

# Building Vibrant Rural Communities



3 areas that youth  
can make a difference  
1. Health and wellbeing



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# Overview

## Together, we thrive!

This bite size module puts the spotlight on three areas that youth can bring unique perspectives and solutions to.

1. Health and wellbeing
2. Cultural and community identity
3. Digital futures

**Let's dive into Health and Wellbeing..**



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# 01

## Health and Wellbeing



Youth have a unique perspective on health and well-being that can lead to innovative solutions and a more inclusive approach to addressing these critical issues.

It is so important that youth voices are heard in the area of health and wellbeing of our rural people and place, explore key areas where young people can make a difference, and provide actionable steps to harness their potential.

Let's look at the key areas...



# 1. Mental Health

## Understanding Youth Mental Health in Rural Areas

- Young people in rural areas often experience isolation due to geographic distances and a lack of social opportunities, leading to feelings of loneliness and increased anxiety.
- Limited access to educational courses e.g. specialist areas and extracurricular activities can create additional stress
- Concerns about limited job prospects and economic instability in rural areas can cause significant anxiety for young people.
- Mental health issues are often stigmatised in rural communities, leading to underreporting and a lack of awareness about depression.
- There are often fewer mental health professionals and facilities in rural areas, making it difficult for young people to seek help.
- Economic hardship, family stress, and social isolation can contribute to higher rates of depression among rural youth.

**What can you as a young person do to tackle these challenges?**



# Ideas for young people

## 1. Set up a Peer Support Network

- Establish a peer-led support group where young people can share their experiences, offer mutual support, and provide a safe space for discussing mental health issues.

### Action Steps:

- Train peer leaders in basic counselling and mental health first aid.
- Use social media platforms to create private groups for continuous support.
- Organize regular in-person or virtual meet-ups to maintain engagement. Utilise local community centres or coffees shops to host these meet- ups and ensure they are accessible to all.
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# Ideas for young people

## 2. Run Mental Health Awareness Community Events

Launch a campaign to raise awareness about mental health issues, reduce stigma, and encourage help-seeking behaviour.

### Action Steps:

- Organise an event where mental health organisations can gather in the community to provide information, conduct screenings, and offer resources. Include interactive activities and guest speakers/storytelling to share personal experiences and success stories.
- Host events like art exhibitions, poetry readings, and music concerts focused on mental health themes. Use these platforms to spark conversations and break down stigma.
- Plan a group walk or run that raises awareness about mental health. Walk and talk is a great opportunity to discuss mental health openly
- Helplines and Crisis Numbers: Ensure that all campaign materials prominently feature local and national helplines and crisis numbers.



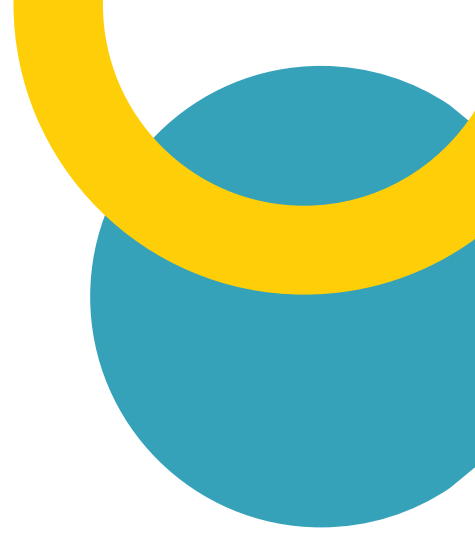
# Ideas for young people

## 2. Mindfulness and Wellness Club

Start a club that focuses on teaching young people mindfulness, meditation, and wellness practices.

### **Action Steps:**

- Host weekly sessions e.g. Mental Health Pop-Ups on mindfulness and stress reduction techniques.
- Invite guests from within the community to lead workshops on yoga, meditation, and other wellness practices.
- Create a resource library with books, videos, and articles on mental health and wellness.





## 2. Importance of Physical Health for Rural Youth

Physical Activity is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle for rural youth, particularly for those who might face unique challenges and opportunities.

### Challenges:

- Rural areas often have fewer sports facilities, gyms, and recreational centres, leading to a more sedentary lifestyle.
- Lack of public transportation can make it difficult for youth to access available facilities.
- A limited youth population can make it challenging to find peers for physical activities.
- Extreme weather conditions can limit outdoor activities.

### Importance:

- Regular physical activities can foster a sense of community and belonging, which is vital for emotional and social development. It also helps in building lifelong healthy habits, reducing the risk of chronic diseases.
- Engaging in physical activities can prevent obesity, which is a growing concern for young people even in rural areas.

**What can you, as a young person, do to tackle these challenges?**



# Ideas for young people –

## a mix of practical and impactful steps

- Conduct a survey to understand what physical activities are popular among local youth.
- Plan weekly or monthly physical activities events. Make sure they reflect all abilities and interests.
- Partner with local school facilities or community centres to use their facilities.
- Advocate for and participate in the development and maintenance of safe parks, trails, and recreational areas.
- Create groups for activities like yoga, dance, or workout sessions.
- Organize fitness challenges or competitions, such as step counts or distance running.
- Host sessions with local fitness trainers or coaches who can offer professional guidance.



# 3. Nutrition and Healthy Eating

## Youth-Led Nutrition Initiatives

- Many rural areas are considered food deserts, where residents have limited access to affordable and nutritious food. Grocery stores can be far away, making it difficult to regularly purchase fresh produce.
- Lack of reliable transportation can make it challenging for rural dwellers to access grocery stores or farmers' markets.
- Economic hardship is more prevalent in some rural areas, limiting families' ability to purchase healthy foods regularly.
- Traditional diets in rural areas may not always align with modern nutritional guidelines, and changing these habits can be challenging.

**What can you as a young person do to tackle these challenges?**



# Ideas for young people – a mix of practical and impactful steps

As a young person in a rural area, you have the power to make a significant impact on your community's nutrition and health. **Some ideas....**

- Organise interactive workshops and cooking classes that teach about nutrition and healthy cooking techniques, specifically for young people. Host cooking classes that focus on affordable, nutritious meals using local ingredients, and incorporate cultural recipes to respect traditions.
- Feature local chefs and nutritionists, include hands-on cooking sessions, and offer take-home recipes and meal planning guides.
- Organise farm tours and meet the farmer events to create a direct connection between young consumers and producers.
- Identify unused land that can be donated , gather a group of enthusiastic peers, and seek guidance from local gardeners or agricultural support services to set up a growing project.
- Volunteer at and organise food drives for local food banks

**Impact:** Empower young participants to make healthier food choices while respecting cultural dietary preferences.





Thank you



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