

Toolkit: Crafting Europe's Rural Tomorrow, It Starts  
with You!

Bite sized learning 1.3: Active Citizenship for Youth



# Youth Stories: Vignettes of young Europeans making a change

In this final bite-sized learning section of active youth citizenship, we have been learning about what is crucial for a democratic, vibrant, and sustainable future for our rural communities.

**But who are the young people who are making a change as active citizens?  
Let's meet 3...**

**Venture Out Wilderness is based in Galway and is a registered charity and social enterprise, not-for-profit, limited company** They prescribe and deliver outdoor, nature based therapeutic programmes to people experiencing a range of diverse challenges in their lives. [Click link on play icon to find out more](#) from Barry Dillon.



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*My co-founder Nick and I met for the first time in 2015 on a Master's Course at NUIG. We quickly identified that we had the same vision and grá (Irish word for love) for the outdoors. We conceived the Venture Out social enterprise by coming together with the shared understanding that Ireland has not reached the same heights as other countries with regard to the potential of Outdoor Developmental Work.*

*We are a group of social workers who want to provide experiential learning and personal development through the outdoors. We saw a need to combine outdoor, nature-based programmes with people within marginalised and disadvantaged communities to promote their health and well-being.*

*Our users could be a forest school group with early years, a teenage urban adventure club, or an extended wilderness-based personal development expedition. Whatever the need is for that specific group or individual, we knew we needed to develop a bespoke programme to suit their requirements. We knew we needed to develop something that was needs-led and needs-driven. We like to think of ourselves as occupying the space between social care and the outdoors!*



# Benjamin Hennig from Rural Germany - Community Mapping

**Background:** Benjamin Hennig, a geographer from a rural part of Germany, developed innovative mapping techniques to address social and environmental issues.

**Impact:** His work includes creating detailed maps that highlight areas of need and opportunities for community development.

**How:** Benjamin's maps have been used to inform local policy decisions and community planning efforts.

**Link:** [Worldmapper - Benjamin Hennig](#)

Click link on play icon to find out more



# James – Jimbo's Accessible Adventures

James Casserly has been a wheelchair user from a young age. He's made it his mission to travel around Ireland, using public transport, and pointing out issues that wheelchair users face.

He does this on his social media channels:

[X](#) and [Instagram](#)



## James was featured on [Always Brighter Stories on Dublin.ie](https://www.dublin.ie)

*Always Brighter Stories celebrates people doing kind, inclusive work in their communities across Dublin.*



# Blezzing Dada

Blezzing is an award-winning writer and SeeChange - Mental Health Ambassador.

Born and raised in Dublin, Blezzing is Black-Irish and a passionate advocate for mental health awareness and inclusion.



*"People from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds require considerable mental health literacy and practical support to raise awareness of mental health conditions, combat stigma and close the gap of being excluded from these conversations. There is a need for improving information about services and access pathways. Black individuals are less frequently included in research, which means their experiences with symptoms or treatments are less likely to be taken into consideration.*

*A more inclusive knowledge base that includes the voices and studies of Black people in the field of psychology (and other related areas) is necessary.*

*Inclusive education surrounding mental illness and normalizing mental health problems may help individuals recognize that treatment for a mental health problem doesn't have to be any more shameful than treatment for a physical health problem. We all have mental health, and we all need to emphasize commitment to inclusion and social equity."*

**An excerpt from *Understanding Exclusion* by Blezzing Dada, on [SeeChange](#).**





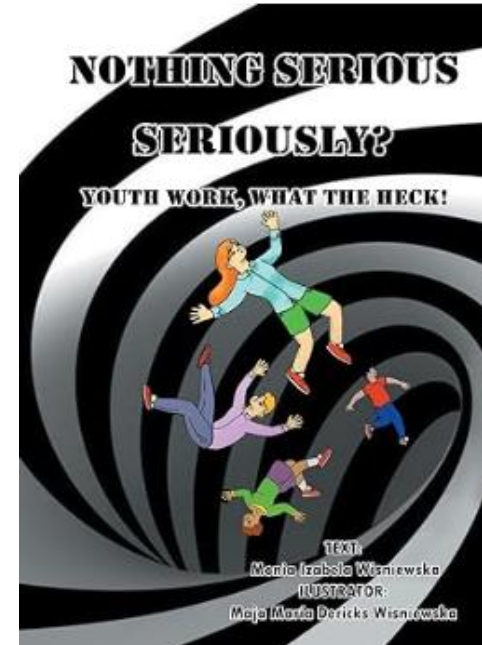
# Maja Maria Dericks Wisniewska From Rural Spain

Maja is a 16 years old student who has been an AJS member since she was 8 years old. Together with her friends they have created the JUNIOR group as a complement to the YOUTH group.

When she was 14, together with her mum and coordinator of the AJS non-profit, she has published the “Nothing serious, seriously?! Youth work – what the heck?”

The comic explains what youth work is about and above all it illustrates in a humoristic way anecdotes from youth work and the challenges faced by youth organisations in Spain.

Link: [Nothing Serious, Seriously?: Youth Work- What the Heck!](#)



# Jovenes Dinamizadores Rurales- From Spain

JDR is committed to the permanence of rural areas in Aragón, based on the most scarce, but also most powerful resource our villages have: young people.

They offer sustainable tools and structures for young people in rural areas to develop personal, social, and professional initiatives.

A JDR initiative was their RETORNO DE TALENTO (Talent Return). They asked the questions “What would happen if rural businesses had young people who are prepared, creative, innovative, and capable of developing new business strategies?” Here, the main players are not only the young people; we all have to get involved.

Link: [Jovenes Dinamizadores Rurales](#)

Click link on play icon to find out more





**Thank you**  
Any Questions?