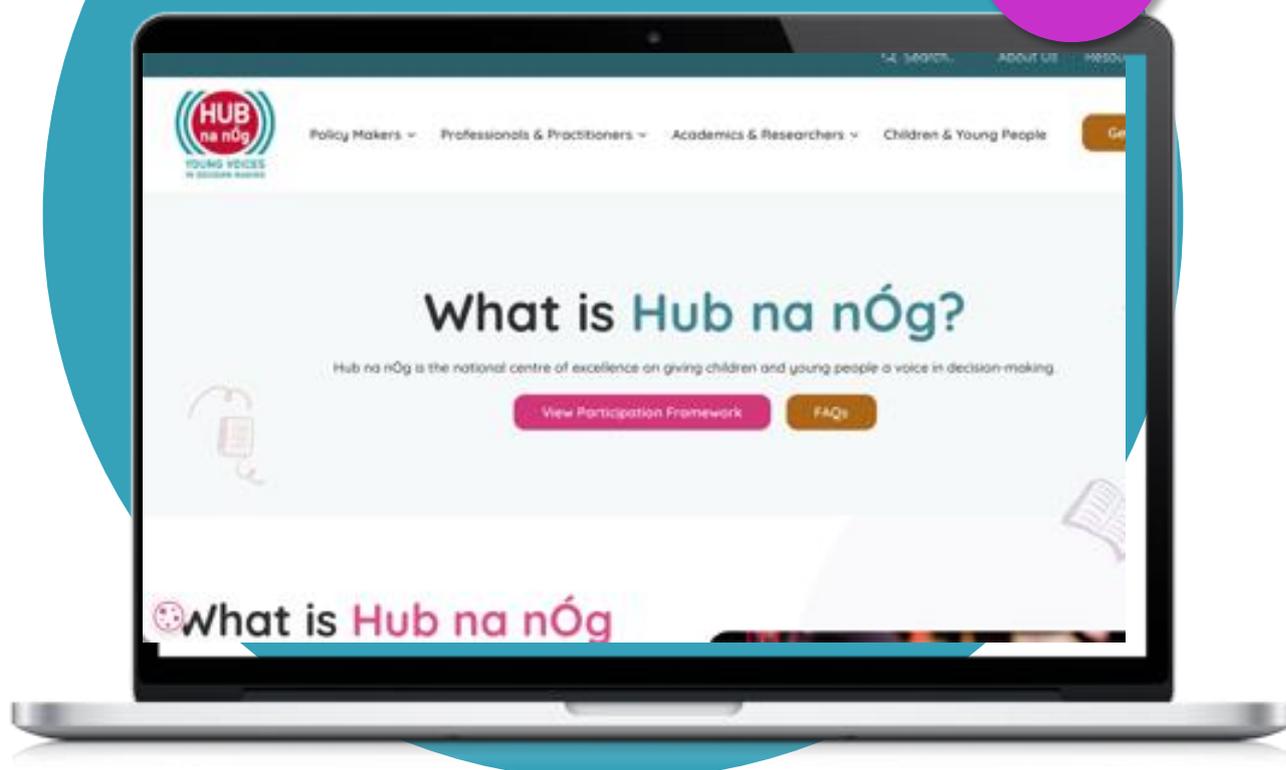
Level (local/regional/national)

National

Type of Initiative

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth

CLICK TO VIEW



Brief description

Hub Na N'óg is a national centre of excellence and coordination on giving children and young people a voice in decision-making.

It supports Government Departments, State agencies and non-government organisations to give children and young people a voice in decision-making with a particular focus on those that are seldom-heard.

It provides training, coaching, development, advice and support to organisations to more effectively listen to and act on the voices of children and young people. The initiative allows children and young people to be involved in decision-making, their views are listened to, taken seriously and given due weight with the intention of leading to an outcome or change.

Who does/did it involve?

Departments, agencies and organisations that have taken part in Hub Na N'óg training and development:

Active Schools Flag National Team, Baboró, Branar Téatar do Pháistí, Children's Books Ireland, COPE Galway, Council of the National Cultural Institutions (Learning and Engagement Group), Creative Schools Associates, Creative Schools Co-ordinators, Department of Education Inspectorate (Student Voice Project), Dreamstuff Youth Theatre, Educational Research Centre of Ireland, Educate Together National Office, Gaisce – the President's Award (National Office), Galway Community Circus, Galway Film Fleadh, Health Information and Quality Authority (Child Inspection Team), Hub na nÓg panel of facilitators, Involve CLG, Irish Traveller Movement, Local Creative Youth Partnerships, Mayo Women's Support Services, NCBI, National Gallery of Ireland (Education Team), Oakridge Children's Services, Oberstown Children Detention Campus, Sophia Housing, Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland (SBHI), Sport Ireland (GAA, Cara, Swim Ireland, Spirit of Rugby), The Ark, Tipperary Rural Traveller Project, Young Irish Filmmakers, Youth Services (Clare, Kerry, Limerick and Tipperary).



Age of young people involved

13-30 years of age

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

The Framework supports departments, agencies and organisations to improve their practice in listening to children and young people and giving them a voice in decision-making.

It is underpinned by: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making.

This framework is transferrable to other areas and is a good opportunity to allow children and young people to be able to voice their opinion within their rural areas.



Key Quotes/Insights:

We give children and young people a voice in decision-making with a particular focus on those that are seldom-heard.



How is it transferrable to other areas?

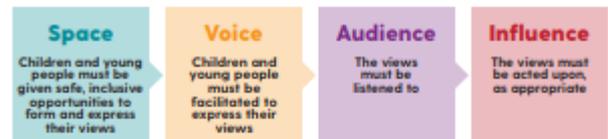
Hub Na N'óg uses a framework called the **participation framework**. The Framework supports departments, agencies and organisations to improve their practice in listening to children and young people and giving them a voice in decision-making.

The Framework is based on the child rights model of participation developed by Professor Laura Lundy, Queens University, which provides guidance for decision-makers on the steps to take in giving children and young people a meaningful voice in decision-making.

[Click here for a link to the framework.](#)

Lundy Model

This model provides a pathway to help conceptualise Article 12 of the UNCRC. It focuses on four distinct, albeit interrelated, elements. The four elements have a rational chronological order.



Name of Youth Focused Rural Development Initiative



2. YOUNG VOICES

Level (local/regional/national)

National

Type of Initiative

National Youth Council of Ireland



Brief description

In Ireland the EU Youth Dialogue is delivered by NYCI through the Young Voices programme, as implemented by the [National Youth Council of Ireland \(NYCI\)](#) in partnership with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the National Working Group on EU Youth Dialogue.

Young Voices is a programme that offers ongoing opportunities for young people who have an interest in change making. Their challenge is to explore the issues, consult as many young people as possible and ultimately to propose actions that might have a positive outcome for young people at EU and National Level.

The Mission of Young Voices is

- To create a better future by empowering young people to influence decision making.
- To develop connections between young people, communities and decision makers.
- To connect, empower, represent, change and make a difference!



How is it transferrable to other areas?

Young Voices organise events, arrange meetings, deliver presentations, offer outreach and make submissions to decision makers through national structures within the better outcomes, Brighter Futures National Policy framework for children and young people.

Link to more Information

[Click here to link to the Young Voices website](#)

Who does/did it involve?

Young voices is implemented by NYCI, the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. They use their collective expertise to act on issues that impact on young people

Age of young people involved

16-30 years of age

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

Young Voices has a dynamic approach to how it engages with young people. They send delegates to the EU Youth conference where their ideas, experiences and analysis are combined with young people from across the EU to influence policy at European level. They offer online consultations, facilitate workshops and dialogue with policy makers, and they host international seminars, deliver residential training courses and send delegates to national and European events. This method can be used EU-wide, in any country and it benefits the young people as their opinions are taken seriously.

Key Quote/Insight:

Our challenge is to explore the issues, consult as many young people as possible and ultimately to propose actions that might have a positive outcome for young people at EU and National Level.



Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative



3. DÁIL NA NÓG

Level (local/regional/national)

National

Type of Initiative

National Youth Parliament



Brief description

Dáil na nÓg is the national parliament for young people aged 12-17 years. It is an initiative of the Department for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCYA) and was first established in 2001.

The DCYA funds and oversees Dáil na nÓg, which is hosted biennially by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Successive independent evaluations note that Dáil na nÓg has gone from strength to strength, with more challenging and contentious debates.

Dáil na nÓg provides a platform to young people to speak about and debate the issues which matter most to them.

In 2022, Dáil na nÓg explored the theme of equality. It involved young people, through their local youth councils (Comhairle na nÓg), investigating the challenges and opportunities in a host of areas such as mental health, climate change, body image, drugs and alcohol, youth facilities and LGBTIQ+.

Previous years' themes included education, climate action and transport.

Age of young people involved

12-17 years of age

Who does/did it involve?

Foróige and Youth Work Ireland are contracted to organise Dáil na nÓg in co-operation with the DCYA.

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is involved with young people aged 12-17 who were put forward by their local youth council.



Key Quotes/Insights:

Of the 2022 Dáil na nÓg theme, the then Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD said, *"I am delighted to see so many young people engage with issues that matter most to them through the Dáil na nÓg forum, and I am grateful that this year's theme is equality, as I know there is much work to be done in this area across all parts of our society."*



Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

In 2019, a debate and vote on sustainable transport solutions saw delegates from the Comhairle na nÓg councils propose a new policy to offer reduced fares to young people in response to the recognised need to reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainable transport options. This was successfully introduced by Government in Budget 2021 along with the Government's Climate Action Plan and is a wonderful example of the value and worth of youth development initiatives.

How is it transferrable to other areas?

The methods employed by Comhairle na nÓg councils offer a blueprint for meaningful youth engagement and participation that can be adapted and implemented in other countries. By tailoring these methods to suit local contexts and needs, countries can harness the potential of young people as active contributors to societal progress and development.

Links to More Information



CLICK TO VIEW



Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative



4. FORÓIGE LEADERSHIP FOR LIFE PROGRAMME

Level (local/regional/national)

National initiative but delivered
locally

Type of Initiative

Training and Empowerment
Programme for young leaders with
a community development focus



Brief description

Foróige Leadership for Life enables young people aged 15-18 to develop the skills and qualities necessary to be inspiring leaders. Young people are empowered to make a positive change in their community through practical actions and projects. Leadership for Life is run in a variety of youth club settings including youth clubs, projects, GYDP and youth cafés. It is run in secondary schools as part of the transition year and the Leaving Cert Applied programmes.

A customised version of the programme, the [Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative](#), is also run in partnership with the GAA. The programme is also run by other youth organisations across the country. It is also run annually at the [Leadership for Life Conference in Maynooth University](#) each summer.

Who does/did it involve?

The leadership programme is designed for 15 - 18-year-olds. The minimum age for completion of the Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action is 16. There is no upper age limit for participants to graduate from the programme. However, the programme can be ran with young people over the age of 18. It depends on the specific needs of the group members involved.

If you have an older group who you believe would benefit from Leadership for Life, Foróige would encourage you to run the programme.

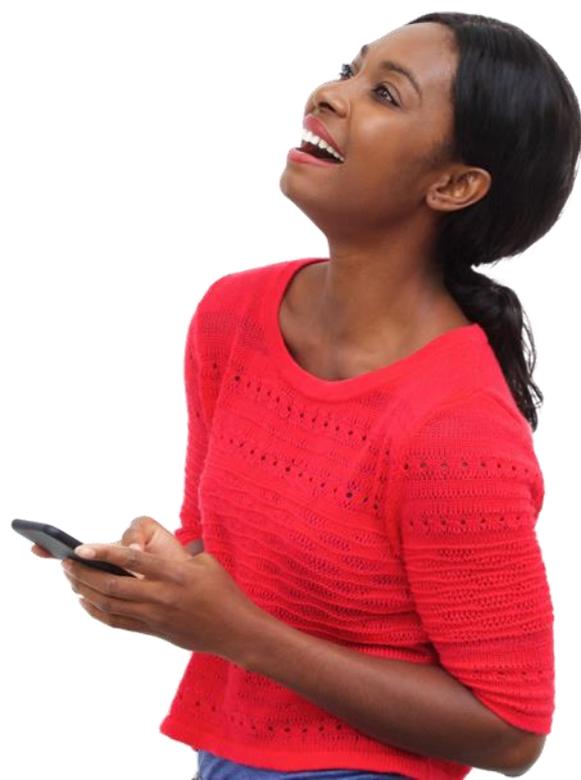
The Leadership for Life programme has three modules. The modules can be carried out one hour each week for 15 weeks or more flexibly to suit your club or project. For example, three hours every Saturday for five weeks. It could also be delivered over mid-term break or during the summer. It really depends what times suit the facilitator and the young people involved.

Module 3 is self-directed and consists of the participants completing a 20-hour community action project, learning journal and portfolio. The 20 hours can be completed over one week or over several weeks depending on the project.

Throughout the project, the qualities of communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, and self-awareness are developed in a fun and encouraging environment.

Age of young people involved

15-18 years of age Foróige



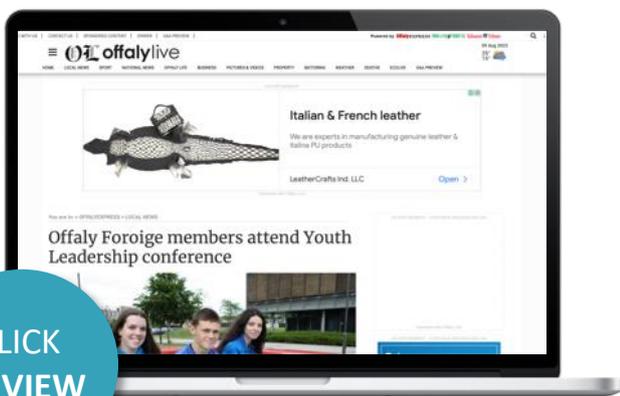
Key Quotes/Insights:

“Young people are playing a greater role than ever before in highlighting the issues that really matter and youth activism and community action are central pillars of our Leadership programme. I’m always in awe of what young people can achieve when given the opportunity.”

Barbara Daly, Co. Offaly, Chairperson of Foróige



Links to More Information



CLICK
TO VIEW

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

Leadership for Life was designed using theories and principles of youth work and adolescent development. It was informed by research conducted by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at the National University of Ireland, Galway. The Leadership for Life Programme has received formal accreditation (NFQ Level 6) from the National University of Ireland, Galway namely the Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action. It was launched in 2009. Since then, over 19000 young people have taken part in the programme and started their own unique leadership journey. It has been running in youth clubs, projects, schools and other youth involving organisations across the country, as well as annually at the Foróige Youth Leadership Conference in Maynooth University

How is it transferrable to other areas?

By drawing inspiration from the FORÓIGE Leadership for Life Programme methods and adapting them to local circumstances, other countries can develop effective leadership development initiatives that empower young people to become impactful leaders in their communities and beyond.



Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



5. OUR RURAL FUTURE: Ireland's first Rural Youth Assembly

Level (local/regional/national)

National

Type of Initiative

Rural Youth Forum/Assembly



Brief description

In November 2021, Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman TD, convened Ireland’s first ever Rural Youth Assembly, which took place online. The Assembly gathered young people living in rural areas, aged between 12-18 years old, to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing those

growing up in Rural Ireland. To plan for the Rural Youth Assembly, a group of 8 Comhairle members were recruited for a Youth Advisory Committee to feed into the planning process, and to pilot the methodology that was used on the day. The young people involved in this group are from rurally isolated places, or from small to medium sized towns, as this issue particularly relevant to them.

Who does/did it involve?

Government Ministers, 35 young people participated from the following Comhairlí and youth organisations: Blarney Girl Guides, Boherbue Girl Guides, CDYS (Cloyne Diocesan Youth Service), Cork County Comhairle, Fis na hÓige Theatre Group, Kerry, Foróige, Galway County Comhairle, Junior Chamber, KDYS (Kerry Diocesan Youth Service, Kildare Comhairle, Kilkenny Comhairle, Leitrim Comhairle, Limerick Comhairle, Limerick Youth Service, Longford Comhairle, Ardee Hub, Louth, Mayo Comhairle, NYCI – National Youth Council of Ireland, Roscommon Comhairle, SpunOut, YMCA Cork and Youth Work Ireland (National Youth Action Group). Comhairle na NÓg

Age of young people involved if known

12-18 years of age





02

COMPENDIUM OF BEST PRACTICES IN SLOVENIA

Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative

6. PROGRAM MLADIM PRIJAZNA OBČINA Youth Friendly Municipality Programme

Level (local/regional/national)

National

Type of Initiative

Programme



Brief description

The Youth Friendly Municipality program is a program implemented by the Institute for Youth Policy in cooperation with the Community of Municipalities of Slovenia. The initiative aims to improve living conditions for young people in the local community by creating a local environment that is friendly, inclusive and supportive for young people and gives them more opportunities to develop, cooperate and realise their potential.

A key feature of the Youth Friendly Municipality program is its comprehensive approach to addressing the needs and challenges of young people. It is not a one-off initiative or individual measures but a sustainable program that includes long-term strategies and policies and the active involvement of young people in making decisions that affect their lives.

The program focuses on various areas that are important to young people, including education, employment, housing, mobility, political participation, health and information. It strives to establish appropriate infrastructural and institutional conditions that support young

people's development and create a safe, stimulating and friendly environment.

The Youth Friendly Municipality program differs from other similar projects primarily in its comprehensiveness, sustainable orientation and emphasis on the active involvement of young people. Instead of isolated measures, the Youth Friendly Municipality program focuses on systematically solving the problems of young people and creating the conditions for their comprehensive approach. The participation of young people in the formulation of policies, programs and projects ensures that they are truly adapted to young people, their needs and expectations.

Local communities that obtain the Youth Friendly Municipality certificate demonstrate their commitment to improving the quality of life of young people and the future of the entire community. The program promotes solidarity, integration and dialogue between generations, which leads to a more inclusive and successful society.

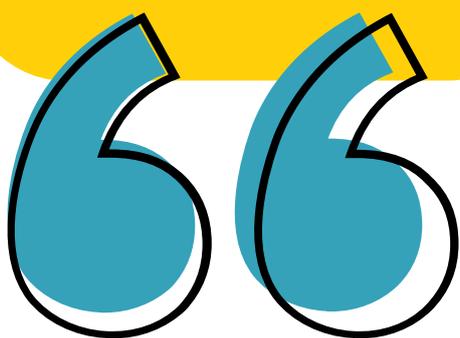
Who does/did it involve?

The Youth Friendly Municipality program is implemented by the Institute for Youth Policy in cooperation with the Community of Municipalities of Slovenia. The Youth Friendly Municipality certificate is awarded to those local communities that the expert commission finds successfully implement at least one measure from all priority areas of youth policies. The program is held under the honorary patronage of the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Nataša Pirc Musar.



Key Quotes/Insights:

Organisations that would like to organise a similar project elsewhere in the European countryside are advised to include young people in the process of planning and implementing the project to enable their active participation and co-creation of the project. They should also regularly communicate and promote the project through various channels and devote themselves to the project's sustainable development by implementing long-term solutions that will contribute to improving conditions for young people in rural areas. Organisations can contact us anytime, as we at the Institute for Youth Policy are very interested in participating in such initiatives.



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Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

Currently, 47 municipalities in Slovenia hold the Youth Friendly Municipality certificate. Its effects contribute to the better development of young people, improving their social and economic situation and creating a more inclusive and vibrant community. Effects include, for example:

- Improving the quality of life of young people in the local community.
- Greater involvement of young people in decision-making processes and the formulation of policies that concern them.
- Development and implementation of programs that support education, employment and career orientation of young people
- Creating better conditions for spending free time and developing young people's interests.
- Promoting the participation and active citizenship of young people.
- Increasing accessibility to services that are important for young people.
- Strengthening intergenerational cooperation and exchange of experiences between different generations.
- Promoting entrepreneurship and innovation among young people.
- Strengthening the belonging of young people to the local community and encouraging the active co-creation of a common space.
- Creating sustainable long-term solutions for the challenges faced by young people in the local community.

Links to more Information



Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative



Mladinski
center
Dravinjske
doline

7. MLADI ODLOČEVALCI

Young decision-makers

Level (local/regional/national)

Local

Type of Initiative

Project



Brief description

The project YOUNG DECISION-MAKERS, which was implemented by the Youth Center of the Dravinjska Dolina, supported young people in understanding the operation and work processes in local decision-making and, at the same time, actively participating in them. Through workshops and meetings where the functioning of the municipal administration and the

municipal council was simulated, the young people identified the problem and the solution they thought most needed. Young people voted on the best proposals with the help of youth workers. Based on their decisions, the municipality, municipal council and other bodies realised and transferred ideas into reality.

Who does/did it involve?

- Young people (14-20 years old)
- Youth workers (working for and with young people)
- Youth volunteers and youth leaders (support in the preparation of the workshops, simulations)
- Local decision-makers (mayor, municipal councillors, employees,

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

Young participants were introduced to the working and political system of democratic participation and engagement on the local level. By simulating and implementing initiatives, young people become more aware of their role and responsibility in society and develop critical thinking and the ability to participate actively.

They learned how to implement their own ideas and suggestions and actively contribute to the local environment, strengthening communication skills and teamwork. Due to the increased understanding of the importance of participation and connecting with various stakeholders, some of the young participants who took part in the program also became politically active (membership in youth organisations, inclusion in the youth council, membership in youth political parties, even candidacy in local elections, etc.)

Age of young people involved

14-20 years of age



Key Quotes/Insights:

It is important to research and understand the specific needs and challenges of young people in the local community to establish a dialogue with young people, local decision-makers, other stakeholders, schools, NGOs, etc. The key to the successful implementation of the program is a partnership with local institutions and its adaptation to local circumstances. Young people should be adequately educated about the fundamental principles of democracy, local self-government, decision-making and active citizenship in an interactive and interesting way. Youth workers should provide them with support and mentoring. It is also crucial that young people are involved in the actual decision-making processes and the implementation of their initiative or of the project voted on in the simulation of the municipal council.

How is it transferrable to other areas?

The idea is easily transferable to other European rural areas, representing a perfect project focusing on young people's participation and engagement in democratic decision-making.

Links to more Information

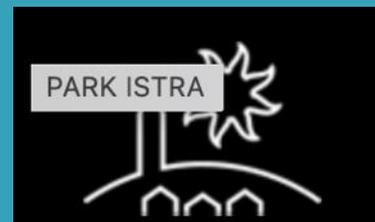


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Name of Youth Focused Rural Development Initiative



8. PARK ISTRRA

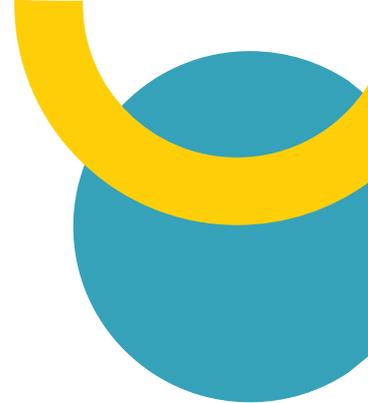
Level (local/regional/national)

Regional

Type of Initiative

Community Support Organisation





Brief description

Park Istra is a charitable organisation operating in Slovenia's Coastal-Karst region. Through volunteer work, they respond to the needs of the local environment, spreading the values of solidarity and active citizenship among the local population and volunteers. Together with volunteers worldwide, they help people in need, educate and help non-governmental organisations to take care of natural and cultural heritage.

They run a volunteer centre in the village of Kastelec, which is one of the few such centres in Europe. It can host fifteen (young) volunteers at any given time and responds to the needs and challenges of the local environment on a daily basis. In most cases, Park Istra does not have its own projects, but supports other projects and organisations such as centres for social work, protected areas, animal shelters, a wide variety of charities, as well as local farmers and individuals with good ideas, etc.

Who does/did it involve?

In the past ten years, Park Istra has hosted 1,300 volunteers from 56 countries, who have completed over 3,000 volunteer campaigns in the region.

Age of young people involved if known

Mostly hosting young people between the ages of 18 and 30, but sometimes much older people as well. The youngest volunteers in the centre were 14 years old, and the oldest was over 70.



Key Quotes/Insights:

Such projects are needed in every region. The countryside, especially remote, struggles with a poor demographic picture. There are many individuals who cannot care for themselves due to age and other problems. Even small farmers cannot do everything by themselves in the peak season. Less populated areas are struggling with the decline of natural and cultural heritage. Active individuals with green ideas who can help revitalise the countryside need support. So many hands are needed, and volunteers' help can be invaluable if well-coordinated. Over the years, the European Solidarity Corps program has supported our work and the work of many other organisations in volunteer work. It thus represents the potential for partial financing of such projects. Abandoned or unused infrastructure in the countryside represents the potential for the establishment of a volunteer centre. And Park Istra, we can support new ideas with advice and hardworking hands.



Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

The support for sustainable initiatives contributes to the sustainable development of the Coastal Karst region, improves the quality of life of local communities, protects the natural and cultural heritage and contributes to a more solidary and just society that takes care of people who find themselves on the margins of society.

The flexibility of the organisation's work and connection with the local environment and its various stakeholders contribute to a quick response to the challenges the local environment faces.

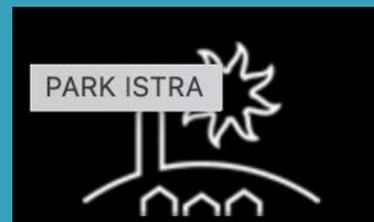
Links to more Information



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Name of Youth Focused Rural Development Initiative



9. VIVO.19

Level (local/regional/national)

International

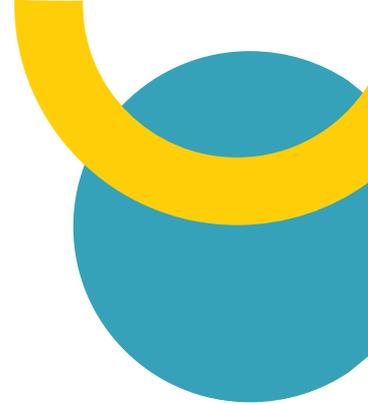
Country

Slovenia, Croatia,
Austria, Italy

Type of Initiative

Erasmus+ project KA1 in the
field of youth





Brief description

Four volunteer rural firefighter organisations from Slovenia, Austria, Italy and Croatia carried out a project to strengthen the capacity of young firefighters and the management volunteer staff of the organisation.

Through two activities, the mobility of youth workers and the youth exchange, the participants exchanged good practices of organisations through various methods of informal learning and activities, strengthened managerial and mentoring competencies, created a handbook *Vivo & Me* for a better implementation of the youth exchange and jointly produced the didactic game ČMRLJ.

Who does/did it involve?

Young firefighters from 4 different areas in Slovenia, Croatia, Austria and Italy; youth workers (firefighters)

Age of young people involved if known

13 – 17 years -> 12

18 – 25 years -> 12

26 – 30 years -> 3

Number of women: 18

Number of men: 19



Key Quotes/Insights:

Although there was much work, the project was very great! The key was good preparation and focusing on motivating young people to engage and contribute to actual activities. Young participants realised that this experience helped them in their further work (good self-esteem, empowerment). We emphasised the local area and individuals (“ordinary people”) who shared their experiences.



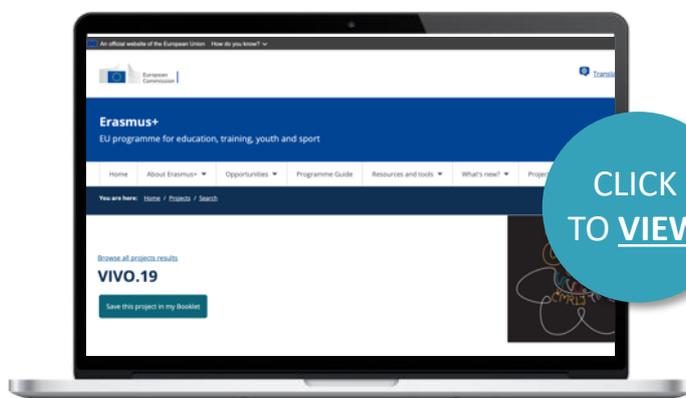
Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

Firework associations form an essential part of the identity in rural areas, not only in Slovenia but also in all other participating organisations. The project VIVO.19 is an important example of combining traditional rural approaches with modern youth work methods. By combining youth exchange and mobility of youth workers, the project strengthened the capacity of youth workers (firefighters) and engaged young people in a creative and youth-friendly way.

How is it transferrable to other areas?

As the project VIVO.19 has been funded by the Erasmus+ Grant, it can be easily transferred to other European rural areas.

Links to More Information



Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative



DOBRA POT

zavod za kulturo in sonaravno delovanje

10. ZAVOD DOBRA POT

Dobra pot Institute

Level (local/regional/national)

Regional

Type of Initiative

Community Support Organisation



Brief description

The Dobra Pot Institute is a cultural and sustainable action institute from Brkini, Slovenia, founded in 2015 with the desire to protect and preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the local environment in a fresh and innovative way. The institute organises trainings, workshops, guided tours and other activities for the general public and develops programmes for rural youth.

Through its activities, it aims to address the current social challenges of the rural environment and respond to the needs of the Karst-Brkini region and the wider Slovenian area.

In terms of Rural Youth, the institute develops specific programs and initiatives tailored to the needs and interests of young people living in rural areas or interested in rural areas.

These programs include skill-building activities, educational workshops, or opportunities for creative expression, all related to heritage sites,

crafts, services and events.

It sees heritage as an extraordinary potential for a sustainable and sustainable way into the future, which is why it also focuses intensively on projects for the actualisation, popularisation and, in the modern era, the necessary digitisation of cultural heritage.



Who does/did it involve?

In the last years, the work of the Institute has been focused on bridging the gap between heritage and the digital world, thus finding ways to reinvent a place for heritage in our modern lifestyles.

The activities of the Dobra Pot Institute involve a diverse range of target groups, most of them coming from rural environments:

- **Elderly people:** working with local elderly and striving to empower them, as they are the bearers of memory, of the oral tradition
- **Local craftsmen:** they collaborate with local masters in various ways: they support them with digital promotion and marketing in order to boost their sales, enable 3D scanning of

handicraft products, provide training and advice, collaborate in the organisation of events, provide documentary-promotional scenarios for video content etc.

Age of young people involved

10-30 years of age

In terms of popular projects, the Institute has in 2021, created an online and mobile heritage app “Zapisi spomina” (in English: Writings of Memory) for collecting and sharing oral tradition - life memories from elderly.



Key Quotes/Insights:

Every rural area is unique, so it's crucial to tailor the project to the specific context, needs, and resources available in that particular community. By taking a community-centred approach, embracing technology, and fostering partnerships, organisations can create successful projects that preserve and promote rural heritage in Europe. When you work in the local area, you should understand the local context, engage the community, collaborate with local institutions and experts, leverage digital technologies and empower the local community.

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

The organisation has made much impact in the preservation of intangible heritage, especially through the app Zapisi spomina. By providing a platform for elderly individuals to share their life memories, the app has helped capture and preserve personal stories that would otherwise be forgotten.

The institute's focus on bridging the gap between heritage and the digital world has resulted in the successful development of several digital projects, showcasing local rural heritages for instance, with documentary movies featuring locals or empowering heritage-lovers through online heritage courses

Through various activities, including trainings, workshops, hikes, and programs for rural youth, the institute promotes active community participation. By involving the general public, rural youth, and elderly individuals, the institute fosters a sense of ownership and pride in the local natural and cultural heritage. This active engagement strengthens the connection between community members and their heritage, fostering a greater appreciation and commitment to its preservation. Their projects also connect the old and the new, the elderly and the youngsters, and the past and the future, overcoming intergenerational and digital division.

Links to More Information





03

COMPENDIUM OF BEST PRACTICES IN MALTA

Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative

11. YEAH YOUTH HUB

Level (local/regional/national)

National

Type of Initiative

Youth Engagement



Brief description

Friends of the Earth Malta are conducting a project focused on building a platform for marginalised youth engagement in social and ecological transformations. The idea is to create a youth hub for non-formal education where youths can innovate and create their own ideas on community activities seeking social and environmental welfare. This youth hub can also function as a leisure centre where youth can contribute towards building a sustainable future. YEAH Youth Hub is a non-formal educational place within a formal education set-up. It offers a

recreational environment through which the youth worker can work with young people so that they can come up with projects and initiatives that enhance their potential.

The youth hub will also engage in various community activities to ensure as much contact as possible with the young people and the community.

The project received a grant under the Active Citizens Fund from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, through the EEA Grants.

Who does/did it involve?

Youth workers and marginalised youth

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

This project empowers youths by promoting their active participation in creating ideas towards sustainable development. It promotes innovation and community engagement.

Age of young people involved

16-25 years of age

How is it transferrable to other areas?

A Youth Hub can be viewed as a microcosm of society. The young people involved created their own agenda, a democratic structure, shape the space to be inclusive, tackle injustices, intersectional issues within the group and is in itself an experiment in radical democracy. Creating a youth hub, a space where young people meet and engage, can also serve as an incubator for developing visions for a positive future without current societal boundaries, oppressions and limitations, and create a vision for the future that transcends them. This project does not specifically focus on rural development but can easily be adapted to tackle issues related to rural areas and involve marginalised youths.

Link to more Information



CLICK TO VIEW



Name of Youth Focused Rural
development Initiative

12. NASPLY

Nature and Social Permaculture Learning for Youth

Level (local/regional/national)

National

Type of Initiative

Community Support



Brief description

The Friends of the Earth Malta are conducting a project that aims to increase resilience in communities, particularly focusing on youths facing conditions of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.

Through NASPLY marginalized youths can gain important life-skills and improve their wellbeing by engaging in permaculture. These training addresses youth's needs and focuses on resilience building for communities.

The NASPLY project envisions social and nature permaculture as a learning opportunity where youths can learn about designing permaculture practices that generate resilience in communities and foster strong social ecosystems that are environmentally responsible.

Throughout the course the students learn digital skills, financial planning, environmentally responsible entrepreneurship. By encouraging care and solidarity, youths get a chance to feel socially included and learn important skills in permaculture.

Who does/did it involve?

Youth

Key Quotes/Insights:

"In the EU in 2020, 25% of young people between the age of 15-29 were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat, 2022). 9% of these young people live in households with very low work intensity. 16.4 % of the 20-34 year-olds in the EU in 2019 were NEETs. In many cases, social exclusion and marginalisation are intersectional where cohorts of young people would experience heightened discrimination or lack of opportunities due to their gender, ethnicity, disabilities, intellectual ability or due to their socio-economic background. Such people feel less catered for in formal education systems, which could lead to young people being disengaged and disinterested in education.

In Malta, the number of early school leavers is amongst the highest in Europe, standing at 16.7% in 2019 (Eurostat, 2020)."

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

It is a holistic project that aims to address important social issues affecting youths but at the same time promote socially and environmentally sustainable agricultural practices. It involves generating a curriculum and educational training materials for youths with a holistic vision on the importance of permaculture to address social and environmental resilience in communities. It's focused on youths that are facing social and economic exclusion, as well as discrimination is a particularly important point of the project as it uses training in permaculture to generate social inclusion, foster cooperation and solidarity.

How is it transferrable to other areas?

It is possible to design similar courses aimed at training youth in conditions of social exclusion and poverty. This project links youths and rural development initiatives through a training course and that is possible to replicate by encouraging similar social and environmental agricultural practices.

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TO VIEW



Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative

13. BE ACTIVE AND BE SUSTAINABLE

Level (local/regional/national)

National

Type of Initiative

Youth Engagement



Brief description

Friends of the earth Malta have created 6 sessions for youth engagement that address several environmental issues that are significant to the Maltese context. The six programmes are: Be active be ecological- which deals with identification and surveillance of bat species, learning to identify the commuting and foraging patterns of bats. The second session is called be active be waves of change- which deals with waste in Maltese waters, the session encourages young people to participate in beach cleaning. The third session is called be active be seasonal cooks- which encourages sustainable food

choices based on seasonality. The fourth session is called be active become a beekeeper- where youth can learn about bee-keeping and the importance of beehives for the ecosystem. The fifth session be active be plastic creative-encourages youth to raise awareness of the threat plastic poses to marine ecosystems and to engage in creative ways to spread the word. Finally, be active be zero waste teaches students to make their own deodorant, lip balms and cosmetics as a way to reduce the use of microplastics present in these products.

Age of young people involved

Under **25**



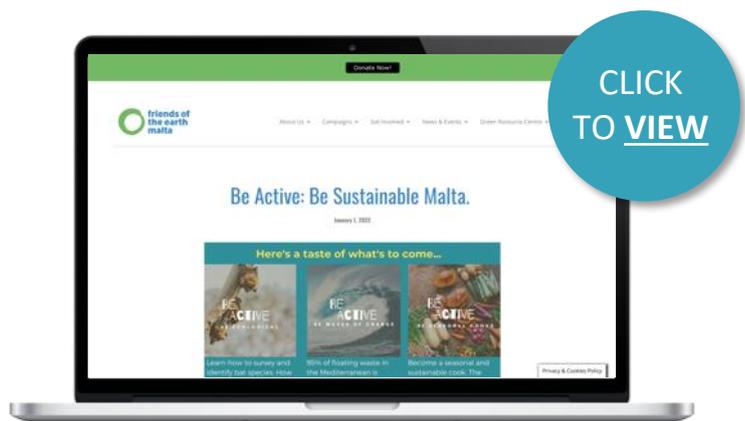
How is it transferrable to other areas?

Courses similar to these one can be important in spreading important key issues in rural development to youth in other regions.

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

These sessions encourage youth activism and teach students valuable lessons on important environmental topics. Moreover, it engages youth creativity and brings people together to learn and take action. It is a good way to train youths while also helping them become active participants in making Malta more sustainable.

Links to more Information





04

COMPENDIUM OF BEST PRACTICES IN SPAIN

Name of Youth Focused Rural Development Initiative

AcTúa

14. ACTÚA

Level (local/regional/national)

Local

Type of Initiative

Non-Profit



Brief description

Actua is an organization whose main objective is environmental awareness through activities at festivals and socio-cultural events. They do not have any employees on their team so collaborate with about 10 volunteers.

Currently they are working on elaborate green mobility plans for Tiétar Valley including a bike road that crosses the valley from east to west.

Actua promote climate awareness through different means:

Reforestation activities

- Conferences and talks on environmental issues
- Exhibitions
- Proximity consumer groups
- Theater and puppets on sustainability
- Cooperative field work
- Seed exchange
- Grazing practices
- Promotion of sustainable tourism
- Collaborations with other Associations and Groups
- Promotion of the formation of Energy Communities

Who does/did it involve?

Actua collaborate together with municipalities and other organizations in the area. Last year they created a theatre group where people from all ages can join and raise awareness about different realities and issues in our environment and social contexts.

Age of young people involved

At the theater, kids, teens and young adults collaborate actively .

How is it transferrable to other areas?

Activism to fight environmental rights are always transferable to other areas and to show other that this kind of initiatives are possible. The projects and methods that Actua have created can be applied to other organizations wishing to embark on a similar journey in their own country.

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

All projects that are planned to be implemented are ones that they are already doing, creating a great impact on rural areas and an even biggest impact on youth. Thanks to Actua, they can observe the world around and fight for a better world in a peaceful way.

Link to more Information

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Name of Youth Focused Rural Development Initiative



15. ADISVATI

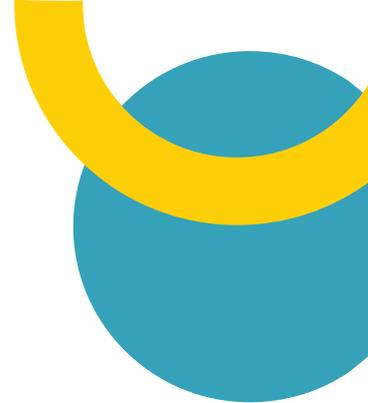
Level (local/regional/national)

Local

Type of Initiative

Non-Profit





Brief description

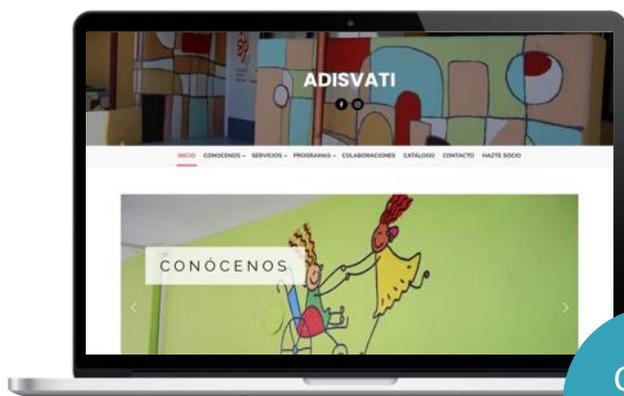
ADISVATI's mission consists of improving the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families, understanding quality of life as having a "quality life", improving as far as possible, cultural contexts, the system of values in which we live and trying to achieve new expectations and concerns.

As a result, for the purposes of the mission, ADISVATI understands mental disability as a dynamic and active concept that goes beyond the different abilities of people, the supports they need to share, enjoy and interact with the environment in equal opportunities. with the rest of the citizens.

ADISVATI intends to provide a quality service in the Valle del Tiétar region, to defend the rights of people with disabilities and their families. Therefore, there is a need for:

- Promote the autonomy and self-determination of people with different abilities.
- Support and attend to educational, physical, psychosocial and emotional needs
- Provide a permanent support service to people with disabilities and their families.

Link to more information



Age of young people involved

16+ years of age

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

ADISVATI is one of few organisations that promotes autonomy of people with mental disabilities by offering tutored housing. It is reassuring for families to have the option and to know that after they are gone, their children will be able to take care of themselves with the support of the community.

It is still very normal to assume that the care of a person with mental challenges is mainly responsibility of the family. There are Day Care Centres that offer activities for people with mental disabilities that provide care and supports to stimulate their capacities and abilities. Some offer jobs adapted for this target group.

Yet, many beneficiaries continue living with their parents until it is just not possible anymore. Then the big question arises: who takes care of them in a meaningful way for themselves and for the society?

Tutored housing is not possible for everybody, but it is an option for many. It gives a sense of dignity to the beneficiaries and at the same time a feeling of peace for their families seeing their children integrated and with future options.

How is it transferrable to other areas?

There are other similar initiatives across Spain. Nevertheless, there is a need of financial support from local authorities and the private sector.

Who does/did it involve?

Directly: Families resident in the Tiétar Valley which have members who have a mental handicap.

Indirect: the Tiétar Valley citizens raising awareness about mental health and the integration of those who suffer it in the society.

Financially supported by:

AUTHORITIES:

- Junta de Castilla y León
- Gerencia de Servicios Sociales de Castilla y León
- Ayuntamiento de Candeleda
- Diputación provincial de Ávila

MOVEMENTS AND FEDERATIONS:

- Plena Inclusión Castilla y León

FUNDATIONS:

- Fundación Ávila
- Fundación Gmp
Obra Social «la Caixa»
- Pronisa
- Asprodes

BANKS:

- Bankia
- MEDIOS DE COMUNICACIÓN:
- Diario de Ávila Tribuna de Ávila

ASOCIACIONES:

- Asociación Cultural Pedro Vaquero
- Asociación Cultural Candjoven
- Coral Polifónica de Candeleda
- Peña cultural Flamenca Amigos del Cante
- Club de Tenis Candeleda

ENTERPRISES:

- Hotel Nabia
- Restaurante Casa Pepe
- Casa Rural Vergel de Chilla
- Escuela de Equitación «El Carmen»
- Estación de Servicio Sánchez Campos S.L.
- Estación de Servicio Angora S.L.
- Materiales de Construcción Muñoz & Miranda
- Distribuciones Braulio Rodríguez Panadería
- Carabias
- La Exposición
- AMG Clases de Padel
- Extintores Arte S.L.

Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative



16. AJS

Asociación Jóvenes Solidarios

Level (local/regional/national)

Local

Type of Initiative

Non-Profit



Brief description

AJS is a non-profit association that aims to develop open-minded, tolerant and active attitudes, fosters dialogue and critical thinking among young people when facing socio-political issues. AJS' goals are reached through educational projects with young people with emphasis on teenagers and NEETs, educators in general especially with youth workers and teachers and other stakeholders such as political representatives and private sector agents..

The specific objectives of AJS are:

1. Promote citizen participation among young adolescents and young adults;
2. Develop a conscious and critical attitude with socio - political issues.
3. Develop transversal skills and aptitudes to encourage young people's initiative and entrepreneurship;
4. Promote youth initiative.
5. Contribute to the development of didactic tools related to entrepreneurship and employability, among others.
6. Promote the education of future entrepreneurs.
7. Contribute to the quality of projects related to entrepreneurship by sharing good practices and experiences from previous projects with other organizations.



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 Asociación Jóvenes Solidarios

 ajs.spain

Who does/did it involve?

Size of the organisation:

- Coordination team (paid staff): 4
- Unpaid staff: 4
- Beneficiaries: 600/year:
- Children between 3 and 11 years old
- Teenagers between 12 and 19 years old
- Young adults

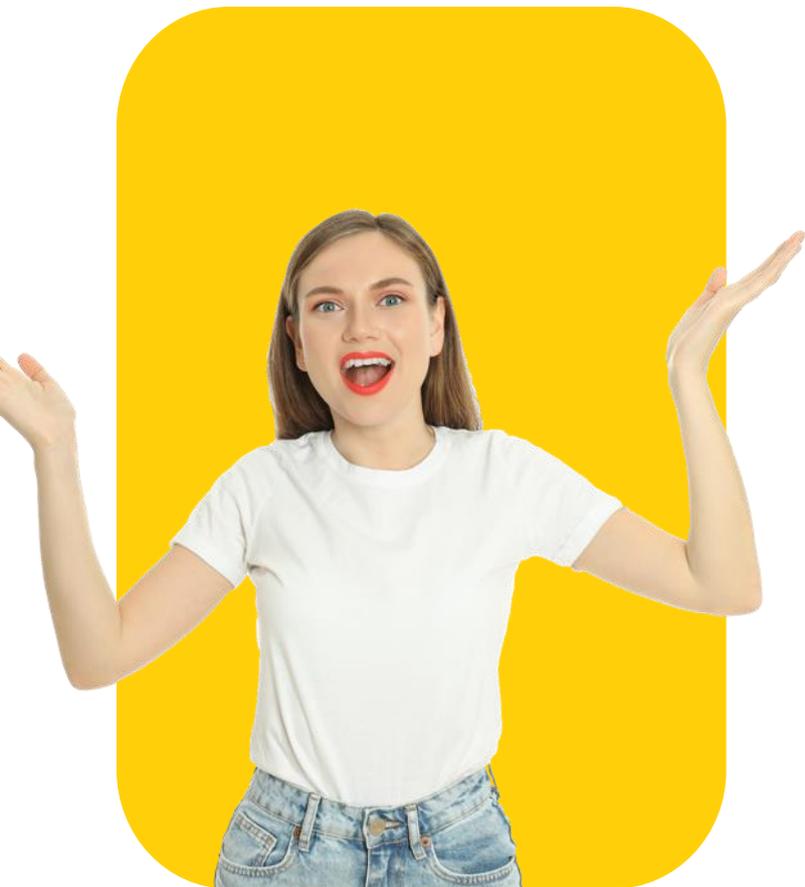
80% comes from Arenas de San Pedro and the rest from nearby villages, such as Candeleda, Sta Cruz del Valle, Lanzahita, Ramacastañas, La Parra, Guisando, Hornillo, El Arenal y San Esteban del Valle.

Some projects involve local VET and Secondary Education Centers: IES Valle del Tiétar, CIFP, Colegio Divina Pastora, IES Candevera, IES Sierra del Valle.

Age of young people involved if known

The main target group are children between 7 and 12 and young people between 13 and 20 years, although the majority (90%) is under 18. AJS focusses on youth from rural areas of the Tiétar Valley region in central Spain.

AJS' activities take place in several municipalities of the Tiétar Valley, running JUNIOR, JOVEN and LEADER youth groups and trainings on local level for Young Entrepreneurs in which they offer a personalized training and accompaniment during the creation process of an entrepreneurial idea.



Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

It is the only non-profit in the region that offers activities to young teenagers that go beyond the traditional ones, such as football, music school, dancing or painting. It's also the only organisation that works in a context of European-funded projects by using the non-formal education methodology to promote European values, active citizenship and entrepreneurial and independent mind-set.

How is it transferrable to other areas?

Very much transferable. All that is needed is motivation and local support. The last one is the most difficult part as the local authorities tend to be led by autochthonous people that put their priorities on traditional activities.

In the Tiétar Valley, there are conversations about de-population (all of the municipalities are losing population) but there is not enough being done from the political side to get out of the box and try some new approaches.

Links to More Information



Name of Youth Focused Rural
Development Initiative



17. ARENAS ARCOIRIS

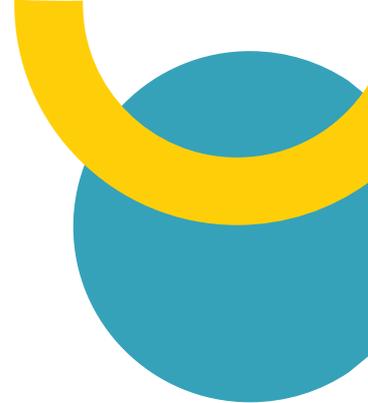
Level (local/regional/national)

Local

Type of Initiative

Activism





Brief description

ARENAS ARCOIRIS is an activism movement for the rights of LGBTI+ community in the Tiétar Valley region. They organise the Pride Day and other time set activities that create awareness about the topic and promote solidarity, understanding and LGBTI+ community rights.

Who does/did it involve?

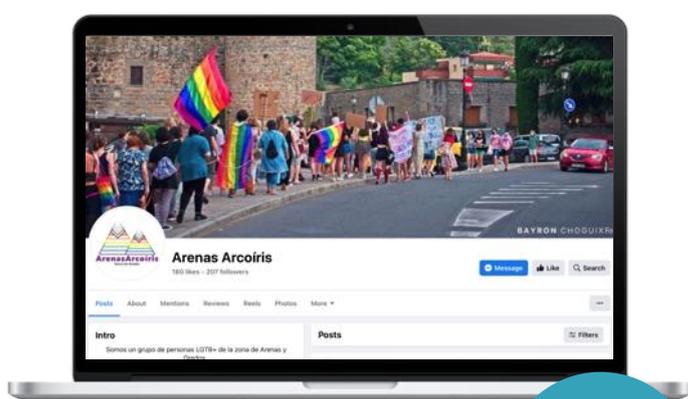
Local people including young and older people that recognise their sexual and gender orientation beyond the heterosexual.

Age of young people involved

All ages,
but mainly between

15-40 years of age

Link to more Information



 [arenasarcoiris](#)

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Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

It is the only movement (not established as any organisation/entity) that makes the LGBTI+ community visible in the region and brings the topic directly to people, by going on to the street and organising events that invite everybody independent their sexual and gender orientation/identity.

It is a female led movement by German, Mexican and Spanish young women.

How is it transferrable to other areas?

Very transferrable to other regions.



Name of Youth Focused Rural Development Initiative



CONFEDERACIÓN ABULENSE DE EMPRESARIOS

18. CONFAE

Level (local/regional/national)

Regional

Type of Initiative

Confederation of business



Brief description

CONFAE is the confederation of business of the Ávila region which is connected with public services, but its operation depends on the membership fees of the associated companies for which it offers several services

Who does/did it involve?

Size of the organisation:

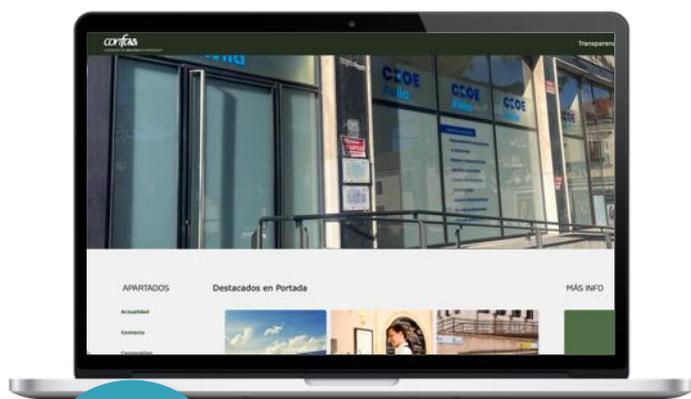
- Employees: +20

Beneficiaries:

- They support more than 100 companies in the region that work on teams according to the topic.

One of the most important services is the entrepreneur's office where they support young people and new businesses in the region.

Link to more Information



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Age of young people involved

Mostly young entrepreneurs who are members of the confederation. They also organise conferences in High schools to motivate teens to become active in the business world.

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

CONFAE have been working in the Ávila region for many years already and they understand the complexities of bureaucracy. Due to this understanding, they are excellent at supporting and guiding the people who use the confederation.

How is it transferrable to other areas?

What makes CONFAE special is the duality of working with different targets of entrepreneurs from different rural areas and a big city where each one is totally different to each other. By combing both it creates a fantastic understanding between the two backgrounds of people, highlighting what is beneficial and what can be applied to other areas.

Name of Youth Focused Rural Development Initiative



19. GRUPO GREDOS

Level (local/regional/national)

Local

Type of Initiative

Non-profit



Brief description

Mountaineering and climbing association that values the mountains of Gredos and how through mountain sports you can find a balance between physical and mental health.

Who does/did it involve?

They are around 10 people in the core team and more than 300 members who pay yearly for many services including a storycal library about climb, routes and mountains, a mountain refuge and climbing wall.



Age of young people involved

Mostly people up to 30 but there is a group of 20 people between 18 to 30 and some of them involve all the family.

Why is it best practice? What impact is it going to make?

They started in 1969 so they have a lot of experience in the valley so they can understand the lifestyle and real needs of the area really well. Of course, the intergenerational connection with nature is also very innovative.

How is it transferrable to other areas?

The way they collect info and how they understand the mountains is highly valuable and rich to transfer and share as powerful knowledge.

Link to more Information





05

COMPENDIUM OF BEST PRACTICE IN DENMARK

Name of Youth Focused Rural development Initiative

20. R-YOU-CULT

Level (local/regional/national)

The R-YOU-CULT project is a national-level research initiative that is focused on the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in rural areas of Denmark.

Type of Initiative

The R-YOU-CULT project is a research initiative that aims to investigate the potential for the CCIs to promote economic and social development in rural areas of Denmark, with a particular focus on the role of young people in driving innovation and entrepreneurship in these industries.



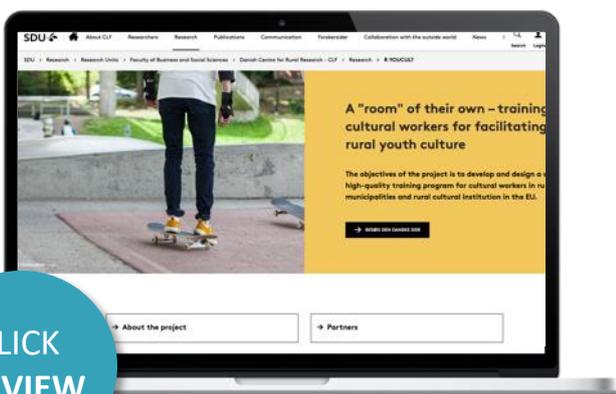
Brief description

The R-YOU-CULT project is a research project that is being carried out by researchers at the University of Southern Denmark, with funding from the Danish Council for Independent Research. The project aims to investigate the potential for the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) to drive economic and social development in rural areas of Denmark, with a focus on the role of young people in these industries. The project consists of several sub-projects, including a survey of young people's attitudes towards the CCIs in rural areas, case studies of successful CCIs in rural areas, and an analysis of the policy framework surrounding the CCIs in Denmark. The project is expected to generate new knowledge and insights into the potential for the CCIs to contribute to the creation of sustainable and vibrant communities in rural areas of Denmark.

Who does/did it involve?

The R-YOU-CULT project involves researchers from the University of Southern Denmark, with funding from the Danish Council for Independent Research. The project also involves collaboration with stakeholders from the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in rural areas of Denmark, including entrepreneurs, policymakers, and community leaders. In addition, the project includes a survey of young people's attitudes towards the CCIs in rural areas, so it may involve young people living in rural areas of Denmark as well.

Links to More Information



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Key Quotes/Insights:

Young people in rural areas face a 'double disadvantage' compared to their urban counterparts: they have limited access to resources and opportunities, and they also face negative stereotypes and stigmatization that can undermine their confidence and motivation





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