

# VILLAGE INTERNATIONAL

A practical booklet for youth workers about setting up international projects in rural and geographically isolated areas

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SALTO-YOUTH  
INCLUSION  
RESOURCE CENTRE



Education and Culture

# VILLAGE INTERNATIONAL

This document does not necessarily reflect the official views of the European Commission or the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre or the organisations cooperating with them.



## SALTO-YOUTH STANDS FOR...

...‘Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the Youth in Action programme’. The European Commission has created a network of eight SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the European Youth in Action programme which provides young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

SALTO’s aim is to **support European Youth** in Action projects in priority areas such as European Citizenship, Cultural Diversity, Participation and Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, in regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe or Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, with Training and Cooperation activities and with Information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides **resources, information and training** for National Agencies and European youth workers. Several resources in the above areas are available at **www.SALTO-YOUTH.net**. Find online the European Training Calendar, the Toolbox for Training and Youth Work, Trainers Online for Youth, links to online resources and much more...

SALTO-YOUTH actively **co-operates** with other actors in European youth work such as the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers and training organisers.

## THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION RESOURCE CENTRE [WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/](http://WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/)

The SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre (in Belgium-Flanders) works together with the European Commission to **include young people with fewer opportunities** in the Youth in Action programme. SALTO-Inclusion also supports the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work by providing the following resources:

- training courses on inclusion topics and for specific target groups at risk of social exclusion
- training and youth work methods and tools to support inclusion projects
- practical and inspiring publications for international inclusion projects
- up-to-date information on inclusion issues and opportunities via the Inclusion Newsletter
- handy annotated links to inclusion resources online
- an overview of trainers and resource persons in the field of inclusion and youth
- bringing together stakeholders to make the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities more effective and easier

For more information and resources, have a look at the Inclusion pages at

 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/)

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# INTRO

## INTERNATIONAL RURAL YOUTH PROJECTS



## SALTO INCLUSION FOCUSES ON DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS

The SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre's mission is to stimulate the **Inclusion of ALL young people** within the European Commission's Youth in Action programme. Various types of young people are missing from international youth projects for a variety of reasons, for example geographical isolation.

The European Commission's **Inclusion Strategy** for the Youth in Action programme lists a number of obstacles that young people can face, which prevent them from taking part in international YiA projects. These can include:

- **Social obstacles:** discrimination, limited social skills, anti-social behaviour, (ex) -offenders, young single parents, broken homes, etc.
- **Economic obstacles:** low standard of living, low income, dependent on social welfare, long-term unemployed, homeless, in debt, etc.
- **Disability:** mental, physical, sensory or other.
- **Educational challenges:** learning difficulties, early school-leavers, school dropouts, no qualifications, different cultural/linguistic background, etc.
- **Cultural differences:** young immigrants, refugees, national or ethnic minorities, linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion problems, etc.
- **Health problems:** chronic health problems, severe illnesses, psychiatric conditions, mental health problems, etc.
- *And last but not least:*  
**Geographical obstacles:** remote, rural or hilly areas, small islands or peripheral regions, urban problem zones, less serviced areas, etc.

👉 Find the **European Commission's YiA Inclusion Strategy** at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/)

The Youth in Action National Agencies and the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre should take action to pave the way for more of these young people with fewer opportunities to become involved in the Youth in Action programme. In 2003, SALTO Inclusion started its **target group approach**, bringing together youth workers who work with groups of young people with specific disadvantages:

- young people with disabilities (2003),
- gay-lesbian-bisexual youth (2005),
- young ex-offenders (2006),
- youth in disadvantaged (sub)urban areas (2007)
- and young people from rural and geographically isolated areas (2007)

👉 Find a complete overview of the **SALTO Inclusion courses** at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionCourses/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionCourses/)

In April 2007, SALTO Inclusion, in cooperation with the Turkish National Agency, organised an **international training course** for rural youth workers on how to set up international projects in their rural or isolated area: called ‘TC Rural’. SALTO brought together 25 youth workers from all over Europe, who had one thing in common: they were all working in similar, geographically isolated areas, far away from the capitals and big cities.

For this training course, SALTO Inclusion **cooperated** with the two big umbrella organisations for rural youth work in Europe: MIJARC and Rural Youth Europe (see also page 42-43). SALTO Inclusion brought in its expertise on inclusion, international youth projects and youth worker training. The two rural partner organisations contributed to the course with their knowledge of the target groups and organisations working with them. This led to a **fruitful cross-fertilisation**, making the link between Youth in Action opportunities and rural youth work.



👉 More about the **SALTO TC Rural 2007** at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TCrural/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TCrural/)

The SALTO TC Rural allowed the participants to get to know and **learn from each other's realities and projects**, and set up projects together for the future, to create more opportunities in the countryside across Europe. The concrete impact of the TC Rural is documented online, and Village International is one of the outcomes of this successful course.

Young people in **rural and geographically isolated areas** often simply don't get all the information that is available in the busy city-centres. Distances and lack of public transport and infrastructure make it more difficult to set up international projects. Often youth work and youth workers is scarce. So no initiative is taken.

☞ However, Youth in Action projects are **also for young people in rural areas!**

Based on the SALTO TC Rural and the work done by the participants and the trainers' team, SALTO Inclusion developed this educational booklet '**Village International**'. It aims to disseminate the ideas, practice and methods from the course to a wider audience than only the 25 lucky youth workers who participated. This way everybody can benefit from the SALTO investment in the course and we hope that this booklet will help make international rural youth projects easier and better.

- ☞ Village International is part of the **SALTO Inclusion for ALL** series of publications. Find the complete collection at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForALL/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForALL/)
- ☞ All **methods and exercises** used at the SALTO TC Rural are also documented online in the SALTO Toolbox for Youth Work & Training at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/)

### **A BIRD'S EYE OVERVIEW OF VILLAGE INTERNATIONAL**

Our bird flies first of all over beautiful rural areas and gives you a bit of an insight into the **specificities of rural and isolated areas** and the young people living there.

- ☞ *Chapter 'Rural & geographically isolated youth', page 9*

Next, you will find an overview of the many **reasons** why it makes sense to go international with rural youth and the **benefits** it brings. Not only rural young people profit from international youth work, but also the rural community and your youth organisation.

- ☞ *Chapter 'Why go international with rural youth? - Benefits', page 18*

We also invite you to think with us about your **role as a rural youth worker**, as a crucial actor in terms of supporting change in the countryside.

- ☞ *Chapter 'The role of the rural youth worker', page 24*



This booklet is not going to be a course on **project management**; nevertheless the most important features of organising an international project will be highlighted and a clear insight into the ‘why’s and ‘how’s of projects is given.

☛ Chapter ‘Setting up a rural youth project – Project management’, page 26

For many rural youth workers, even though they are convinced that they would love to do an international project, it is often difficult to find out **where to start**, what to tackle first, how to find project partners, where to get money from, which programme to apply for. Village International gives you ideas on how make your way into international youth work.

☛ Chapter ‘Starting international youth work – Step-by-step’, page 38



When moving on to rural projects in practice, many of the **challenges** that rural young people face in the countryside are presented and experienced youth workers give their **tips and tricks** on how to address these. Starting from the involvement of young people in the countryside, how to overcome linguistic barriers, gain support from family and the local community, how to solve practical issues such as transport, mobility and infrastructure, etc. We will give you loads of ideas on how to deal with them in practice.

☛ Chapter ‘Rural Projects in Practice – Addressing challenges’, page 50

At the end of the booklet you will find a **selection of rural projects** presented by youth workers from all over Europe. They share with you their success stories and explain how they overcame some of the challenges of their international projects.

☛ Chapter ‘Examples of rural projects – Get inspired!’, page 68

To round off, Village International gives you **references** to other publications and websites relevant to rural youth work, in case you are hungry for more.

☛ Chapter ‘Going Further – References to other publications & websites’, page 76

### Enjoy the rural reading!

☛ If you find this booklet useful, share it with other rural young people! You can download it for free at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/)

## RURAL & GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED YOUTH

Many people have come up with **definitions** for the term ‘rural’, but seldom do these rural definitions agree with each other. For some, ‘rural’ is a subjective state of mind. For others, ‘rural’ is an objective quantitative measure.

- *What do we mean by ‘rural’ and ‘geographically isolated’ areas?*
- *Where does it start? And where does it end?*
- *How peripheral does an area have to be in order to be called ‘rural’?*
- *How many people live in ‘rural’ and ‘isolated’ areas?*

The **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development** (OECD) sets quantitative criteria for ‘rural’ and states that:

*“If 50% of the population of a region live in rural communities, the region is defined as a rural area. Communities with a population of less than 100 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> are defined as rural communities”.*

 [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

In some of the latest **European Commission** articles on rural development and policies (2007-13) in Europe, they say that: *“Rural areas represent more than 90% of EU territory and contain more than half of the EU’s population.”*

The European Commission states that rural areas are diverse and include many important regions. However, some rural areas, and in particular those which are the most remote, depopulated or dependent on agriculture, face **particular challenges** as regards growth, jobs and sustainability in the coming years. These include:

- *lower levels of income,*
- *an unfavourable demographic situation,*
- *lower employment rates and higher unemployment rates,*
- *a slower development of the tertiary sector,*
- *weaknesses in skills and human capital,*
- *a lack of opportunities for women and young people,*
- *a lack of necessary skills in parts of the agricultural sector and food processing industry*

 <http://ec.europa.eu/>



### Get Active – Exercise

#### What is your definition of 'rural'?

Try to write down what you would consider 'rural youth' to be – and what it is not? Where do you put the boundary? Is it important to distinguish between 'rural' and 'non-rural' youth? Why?

- ☛ This could be a good exercise to do with the people in your (rural) youth organisation and with your partners when doing an international project, to see if you are talking about the same concepts.

### DIFFERENT DEGREES OF 'RURAL' AND 'ISOLATED'










When having a conversation, **'rural' is not always the equivalent of 'rural'**, as sometimes people have a completely different geographical setting in mind when using the word.

For example, there are 'rural areas' located at the **fringes of urban areas** that are expanding and these villages benefit from employment as well as leisure time activities and have an excellent infrastructure linking into the city. These areas are doing very well and are extremely popular places to live, because of the quality of life. They can take advantage of their vicinity to the city (e.g. access to jobs, education, cultural life, good public transport, etc.) and enjoy the benefits of living in the countryside at the same time.










The focus of Village International is more on young people living in rural areas which are **less developed and more remote**, those we refer to when talking about 'geographically isolated' or 'geographically disadvantaged' areas. This can be mountain villages, distant valleys, small islands or simply a small town or village far away from the bigger cities.

- ☛ In order to make this booklet easier to read, we will not always refer to **'rural and geographically isolated areas'**, but we will simply use the term 'rural'.
- ☛ When referring to 'rural areas' or **'rural young people'** in this booklet, we are talking about those young people who have fewer opportunities because they live in a geographically isolated or remote area.

Young people in these rural and isolated areas often face a series of **challenges**:

-  fewer opportunities for formal and non-formal education: specialised schools and universities as well as youth NGOs are often non-existent,
-  employment: there is a small jobs market and high unemployment rate among youngsters,
-  leisure time activities: few or no cultural activities such as theatre, cinema, concerts,
-  transport and mobility: public transport is often non-existent or very scarce,
-  lack of information about youth-related issues, opportunities and initiatives,
-  healthcare: the nearest hospital and specialised doctors are far away,
-  frequent alcohol and smoking problems among youngsters due to boredom and lack of opportunities: the local bar is often the only meeting point in the village,
-  infrastructural problems: new technologies are lagging behind or non-existent: no internet in some areas, less and more expensive access ,
-  ...

Nevertheless, the countryside also has its **strengths and opportunities**:

-  close social network to support youngsters in setting up their own initiatives, projects or businesses,
-  good quality of life in terms of living in an unspoilt, natural environment: plenty of green areas, no heavy traffic, tranquillity, low stress levels, unlike in the cities,
-  rural areas are also characterised as being very family-friendly,
-  no or low crime rates and in general a safe environment,
-  strong sense of identity, going hand in hand with many traditions and customs,
-  less focus on consumerism, partly because of lower wages and less availability of shops and choices,
-  opportunities for different outdoor sports: jogging, skiing, swimming, hiking, cycling,...
-  healthier lifestyle (e.g. sports, outdoor activities) and healthier food (e.g. no fast food, more home cooked meals, own fresh vegetable gardens...),
-  'everyone knows each other' in rural areas: this helps to gain direct access to the mayor, local media... and build up good contacts,
-  easy to get attention and cooperation when organising projects, holding special events, doing rural youth work,
-  ...



### Get Active – Exercise

#### 'Likes' 😊 and 'Dislikes' ☹️ in rural areas

Be conscious of how you, your colleagues and your young people appreciate your rural area. What do you like about it and what don't you?

Create two boards, walls or flipcharts: one for 'likes' 😊, the other one for 'dislikes' ☹️ regarding their rural area. Give each person a few post-it notes for each board and ask them to write down their likes or dislikes. After sticking them on the boards, you can discuss similarities and differences, and group the 'likes' and 'dislikes' into categories, if possible.

If you want to work further with the issues mentioned, you can let participants vote on which ones are most crucial for them. Give each person some little stickers (or a marker) to indicate on the post-it notes which points are most relevant or important for them.

After this you can form discussion groups for the various crucial issues and ask the participants to exchange experiences on specific 'likes', or work out solutions for the 'dislikes'. This could be recommendations, future projects,... according to whatever you want to achieve in your activity.



### Get Active – Exercise

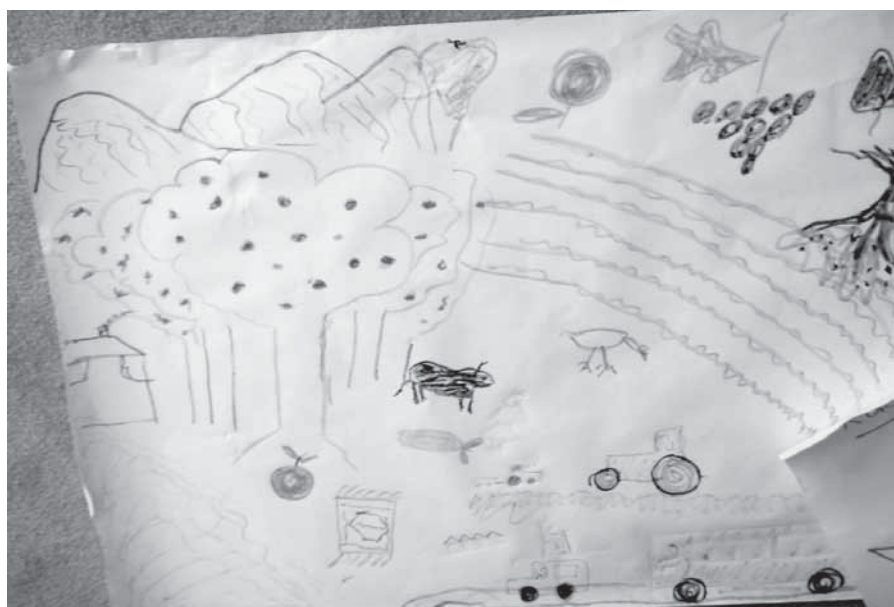
#### Drawing our rural realities – a creative exercise

Divide the young people (e.g. from your exchange) into mixed groups of four or five participants (mixing gender, nationality, age,...). Give them different material like scissors, flipchart paper, paint, coloured paper, wax crayons, markers, wood, cardboard, string,... Ask them to make a collage or piece of art and create one common image, representing their rural area (their living realities in their home countries). Give them approximately 20 minutes. They should work without talking and communicate only through creative expression.

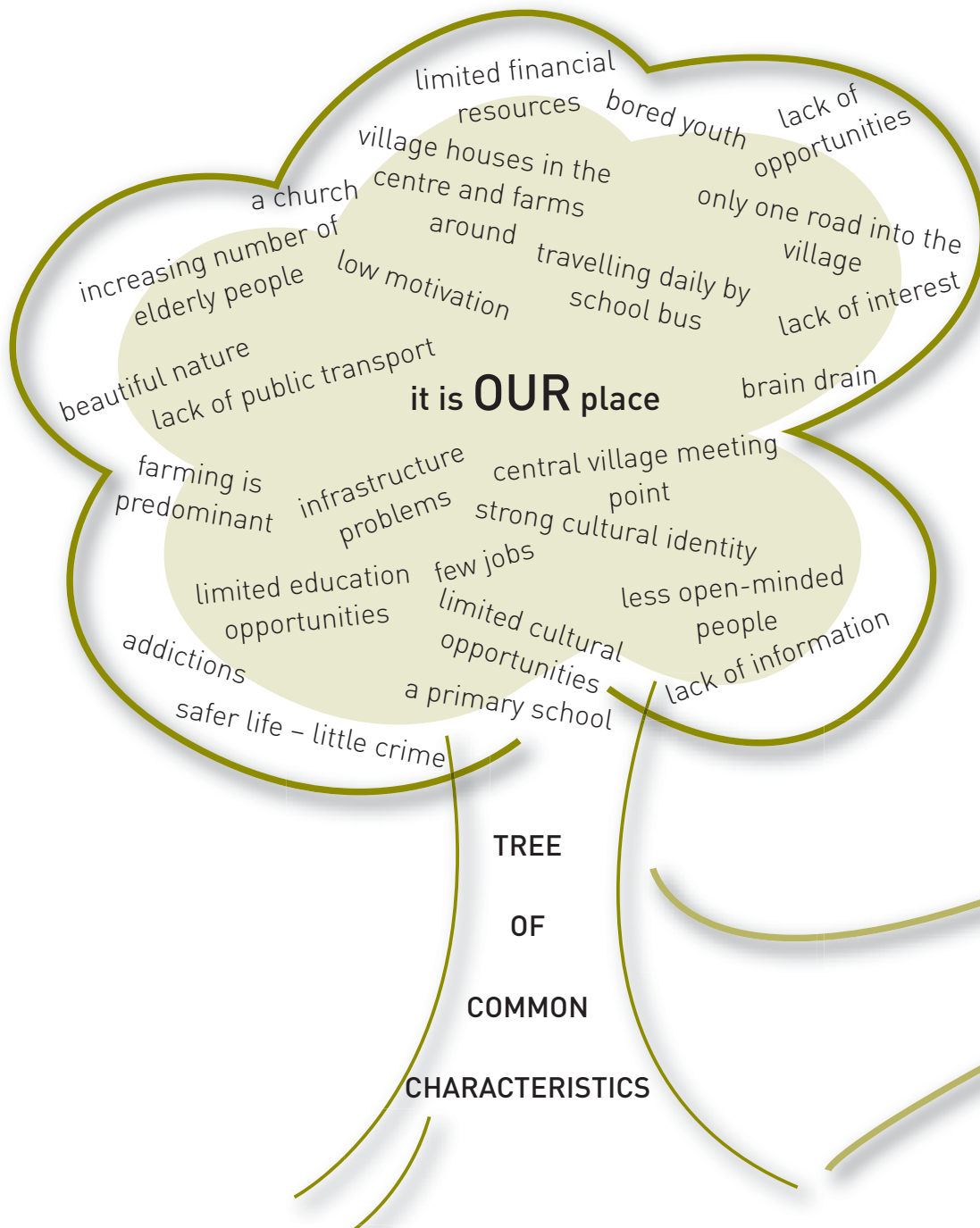
In a second step, the participants discuss the final result, the teamwork and their cooperation during the drawing of the image (10 min).

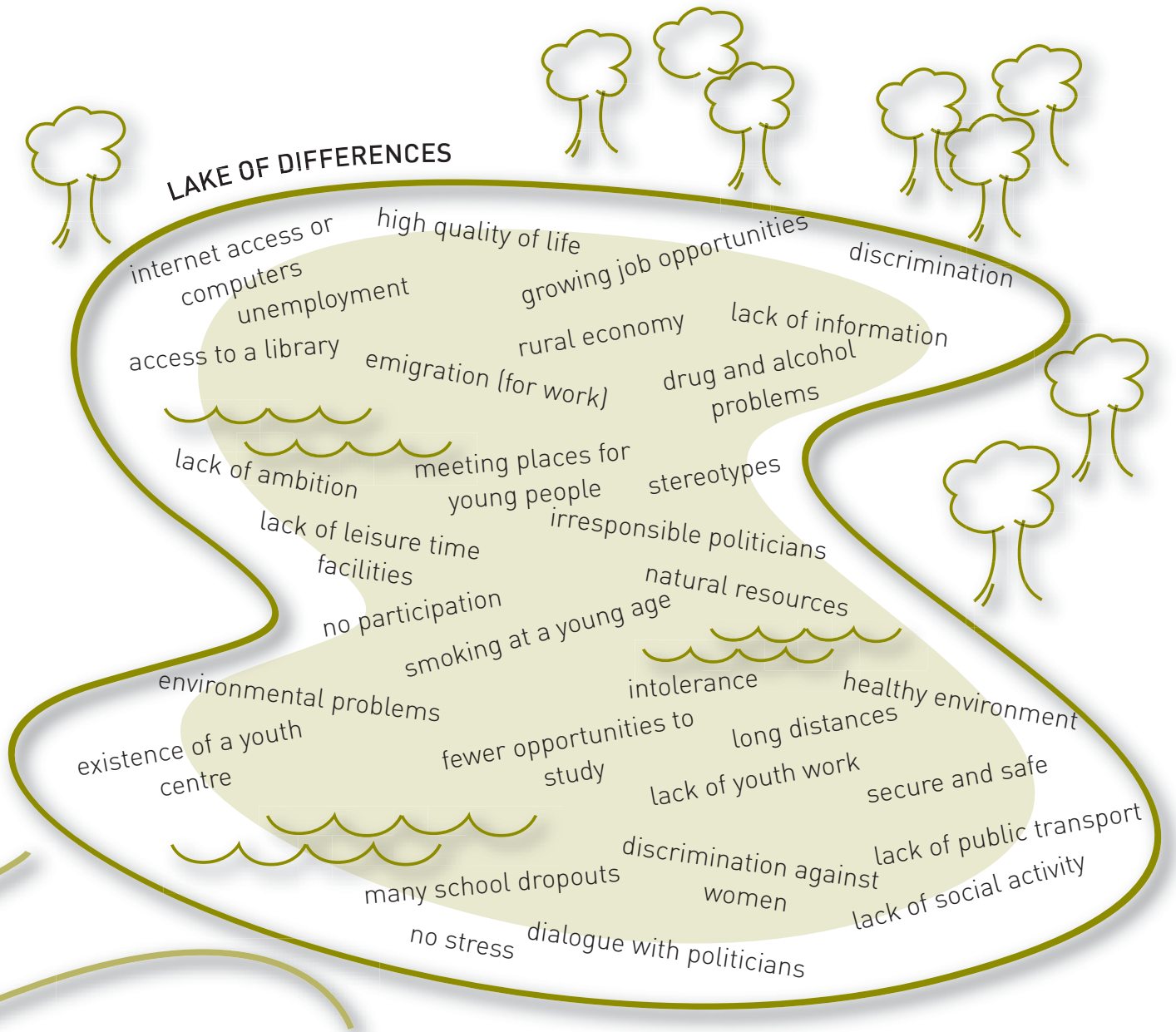
The third step consists of sharing amongst the members of the subgroup what they have in common, and what is different in the rural areas they come from. They can use their piece of art as a basis for the discussion (20 min).

In a fourth and last step, the different subgroups briefly present their collages and the main topics of their discussions to the other groups.



Rural young people from all over Europe, discussing the similarities of their rural area, pointed out the following **common characteristics**, listed in the tree of similarities. The **differences** regarding the rural realities across Europe are mentioned in the lake of differences. But depending on who you ask, some characteristics can be in both.









### Get Active – Exercise

## Shining Star - Similarities and singularities in rural areas

In international meetings, participants come from very different backgrounds and live in very different realities. The 'shining star' method aims to make people aware of these differences and singularities, but also to show them that there are more similarities than they might expect...

- Make subgroups of 4 or 5 people (nationality- and gender-mixed). Every group gets a paper with a 'shining star' drawn on it.
- The young people discuss the differences, similarities and singularities of the realities they are living in at home (20 min).

The participants write down the differences and similarities they find on the 'shining star' (see picture):

- in the centre of the star, they can write as many similarities as they want
- in the tips of the star, they write what is special/different in the rural reality of one of the group members. The star should have as many tips as there are group members so that everybody can write one singularity.

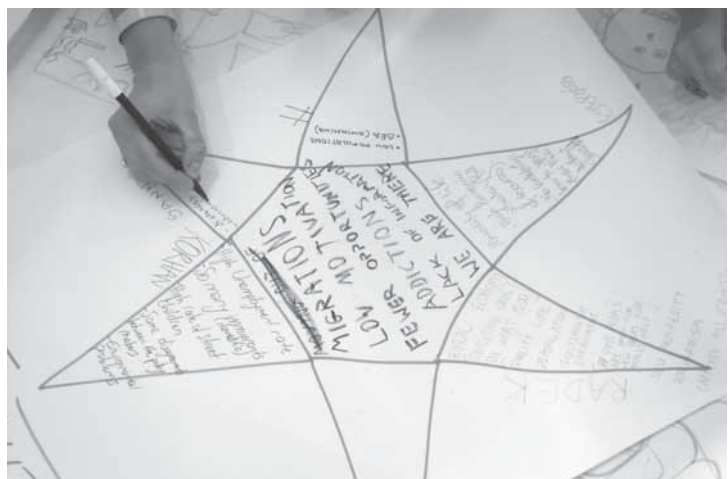
When the groups are finished, they can briefly present their shining star to the rest of the group and mention the most interesting topics of their discussions.

### COMMENT:

In the SALTO TC Rural, we used the 'Shining star' method to facilitate the exchange of the 'Drawing rural realities' exercise, given above.

### VARIATION:

The shining star method could also be used to get to know each other on a personal level (personal similarities and singularities).



- ☛ The insight given by the rural young people above shows very clearly that there is nothing like a homogeneous rural area in Europe. **'Rural'** in Europe is as **diverse** as the social, political, economical and geographical realities which exist. At the same time, **rural youth cannot be considered a homogenous group.**

In general, 'disadvantaged youth' is defined by a lack of access to employment, education, mobility, information and leisure time facilities, as is often the case for young people living in rural areas. It is important that projects addressing rural challenges should be adapted to the specific situation of the rural young people concerned.

- ☛ International activities for rural youth need to be **tailor-made and adapted** to your target group.

Many of the problems and challenges rural young people face, as well as the strengths and opportunities of the countryside, can be addressed in international projects. Not only the young people, but the entire rural community can **profit** a great deal from these initiatives. In the following chapter, you will find a comprehensive overview of the many gains and benefits of international youth projects for rural young people.

- ☛ The European Commission is strongly convinced that **international youth projects can make a difference** in rural and geographically isolated areas. For this reason, they are paying special attention to geographically disadvantaged young people within their Inclusion Strategy of the Youth in Action programme.  
See [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/)

# WHY GO INTERNATIONAL BENEFITS



# WITH RURAL YOUTH?

If you are lucky, there might be a youth organisation in your rural area that works with rural youth. Youth organisations run many **interesting and fun activities** (e.g. outings, workshops, sports, parties,...) through which young people develop many skills and competencies. Youth organisations often make up for the lack of educational and leisure activities in the countryside and play an important role in the **personal development** of young people.

However, there is an **additional tool** available for youth organisations in rural areas and rural young people in general: **international youth projects**. Local youth work is vital, but international projects can provide some additional benefits. A number of these benefits are identical for all young people but some are particularly valid for rural youth and rural youth organisations.

## BENEFITS FOR RURAL YOUNG PEOPLE

### INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AND WIDENING HORIZONS

- Through participation in international youth projects, young people **discover new cultures**, new people, new places, etc. An international youth activity can be a 'window on the world' where young people have new experiences outside their own communities. They learn that their way of doing things is just one of many. Knowing that things can be done differently (e.g. in different countries) can stimulate young people's **creativity**, encouraging them to find new solutions to old challenges. It can also increase their **empathy**, helping them to try and look at things from different perspectives.
- This is also valid for **rural youngsters**. Through interaction with young people from rural areas from different countries or by visiting each other's countries, young people get a closer look at other rural realities, associations and lifestyles, which may differ from their own. Such an international youth activity will make them reflect on 'their own place', will put their own way of doing things into **perspective**, and may help them generate **new ideas**, as well as give them the motivational kick to **start new activities**.

- Through interaction with friends from different cultures, young people build on their **intercultural competencies**. They learn not to judge and how to deal with new situations on a cultural level. They also learn to react **positively to differences**. Rural areas in most cases are not very multicultural and have little contact with other cultures. Many rural young people grow up in a rather conservative, traditionalist setting. An experience abroad confronts young people with their **prejudices and stereotypes** and helps them to overcome these. Moreover, young people learn to be **tolerant** and open to diversity.
- Through meeting young (rural) people from different countries and experiencing a completely different (or maybe similar) lifestyle elsewhere, young people often learn to **appreciate their rural realities** and as a result, they **become proud of their village**. Through such an intercultural experience they often **learn not to take everything for granted** and appreciate certain comforts and standards which exist in their rural communities.
- Part of ‘widening horizons’ is, furthermore, the awareness of how important **foreign language learning** is, which unfortunately in rural areas is often neglected, due to lack of opportunities, limited use, etc. In addition, many young people become **curious about other countries and cultures** and want to explore more of them.
- ...

#### EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

- Participation in an international project and the creation of **new friendships** with other rural young people in a similar situation as their own can be an **eye-opening experience** for a young person. To discuss issues of importance to their everyday life and find out that in other rural areas many young people are facing the **same challenges** can be truly inspiring and motivate people to take on new challenges to improve their situation.
- Young people **exchange life stories** which make them reflect on their own reality, their own values and ideas. This is a great source of **personal development** and of inspiration for their personal lives. Young people learn to reflect and understand their societies better.
- Being with other young people who share a similar reality helps to stimulate a **positive self-image and pride** in who they are. This is truly important to **increase their self-esteem**.

- When meeting **positive peers** who are fighting for the same cause as themselves, young people can feel re-energised and can apply this new energy to their own work. In this sense, an international experience can be an **impulse for increased commitment** to rural issues (within their organisation or in general).
- Participation in an international youth project creates a **space to discuss** rural youth issues, exchange ideas about disadvantages/advantages and challenges, as well as the strengths and opportunities of rural areas and their young people.
- And perhaps a European project – funded by the EU Youth in Action programme – also represents **prestige** and recognition for rural young people and their issues as well as **official acceptance** of their need for inclusion.
- ...

### DEVELOPING NEW COMPETENCIES

- Participants and youth workers in international projects gain a lot of **intercultural skills**, as we have already described above.
- Young people prove that they can be independent, but also work in a team; at the same time they discover and develop **creative skills**. In addition, they learn how to work in multicultural teams, learn about project management, conflict resolution etc. which can also be useful for their **professional lives**.
- Project management skills developed during these activities inspire young people to start **new projects, local initiatives or businesses**, which can be of great benefit to themselves and their rural communities, as well as to their youth organisation. In many cases, young people gain **inspiration for further development** and take on more tasks and responsibilities within their youth NGOs, to develop non-formal educational activities and make use of their newly-acquired international network. The **international project is a valuable practical experience for their further career**.
- Young people learn and acquire **'language by doing'**. This is an essential point for rural young people, to have the chance to apply and expand their foreign language skills and find additional motivation to study languages, which will also give them better chances on the jobs market.
- ...

Of course, international projects are also about **having fun!** 😊 Rural youngsters have a fun time abroad and make new friends. A youth exchange, training course or voluntary service abroad is an **enjoyable and rewarding alternative** to regular holidays abroad and gives you a good insight into the lives and lifestyles of young people in other countries and cultures.

### **BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY**

- **Young rural people** taking part in international activities or organising a youth exchange in their village, for example, always **‘educate’ their rural community** too. They help to **break stereotypes and prejudice** in the countryside. They make their fellow inhabitants curious about other countries and cultures, and the international youth activity is like a ‘window on the world’ for the rural community. In the other direction, your international project also contributes towards combating other people’s **prejudices and stereotypes about rural areas** and their inhabitants, by showing what life in the countryside is really like.
- The rural community profits from the new initiatives (**something is actually happening in your village!**) and often takes the opportunity to forge a permanent partnership (e.g. town twinning) in different sectors or with different NGOs (e.g. local choir, brass band, voluntary fire brigade, etc).
- You can involve the local community as a working method in international youth projects, for example through **host families, cooperation** with other local NGOs, **visits** to local projects, **joint activities**, etc.
- You will establish many **new contacts** with people surrounding your project. This leads to **positive image-building** of rural youth and youth activities, which are often only known for agricultural competitions or folk dancing in traditional outfits. This way you **break people’s stereotype** and you can show that there are also **many other opportunities, including international ones**, for rural youth, such as international youth exchanges, seminars, training courses, internships and volunteer programmes.
- ☞ SALTO Inclusion organises a Training Course on positive image-building in 2008 and develops a publication about this topic within the Inclusion for ALL series:  
see [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForALL/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForALL/)
- ...

## BENEFITS FOR RURAL YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

### PROFILING YOUR ORGANISATION

- By being active on a European level, by receiving European funding (for your international projects) or by co-operating with organisations abroad, you raise your organisation's **profile and visibility**. As not many rural NGOs deal with international projects, your rural youth club/organisation will immediately get **attention from the media and local authorities**. Mayors are usually quite keen to welcome international visitors to their village. Cooperation with the local authorities can also lead to their **financial support**.
- When rural youth organisations co-operate (on an international as well as on a national level) they benefit from a **synergy effect** which is crucial for their **lobbying and advocacy work**. United, you are always stronger and can get your message across more easily.
- International rural youth projects are great for **stimulating** organisations to increase their commitment to **bigger issues in a wider context**. For example, to develop common strategies to prevent the brain drain from the countryside, which is an increasing phenomenon in many rural areas in Europe. In many cases, **rural development strategies** are exchanged and expanded, and local initiatives benefit from international exchange and support.
- ...

### DEVELOPING THE ORGANISATION

- **Contacts** with different organisations and youth workers (abroad), through international youth activities, stimulate **new ideas**: for new projects, to inspire new working methods, to take fresh initiatives, to do things differently (or more efficiently). There is great potential to **learn from one another**.
- Organising an international youth project is a great opportunity to develop **organisational and project management skills** within your organisation e.g. intercultural competence, international co-operation, etc. which can also be beneficial for other activities.
- Participation in projects with international partner organisations allows you to **compare** and to find out how good a job you are doing. The exchange of **good practices** and the design of **common projects** may lead your youth organisation to rethink its youth work practices to better meet the needs of rural youth.



- Participation in an international project could be a **welcome change** from the type of work youth workers are doing. This ‘international variation’ could **motivate** youth workers in their work and be a **new challenge** for them as well.
- ...

### THE ROLE OF THE RURAL YOUTH WORKER

You, as a youth worker, are a **motor for change** in a rural setting. You can build up relationships with the young people there and stimulate them to become active in their rural environment and improve their living conditions and opportunities.



Get Active – Exercise

**Ask yourself: How do you see your role?**

- To help young people to find their own way, to become involved and active
- To pursue a change in the community
- To inspire young people / to create ideas
- To give young people the chance to explore the world
- To give young people a positive self-image
- To offer young people interesting things to do in their free time
- To acquire funding for projects
- To create a strong link between youth work and the benefits to the whole community (no successful community without happy young people 😊)
- To do something for ‘somebody else’ – but also do it for ‘yourself’ (your chance to learn professionally and personally)
- To open young people’s minds
- To offer Non-Formal Education and leisure time activities
- To offer space for self-development and being creative
- To be aware of their identity and find their place in local society
- To give young people an active role – make them responsible
- To be a coach for young people
- To get involved in the young people’s ‘way of life’, in order to design projects according to their own desires and needs

### Is there anything missing for you?

- What is the most important feature (skill, competence,..) a rural youth worker needs to have in your village/rural area?
- Why are YOU a rural youth worker?
- What are your personal motivations?

From the SALTO TC Rural:

"I am a youth worker because I love dealing with the challenges of rural youth, because I want to help people find their own way to become involved and active."

Mariana  
(Estonia)

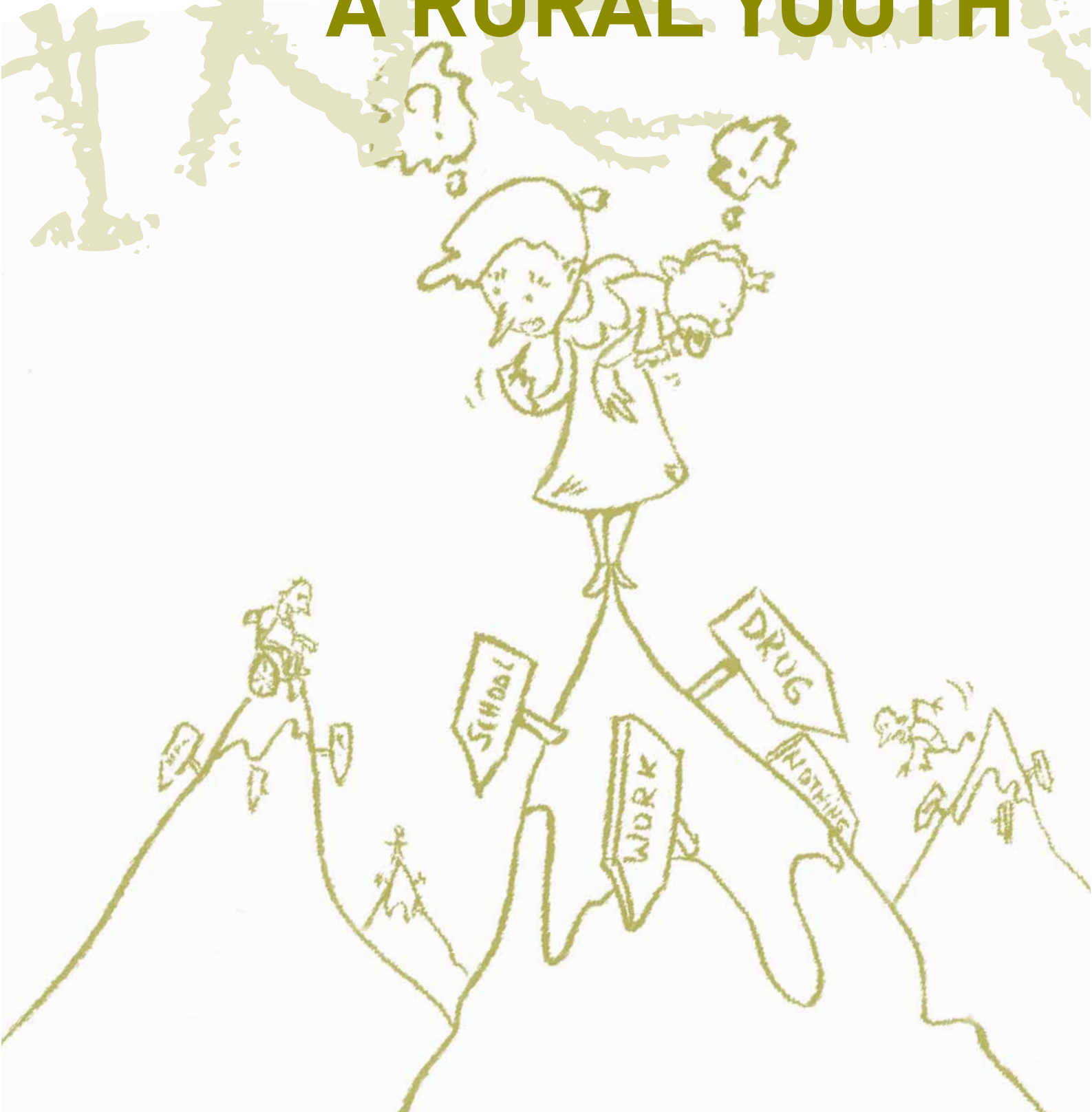
"Working with young people opens my mind."

Korhan  
(Turkey)

"Observing the work I do ... it makes a difference in the community and that keeps me motivated to go on ... and achieve more, as well as involve more young people."

Luis  
(Portugal)

# SETTING UP A RURAL YOUTH



# PROJECT MANAGEMENT

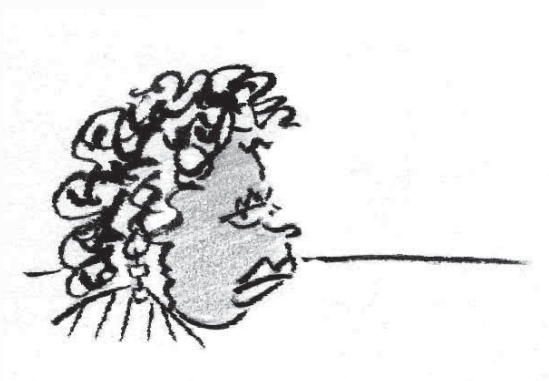
## BASICS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

There are **many ways to manage a project**. Some will definitely lead to a successful project, some may not, and some may, but with some detours.

There is already a lot of material on project management in youth work. That's why, in this booklet, we just want to remind you of **some of the principles** of setting up a project. But we will give you many more references, if you are interested in reading and learning more. We will, of course, point out what is particularly important when dealing with a project which is specially designed for rural young people.

For every **successful project** you need to look at **four different factors**:

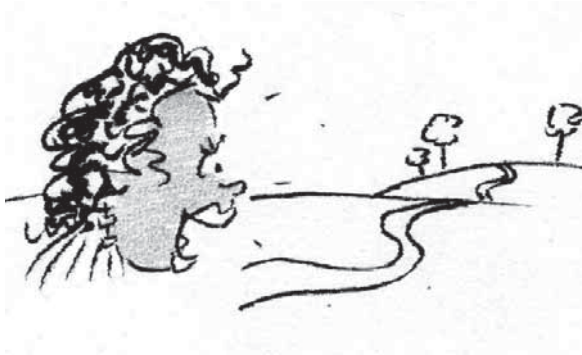
### 1. START FROM A NEED OR PROBLEM



Projects work best when the people developing them know and **understand the needs and problems** they want to tackle. It is important to properly evaluate the need or problem before starting any project.

- *What causes this particular problem in our rural area?*
- *What are the symptoms?*
- *What is the scale of it?*
- *For whom is it a problem?*
- *Only for young people – or for the entire community?*

## 2. SEE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR PROJECT



Projects need to have, or to **create**, a **space** in which to operate. Projects need to be **actively supported** and backed with more than just money. There must be support for the project from **key people** and **active participation** from the target group.

- *Are your young people behind the project?*
- *Do they have sufficient time to deal with it?*
- *Which other actors need to be involved?*
- *How will they support you/your project?*

## 3. CREATE A VISION



Projects need a vision to **frame all the activities and efforts**. It is from the vision that strategies, objectives and work plans flow. The big idea behind the project should be clear enough to **show how** the project will make a significant and sustainable difference to the needs or the problems.

- *Do all the rural young people involved in your project have the same vision?*
- *Are you working towards a common goal?*
- *Are you able to picture this vision together and be enthusiastic about it? (only then will you be able to transmit it to other people in your community and get other key actors on board easily)*

#### 4. GATHER SKILLS AND RESOURCES



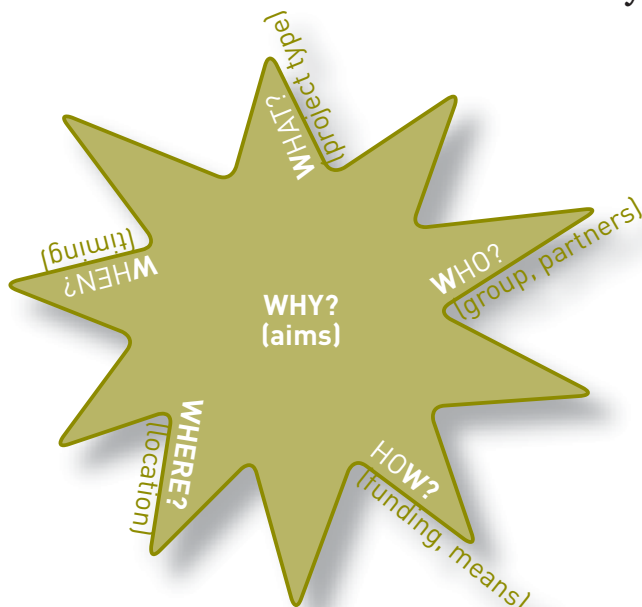
Projects need the right **balance of skills, energy, resources and organisation** to get going and deliver results. They need to be designed so that they are able to **make an impact and create results**.

- Do you have a capable and balanced team, with complementary skills and resources behind the project?
- If there are some specific skills missing, who are you going to consult to get the necessary skills/knowledge/know-how on board?
- Are the results, and the impact you are aiming for, clear to everyone? What is it for: you/your youth group/your community? Are your aims short or long term?

#### WHAT? WHO? WHEN? WHERE? HOW? & WHY?

One of the most common ways to develop your project is to plan it according to the 6 Ws (adapted Laswell model):

- What? Who? When? Where? hoW? & Why?



These are the questions that can help you in clarifying your project. They allow you to quickly check if you have thought of everything.

We have adapted the Laswell model and would like to present it as a project-sun.

The first question, in the centre of the project sun, is the **WHY?** This question is linked to your analysis of the needs and problems that you want to address. The answers to this question are your aims and objectives:

- *What is needed from or wished for by the young people concerned?*
- *Is it wanted by the community and the young people?*
- *Why should everybody be interested in it?*
- *What do you want to achieve?*
- *What should be the impact or result of the project if it is successful?*
- *How would the situation have changed?*
- *How much of a priority does it represent?*
- *Is your project trying to achieve something different from what is already being done?*



### Get Active – Exercise Aims & objectives

Think about the project you want to do: What vision do you have about the activity? Where do you want to get to at the end of it? What do you want to reach?



What are your aims and objectives?

- The aim is what you see if you take binoculars and look into the future, the final result, where you want to get to.
- The objectives are the smaller steps you need to take to get there

When defining those little steps, the objectives, make sure that they are 'SMART'. Formulate your objectives, in a way that they fit the SMART criteria:

- S** - **Specific** → do they clarify precisely what they are about?
- M** - **Measurable** → how will you know when they have been achieved?
- A** - **Achievable** → are they within the control of you and your project team?
- R** - **Realistic** → are they realistic and relevant within the frame of your project?
- T** - **Timed** → have you agreed over what period they should be achieved?

### Rural Tip

-  You will have a better chance of succeeding if you **know what you are aiming** at. You will be able to avoid doing unnecessary and unwanted work.
-  If your project fits in with other projects or other work within the organisation, you need to ensure that there is **no overlap and no gaps**.

Your aims and objectives (Why?) lead you to a decision on the **WHAT?** question. Depending on what you want to reach, there are different ways of getting there. The What? question refers to the type of project or activity you will be doing.

- *What activity is most adapted to the people you are working with?*
- *What are your own preferences and previous experiences?*
- *What resources do you have available for the project?*
- *Do you have time or place constraints or opportunities?*

The next question leads us to **WHO?** Who are you working with? Who has certain needs?

- *In more detail: Who would you like to involve and reach with your project?*
- *What is the target group and who are the beneficiaries of your project?*
- *Who are your partners? What can they bring to the project?*
- *Who will co-ordinate the project?*
- *Are participants involved in running and co-ordinating the project? If so, how?*
- *What is the role of rural young people in the project?*

The following step deals with: **HOW?** are we going about this? How are you going to put the project into practice?

- *What resources are available to you (time, money, young people, authorities, etc.)?*
- *What do you need to do in order to make the project a success?*
- *What methods will you use to reach the aims?*
- *Describe your project's structure and activities. Why these activities?*
- *How will you steer the process? (clear division of tasks)*
- *What expertise do you need to look for externally (partners, funding...)? How are you going to get these?*




The next question is **WHERE?** This question refers to the context and location in which you are going to carry out the project.

- *Are you going to go abroad with your group?*
- *Are you hosting a group within your local community? Where are they going to stay?*
- *Where are you going to work / enjoy the programme together?*
- *Are there any place constraints? Or specific places you can or want to use?*
- *Is there any link to be made between the activity and the place?*

And to make our project sun complete, you also need to think about the **WHEN?** question. Are there any issues concerning the timing of your project?

- *What is the starting and closing date for the project? (a project has a beginning and an end)*
- *Don't let the project go on forever! Stop it when it fails to deliver any further benefits*
- *Did you agree on a time-line for your project? What are the different stages and deadlines? (e.g. applying for funds, contacting partners, meetings of young people, informing, booking a venue, etc.).*
- *Are there any periods to avoid (exam periods, election periods, high season, ...)? Or are there any periods that would be particularly beneficial for your project?*
- *What comes after the completion of the activity? (e.g. accounts, thanking people, reports, evaluation, documentation, follow-up;)*

### **Rural Tip**

-  Don't underestimate the **duration of your project**, including all preparation, as well as follow-up at the end of the activity. Rather, **overestimate the amount of time** in your project- and activity plan! Most likely you will need it!

All 6 questions need to form a coherent picture. All parts of the sun should be connected to the centre of the sun: the **WHY?** question. Be ready to give good reasons for choosing amongst alternatives. E.g. why have you chosen to do a youth exchange rather than a youth initiative? Why do you want to involve both rural and urban young people in your project? Why are you involving the local authorities? Why would you do an exchange in winter rather than in summer? Etc...

For more about the **project management** of international youth activities, please refer to:

- ☛ SALTO Over the Rainbow booklet > [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/OverTheRainbow/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/OverTheRainbow/)
- ☛ SALTO Handbook on Project Management > [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/find-a-tool/86.html](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/find-a-tool/86.html)
- ☛ T-Kit on Project-management > [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net) or [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/find-a-tool/68.html](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/find-a-tool/68.html)



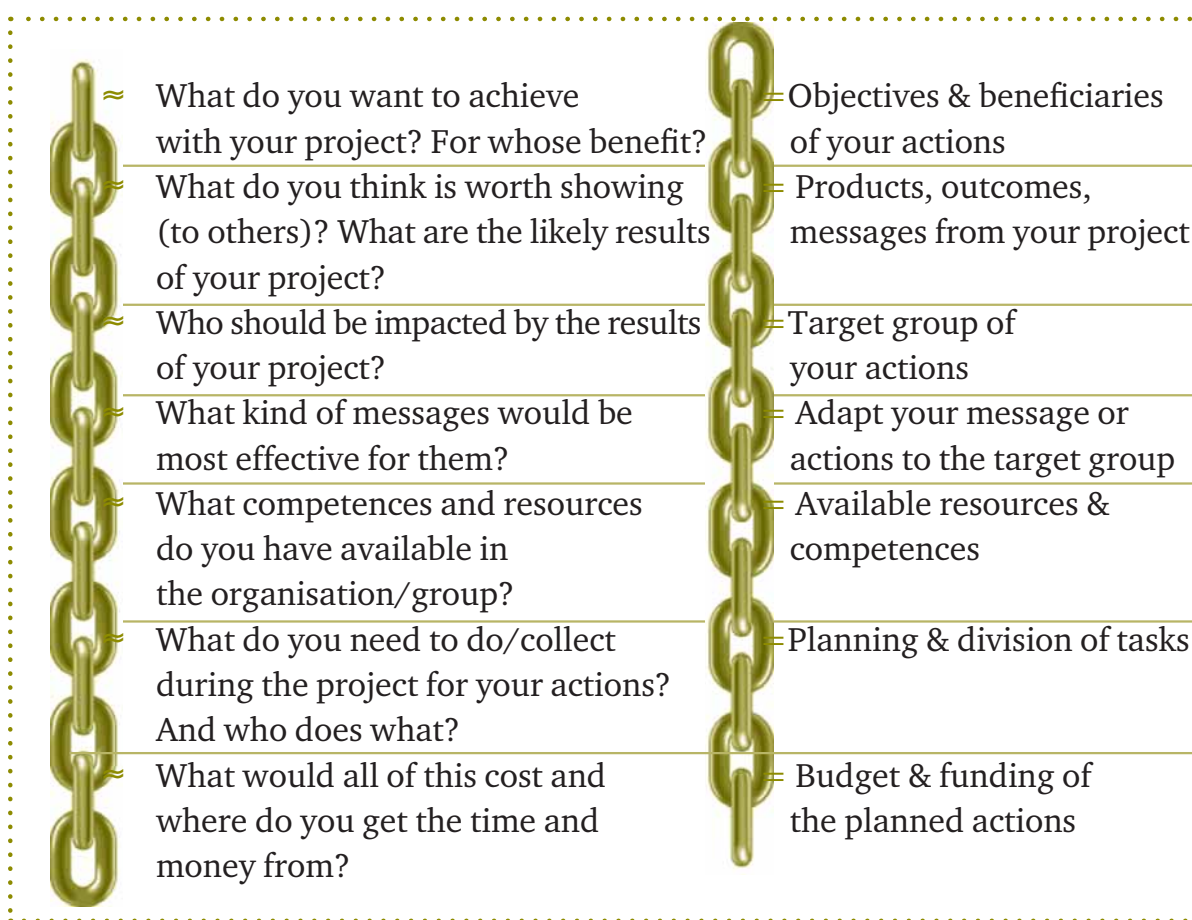
## **FOLLOW-UP, DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS**

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN ACTIVITY HAS TO BE PLANNED BEFORE THE ACTIVITY!**

Already when applying for funding (e.g. in a Youth in Action application), you are asked what you are going to do in terms of follow-up and dissemination of results. The point is that you **do your project for a reason**, to have some impact. And this impact should not stop as soon as the activity is over. Therefore, time should be allocated in your project planning to think about follow-up and dissemination activities.

You can undertake different activities or develop different tools to follow-up and to **‘disseminate and exploit’** the results of your project. Sending out the results of your project (e.g. a report, the lessons learnt, a CD-ROM, new methods,...) is one thing, getting them **USED** is even better. You will need to have a look at your project’s **potential to have an impact** at an early stage – before you actually start the project!

Here are **some questions** that could **guide** you in your reflection:




The chain shows that all these questions are **interrelated** and that you should make a coherent link between the ‘products and outcomes’ of your project. This will determine, more or less, the scope of what you are able to achieve with your project and for whose benefit (objectives & beneficiaries). Depending on the ‘Target Group’ you want to reach, you will need to ‘adapt your actions’, the timing of the message sent out and the medium and format used. Your ‘available resources and competencies’, but also your preferences will determine what you are able to achieve. Last but not least, you have to be clear about ‘who and how’ you are going to ensure the follow-up, dissemination and exploitation actually take place, and have a look at what ‘budget’ you will need for this and where it should come from.

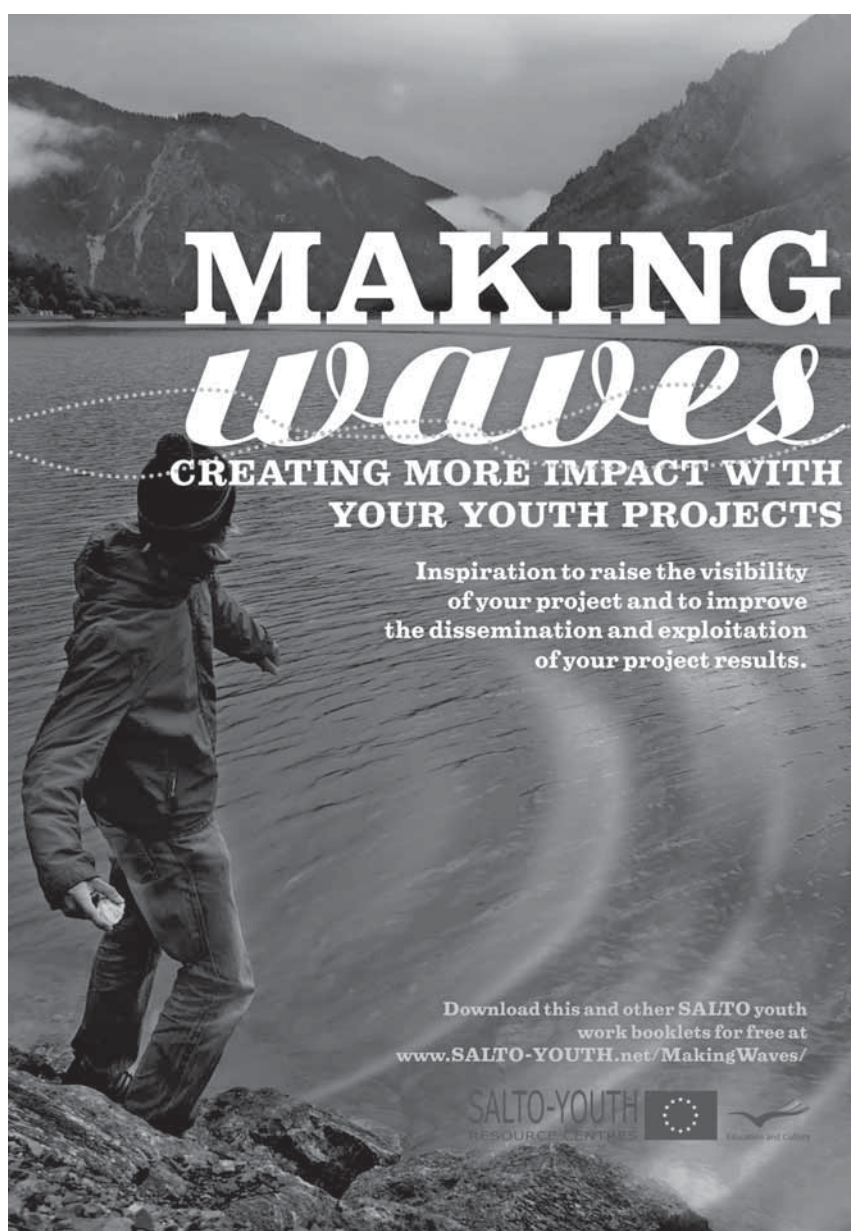
Here are **some suggestions** for follow-up and dissemination of your project results:

- Give recognition to the **learning and personal development** of the rural young people who took part in your activity. Give them a certificate or a letter of recommendation. Within the Youth in Action programme, participants are entitled to get a European **YouthPass** to document their learning and their experience (see [www.YouthPass.eu](http://www.YouthPass.eu)).
- Think about organising a **follow-up project** after your first experience. Consciously involve some of the participants of the first project in setting up a second project, and try to make the new project better than the first one. Find out if there is other **learning that you could continue** with after the project e.g. learning a language, continuing international contacts and friendships, interest in a topic... Support your participants in doing so.
- **Document the outcomes** of your project: this can include both **visible** (e.g. theatre play, a CD-ROM, a report, a piece of art ,...) and **invisible** results (e.g. learning points, conclusions, recommendations, new methods used during the activity...).
- Think beforehand about **who would be able to use the outcomes** of your project, and adapt it to their needs, so that it will be very easy for them to start using what you have produced. **Involve this target group** in the development of your product.
- You could produce a '**rural youth work manual**', which can be used by other youth workers in the same situation as you. However, make sure not to reinvent the wheel and integrate already existing documents into your work.
- Develop a strategy to **show to the 'outside' world** the great work you are doing. Who would you like to inform? How best can you inform them? What are the best channels to reach them? What is the best way of having an impact on them?
- Give **participants** the space within your activity to develop networking and **follow-up projects** themselves (through discussion, 'open space', action plans,...)

- If you have pictures or a video of the activity, have a **special evening** in the community centre or at the local youth club to share your experience with your colleagues, friends, community,... **Involve the young people** in organising and presenting.
- Offer **guidance and training** to young people who want to get more active in your organisation.
- Share your methods, funding opportunities, best practices to make the life of 'newcomers' in the field easier. Add them to existing databases (e.g. [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/)) or circulate them via relevant networks (e.g. MIJARC or Rural Youth Europe).
- Use **networking and communication tools** for future contact and for the exchange of good practice e.g. via an online platform, blog, Yahoo or Facebook group, newsletters,...
- Get the **local press** involved and make the headlines with your international project... so that people talk about it for a while. You can link up to that success with positive PR work and future projects.
- Think about **thanking people** (authorities, funders, families...) for their contributions and keep up the new contacts established.
- Make your work **sustainable** and **share your experiences** within your own organisation and with other organisations (each project is a huge learning experience and you can learn from positive and negative features).
- ...

 Find inspiring examples of rural youth projects on page 68

- ☛ SALTO has developed a booklet on how to create the greatest possible impact with your youth project, called 'Making Waves'. It contains lots of tips and tricks on how to increase the visibility, dissemination and exploitation of your project results. Download it from [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/)



# STARTING INTERNATIONAL YOUTH WORK





# STEP BY STEP

## PARTICIPATE IN SOMEONE ELSE'S PROJECT FIRST

If you think it is a bit daunting to do your own international youth activity, no worries: you can **first experience someone else's project** before doing one yourself.

Plenty of international activities for rural young people already exist. You can just join in an activity or match up with an organisation you find particularly interesting.

Many European institutions and organisations offer great **training and exchange opportunities**. There are also some rural youth umbrella organisations (which have national and regional member organisations all over Europe) which organise regular international activities such as study sessions, seminars or training courses. The choice is yours.

### EXISTING INTERNATIONAL RURAL YOUTH ACTIVITIES

- MIJARC Europe = study sessions, seminars, work camps, exchanges, study visits about rural & farming issues > [www.mijarc.org/europe](http://www.mijarc.org/europe) (see also page 43)
- Rural Youth Europe = study sessions and seminars, multilateral rural youth exchanges, training courses for rural youth workers > [www.ruralityoutheurope.com](http://www.ruralityoutheurope.com) (see also p 42)
- IFYE (International Farmers' Youth Exchange) = exchange programmes between young rural farmers, conferences > [www.ifyeusa.org/links/european.html](http://www.ifyeusa.org/links/european.html) or [www.ifye.lu/test-europe/](http://www.ifye.lu/test-europe/)
- International Agricultural Exchange Organisation = agricultural work in 12 different countries, staying with a host family on a farm > [www.agriventure.com](http://www.agriventure.com)
- Herrsching Seminar (organised by German ministry) = International Rural Youth Seminar with participants from all over the world > [www.international-herrsching-seminar.de](http://www.international-herrsching-seminar.de)
- WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) = stay and learn about organic farms, while volunteering in exchange for food and lodging > [www.wwoof.org](http://www.wwoof.org)
- Service Civil International > [www.sciint.org](http://www.sciint.org) & Alliance of Voluntary Organisations > [www.alliance-network.eu](http://www.alliance-network.eu) & Youth Action for peace > [www.yap.org](http://www.yap.org) = Short term volunteer work camps in international groups in projects all over the world – also in rural projects.



## FIND PROJECT PARTNERS AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

Once you've got the international bug one of the biggest challenges when setting up an international youth project is: **how to find the perfect partner?**

First of all, clarify a couple of questions:

- *What kind of partner would you like to co-operate with? And which partner organisation would you not like to have? Why?*
- *Are you looking for an organisation which shares the same rural background? Shares the same objectives? Works in the same field? Deals with the same challenges on a local level?*
- *Which country should your partner organisation come from? Why?*
- *Are you looking for a completely different experience with a country or several countries in other parts of Europe? Or would you prefer there to be many similarities?*
- *Which languages are you & your rural young people or colleagues going to use for international communication and during your international activity? Are you looking for a country with a common or similar language?*

👉 The chapter 'Overcoming linguistic barriers in international youth activities?' (page 56) gives you some **tips on international communication**.

These questions help you to get started. They help you to clarify your expectations and orient partner-finding initiatives. How do you find **suitable partner organisations**? There are many options and opportunities to identify and get in touch with a potential partner organisation. Different people prefer **different partner-finding techniques**, just like finding a partner in your own personal life.

Often, international activities start off with **personal contacts** between youth workers or board members from similar rural organisations abroad. You might not have these personal experiences with foreign organisations (yet), but maybe if you **ask your members or colleagues**, they might know of an organisation or activists abroad who would be interested in organising a project together with your organisation. Recommended contacts are also a good way of getting in touch with potential partner organisations.

If this doesn't work, you can **take part in international events and activities** where there are other potential partner organisations present (e.g. conferences, seminars, meetings, etc.). This way, you can get to know representatives and their organisations and find out

to what extent they **match** with the answers you've given to the earlier questions. As in inter-personal relationships, be aware that you don't often find the perfect match, and compromises and flexibility are necessary.

We suggested some existing international activities above (chapter 'Participate in someone else's project first', page 39), but there are also a number of specific '**Partnership Building Seminars**' in the Youth in Action Programme where organisations are looking for potential partners too. Alternatively try to participate in international **training courses and seminars** on a topic that your organisation is also interested in. You might not find a rural partner organisation, but one that has a common interest, which could be the basis for an international project.

- 👉 Find information about different European training opportunities in the **SALTO European Training Calendar** [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/) or from your Youth in Action National Agency [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/contact\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/contact_en.html)

Within the European Union's Youth in Action programme (see also page 47), there are a variety of **tools to help you find a partner group or international project**:

- Most National Agencies (NAs) of the Youth in Action programme have some kind of **partner request form** - usually in electronic format on their homepage. The NAs can forward your completed form to one or more of the other NAs located across Europe. These NAs use different ways to circulate the partner requests to potential partners (e.g. e-mail lists, website, newsletters,...). Find a list of NAs at [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/contact\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/contact_en.html)
- Some National Agencies also have a **partner-finding database online**, e.g. on the websites of the German and British NAs. Work is underway to merge all these different databases into one central partner-finding one. You can locate these databases via the SALTO partner-finding page at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Partnerfinding/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Partnerfinding/)
- If you are looking for a host organisation for a **European Voluntary Service (EVS)** project, you will find a list of approved hosting projects in the **host organisation database** at [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/program/sos/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/program/sos/index_en.html)
- You can also contact 'EVS works' which is a network of EVS organisations, if you are interested in sending or hosting a volunteer: [www.youthnetworks.eu](http://www.youthnetworks.eu)

- Some centres for Regional Co-operation have **addresses of youth organisations and contact points** in so-called ‘partner countries’ with which Youth in Action projects are possible. *e.g. SALTO Eastern Europe & Caucasus: [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/eeca/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/eeca/), SALTO South East Europe: [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/see/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/see/), the EuroMed platform for co-operation with EuroMed countries: [www.euromedp.org](http://www.euromedp.org)*
- The Yahoo group of **European Youth Exchanges** might also be helpful for finding partners and for getting answers to technical and practical questions. You can register for this mailing list via <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/european-youth-exchanges/>
- ...

**International rural youth platforms**, as well as the websites of national rural youth organisations in different countries, can be helpful when searching for partners. You can get information, contacts and ideas from **European umbrella organisations for rural youth**, such as MIJARC Europe and Rural Youth Europe. They can post your partner request on their website or send it around among their member organisations.

**RURAL YOUTH EUROPE** | [www.ruralityoutheurope.com](http://www.ruralityoutheurope.com)



Rural Youth Europe is a non-governmental youth organisation which unites and represents **rural young people in Europe**. They offer **non-formal educational training opportunities** (*in fields like youth participation, sustainable local development, Human Rights Education, Intercultural Learning, leadership training, agricultural production, project management,...*) and influence **rural youth policy**. They provide **many international opportunities**, and address the needs and interests of young people in rural areas in Europe today.

Rural Youth Europe has **3 types of member organisations**:

- Rural Youth organisations
- Young farmers' organisations
- 4H Clubs

**RYEurope's activities**:

- Study sessions and seminars for multipliers and rural youth leaders
- European Rally: a big multilateral youth exchange
- General Assembly to discuss and reflect on past, present and future

- Training courses on specific rural or youth issues
- Representation of rural youth in European institutions
- Partnership with the IFYE-Programme (International 4H/Farmers' Youth Exchange)  
[www.ifye.lu/test-europe/](http://www.ifye.lu/test-europe/)
- Newsletter: 'Rural Youth Info'

**Contact:** [office@ruralityoutheurope.com](mailto:office@ruralityoutheurope.com)

**MIJARC Europe** (Mouvement International Jeunesse Agricole Rurale Catholique) |  
[www.mijarc.org/europe/](http://www.mijarc.org/europe/)



MIJARC Europe is the **International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth**. It is a movement of democratic and self-organised rural youngsters, an international network of national & regional rural movements and a training & education organisation. MIJARC Europe is an action-oriented movement, for young people by young people, based on Christian values, gathering together rural youngsters who want to participate in the building of a better and fairer society.

MIJARC-Europe is active in the fields of sustainable rural development, gender mainstreaming, agriculture and food-sovereignty, fair global development, youth policy, youth participation and Christian values. MIJARC-Europe is part of MIJARC World ([www.mijarc.org](http://www.mijarc.org)) which is present in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.

#### **MIJARC Europe's activities:**

- European study sessions, seminars & study visits
- Working groups on a European and worldwide level
- Work camps dealing with a variety of rural topics
- (Inter)continental exchanges of rural youth groups
- Networking with other (rural) youth organisations, agriculture organisations...
- Representation of rural youth in European institutions
- Magazine: 'Info-Europe'

**Contact:** [office-europe@mijarc.info](mailto:office-europe@mijarc.info)

There are a number of other **Europe-wide networks and umbrella organisations** that can provide you with names and contacts of organisations in different countries. Have a look at the **European Youth Forum** website ([www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org)) for a list of international youth NGOs and National Youth Councils active in Europe. Or think of organisations that could be active in the country of your choice OR in the topic you want to organise an international project on, e.g. Red Cross, Scouts, Young Chamber of Commerce, etc.

**Most likely, the choosing will be more difficult than the finding.**

### **MONEY FOR INTERNATIONAL RURAL YOUTH PROJECTS**

Taking part in and organising international projects doesn't come for free. Travelling, eating, sleeping & working together costs **money**. But there are a number of funding opportunities around for youth projects in general, and even some specifically for rural youth.

The **Youth in Action programme** of the European Commission is specifically geared towards a variety of smaller scale youth projects, and focuses on the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. Rural youth is certainly one of these inclusion groups, especially if you face the many challenges listed in the chapter 'Rural & geographically isolated youth' (page 9).

☞ Therefore there is a specific chapter on this European **Youth in Action programme** on page 47.

Besides this user-friendly Youth in Action programme, other funding opportunities for youth and rural projects exist. However, a funder never funds a project 100%, so you will always need to rely on more than once source of funding. Or you could organise your own creative fund-raising activities.

☞ More about fund-raising ideas and activities at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/find-a-tool/346.html](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/find-a-tool/346.html) or [www.fund-raising.com](http://www.fund-raising.com)

## MONEY FOR INTERNATIONAL (RURAL) YOUTH PROJECTS

- **European Youth Foundation** (Council of Europe): [www.coe.int/youth/](http://www.coe.int/youth/) - The EYF funds international youth projects (minimum 4 European partner countries).
- **European Mobility Fund** (Council of Europe): [www.coe.int/youth/](http://www.coe.int/youth/) - The Mobility Fund pays rail travel for disadvantaged groups participating in international youth projects.
- **Leader +**: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/index_en.htm) - Leader+ is designed to help rural actors improve the long-term potential of their local region. Projects need to fall within specific priorities granted to specific countries. Sometimes there is a youth focus in these projects.
- **Interreg**: [www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net) - Interreg is financed by the European development fund for social cohesion and supports cross border trans-national and interregional cooperation. Maybe your region is part of an Interreg project.
- **European Cultural Foundation**: [www.eurocult.org](http://www.eurocult.org) - ECF is an independent non-profit organisation that promotes cultural cooperation in Europe and gives funding for projects with a strong cultural component e.g. concerts, theatre,...
- **World Bank Small Grants Programme** for local communities: [www.worldbank.org/smallgrants](http://www.worldbank.org/smallgrants) - The Small Grants Programme is one of the few global programmes of the World Bank that directly funds civil society organisations.
- **Rotary & Lyons Clubs**: [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) & [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org) - These are associations of professionals that sometimes give money to projects which answer the needs that challenge communities around the world.
- **Embassies & Cultural Institutes**: Some Embassies and cultural institutes (e.g. Goethe Institut, British Council, Alliance Française,...) are actively involved in supporting local projects in different countries.
- **Visegrad Fund**: [www.visegradfund.org](http://www.visegradfund.org) - Provides funding for cooperation projects between the Visegrad countries: Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary.

- **Nordic Council:** [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org) - The Nordic Council funds projects with a Nordic dimension in different fields, e.g. children and youth
  - **Different foundations:** Find an overview of foundations at Funders Online [www.fundersonline.org](http://www.fundersonline.org) - Funders Online is an initiative of the European Foundation Centre [www.efc.be](http://www.efc.be) - The EFC promotes and supports the work of foundations and corporate funders in Europe.  
E.g. Banks sometimes have foundations that fund projects e.g. la Caixa in Spain
  - **Corporate social responsibility:** [www.csreurope.org](http://www.csreurope.org) - Companies supporting social projects or civic society. CSR Europe regroups over 60 multinational corporations as members.  
E.g. Nokia Connection programme: [www.nokia.com/A4254327](http://www.nokia.com/A4254327) - This is a programme that funds projects for youth development.
  - ...
- ☞ If you are looking for more about getting and managing money for youth projects, have a look at the T-Kit on Funding & Financial Management at [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net) or [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/)
- ☞ For more info about European funding and programmes, you can also contact Eurodesk in your country [www.eurodesk.org](http://www.eurodesk.org)

#### NOTE

You are not allowed to combine two European Union funds (e.g. Youth in Action programme with Leader+ money). You need to find non-European Union money for your **co-funding** (e.g. from the Council of Europe, from private foundations or other institutions).

## THE YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME



The Youth in Action programme is the European Union's **mobility and non-formal education programme** for young people and those working with them, in a leisure time context (outside school). The YiA programme promotes active European citizenship, youth participation, cultural diversity and the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

The Youth in Action programme offers various opportunities for young people to set up projects with an **international dimension**: e.g. group exchanges, voluntary service, democracy projects, group initiatives. It also provides funding for support activities for youth workers to increase the quality of their youth projects.

The Youth in Action Programme is open to young people and youth workers in the so-called '**Programme Countries**'. These are (currently) the EU members, the EFTA countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) and the pre-accession country (only Turkey for the moment, more could join). There are some (limited) possibilities to set up projects with neighbouring partner countries (South-East Europe, Eastern Europe & Caucasus and the EuroMed countries around the Mediterranean Sea) and beyond.

There are **several types of projects** that can receive funding. The funding rules of the Youth in Action programme are largely based on a simple system of flat rates and fixed amounts, depending on the number of participants, the activity, its duration, etc.

- Youth Exchanges (*where groups of young people come together*)
  - Group Initiatives (*local projects originating from youth groups*)
  - Democracy Projects (*encouraging young people to take part in democracy*)
  - European Voluntary Service (*young people volunteer in another country*)
  - Training & Networking for youth workers (*training, seminars, job-shadowing, feasibility visits, partnership building, evaluation meetings, etc.*)
- 👉 Find out more about the Youth in Action programme in the **Programme Guide** which you can download from [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/index_en.html) or contact the YiA National Agency in your country: [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/contact\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/contact_en.html)



### THE YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME & RURAL YOUTH

The Youth in Action programme should be **open for 'ALL' young people**. And if certain groups of young people with fewer opportunities are not reached, special efforts should be made to create easier access for them to the opportunities offered by Youth in Action.



Young people from **rural and geographically isolated** areas are often at a disadvantage compared to their peers, due to lack of infrastructure in small villages and the distance to youth information and activities (as described in the introduction on page 7). In many European countries, the Youth in Action programme is not used by young people and youth groups from remote and underdeveloped areas. In this sense, rural youth is one of the **'inclusion groups'**.

**Inclusion** of 'young people with fewer opportunities' is one of the **priorities** of the Youth in Action programme. This means in practice that between two equally good projects, the selection committee would give priority to the project that includes disadvantaged youth (provided that you explain well why your participants are at disadvantage). Besides this 'extra focus', there are also a number of **extra measures** that make it easier for 'inclusion groups' to do a Youth in Action project.

Of course the **same general rules** apply for you as for any Youth in Action project, but you can get some **extra support** for an Inclusion project, if justified.

- **Exceptional costs:** if you have extra costs because you are working with disadvantaged groups, you can claim these expenses in your application e.g. extra costs for transport because of your geographic isolation... It's up to you to ask – within reason!
- **In Youth Exchanges**, bilateral exchanges (between only 2 countries) are reserved for new organisations or inclusion groups. This allows you to do 'simpler' project (fewer countries) because you have other complications due to your isolated situation.
- You can apply for an **Advanced Planning Visit** to prepare the inclusion project with your different partner organisations, to organise the exchange in the best possible way, have a look at the infrastructure in the host country and find solutions to potential problems.
- **Youth initiatives** run by disadvantaged young people (projects for them by them) are allowed to have a youth worker **coaching** them when needed (and extra money for this).
- The regular duration of a **European Voluntary Service project** is between 2 and 12 months. However, for inclusion projects this can be for periods of **2 weeks onwards**, up to a maximum of 12 months, if there are valid reasons for it.
- There is the possibility of making an **Advanced Planning Visit**, together with the disadvantaged volunteer, to get acquainted with the EVS hosting organisation and project.
- If the EVS volunteer needs extra attention, **reinforced mentorship** can be funded, if requested and justified in the application form. Also the volunteer can be younger than 18 (16 or 17) if there are reasons for it.
- ☞ Every country in Europe is different. Therefore your Youth in Action National Agency will have to judge if your **requests are reasonable**, considering your 'geographical disadvantage' in your context. It's up to you to explain why.
- ☞ More about specific measures for inclusion in the European Commission's '**Inclusion Strategy for the Youth in Action programme**' at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/)

# RURAL PROJECTS IN PRACTICE





## INVOLVE RURAL YOUNG PEOPLE?

### HOW CAN YOU GET YOUNG PEOPLE INTERESTED IN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH ACTIVITIES?

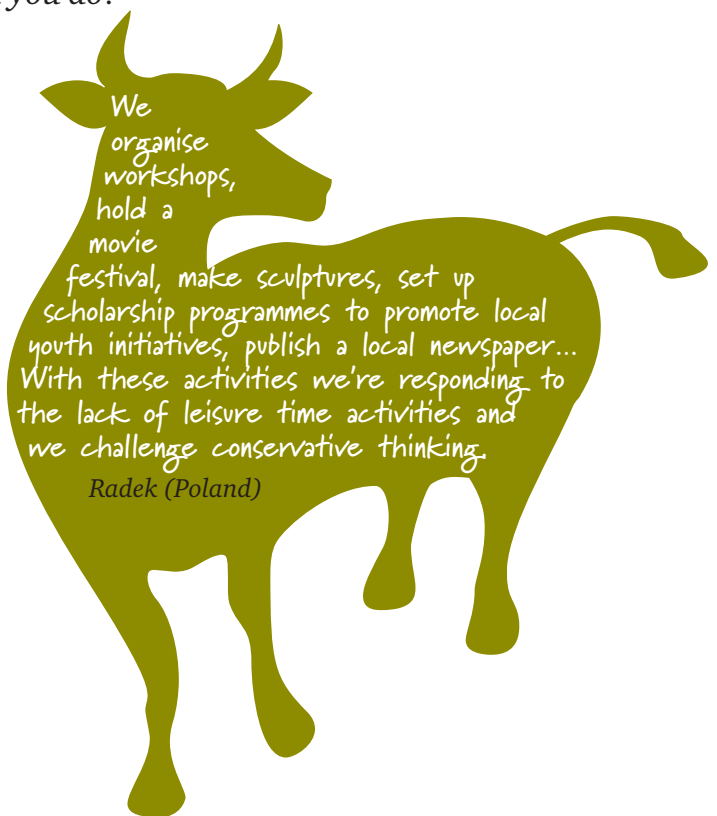
*In many cases, there is a lack of social activities in the countryside – especially for young people. There are not many initiatives – and if any, they are on a local level. The international level seems too far away, somehow alien and unreachable to young people in rural areas. Are they just not interested in international projects? Or is it just difficult to get young people on board for any activity? As a rural youth worker, what can you do?*

#### Have direct contact with the young people

- You can make as many leaflets and posters as you want, but this alone won't be enough to get young people on board your project. It gives them the information, but most likely a personal chat would be more efficient if you what to find out what the young people's interests are or what their reasons are for not participating.
- Organise an open door activity and attract the young people with a concert, free computer gaming, a competition with prizes,... and at the same time talk to them about 'going international'.

#### Go where the young people are

- Maybe you don't want to reach the 'same old' young people who already come to all your activities. To catch new target groups, you should go where they are.
- Go out to schools and talk about your international activities in class. Or, if the young people you are aiming for are online a lot, find them in the virtual world.
- You could also surprise them after school: give them some action, show them what kind of activities you do, do a promotion stunt.



### Keep it interesting and link into the young people's world

- When you are recruiting young participants for your activities, they are probably not so interested in the educational value of international projects. Make sure you show them the fun side of it as well, next to the interesting challenges of such a project.
- If you make information material, make sure to appeal to young people (or ask them to make your info material!). Use slogans with expressions that young people use, use their language, give yourself a young and crazy style. Use people, pictures or videos from other projects.
- If you are targeting special groups, you need special tailor-made approaches (e.g. to get minority youth on board, or young people with disabilities,...). Show the young people what is in it for them.

### Young people are not an island

- Young people do not decide alone if they will come to your (international) activities. It will also depend on their friends and family.
- You can think of ways to convince the kids' families about the benefits of international projects, that you will get European funding for it and that you are skilled youth workers taking them on interesting projects.
- Also ask the young people who are already interested and committed to bring their friends to the activities or camps. Peer contact often works.

### Peer-to-peer communication

- Instead of a youth worker (adult) trying to get young people on board, they might be more open to a message coming from peers. Ask participants of a previous international activity to talk about their experiences. This is highly motivating for others and spreads the international fire.
- Or bring a current EVS volunteer from another country to your youth organisation or to the schools in your area. They can talk about their experiences and make other young people think about doing something similar.
- Intercultural effect! Do some recording / filming of intercultural things as well as international groups and have a prize for the best video within your local rural youth club. Invite the whole community to the prize ceremony.

### Building up step-by-step

- If international projects are a new thing in your area, young people probably need to warm up to this possibility. Organise international clubs and explain what kind of international activities and opportunities exist. Organise an international evening with intercultural games to give them a taste.
  - You can also bring the international dimension to the local community e.g. by organising an international folk dancing festival, bringing in EVS volunteers, etc. to make people gradually more open towards international people and topics.
  - If there is an international youth project happening in your region, try to get your rural youth organisation involved – to meet the foreign youngsters – at least for an evening, an excursion during the day...so that they see what it's like and become motivated to organise similar activities themselves!
- ☛ A useful tool for you to work on the participation of young people in rural areas is the **'Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life'** of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe.  
Available from [www.coe.int/congress/](http://www.coe.int/congress/) & [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Rural/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Rural/)

### NO ORGANISATIONS DOING INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

#### WHAT IF NOBODY HAS DONE ANY OTHER INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS BEFORE?

*Often there are no organisations initiating or with links to international activities in small villages and towns. Most rural NGOs (if any) deal with traditional and local issues, customs, etc. This means that a young person does not get a lot of information about possible international activities and existing youth programmes. If the youth workers and young people don't know about the opportunities, they will be probably never do an international project.*



### There needs to be an 'international missionary'

- Someone from your local community needs to first find out about all the international possibilities. Since you are reading this booklet, we assume you are already informed about some of these possibilities.
- Put yourself on the mailing lists and newsletters of international organisations of your interest: MIJARC, Rural Youth Europe, SALTO Inclusion and, of course, your National Agency of the Youth in Action programme.
- Talk about these international possibilities with people around you. Take part in some international activities yourself (e.g. training courses, seminars, study visits: [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/)) and write an article about it in your organisation's magazine, in a local newspaper, etc.

### Think laterally and be creative

- You don't always have to do the same thing that others have done before you. Besides the 'traditional youth exchange', you could also do exchanges between local volunteer fire brigades, organise joint concerts of the choir or brass band, or a folklore dance festival, ... (if there is no local rural youth organisation in your area).
  - You can also organise a volunteer work-camp in your area (see [www.sciint.org](http://www.sciint.org), [www.yap.org](http://www.yap.org) or [www.alliance.network.eu](http://www.alliance.network.eu)) and bring an international youth group to your place – and get help with not-for-profit local projects.
  - Informal youth groups are also eligible for Youth in Action funding (see page 47), so you don't always need to have an experienced international youth organisation to do an international project. But of course, nothing stops you from teaming up with existing organisations and doing activities in partnership.
  - Try to find partners on a local level who already have experience of international projects. Ask for their experiences, contacts, useful hints and try to co-operate with them or organise the next project together. You can ask your National Agency to put you in contact with other organisations in your area ([http://ec.europa.eu/youth/contact\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/contact_en.html)).
- ☞ You can also participate in **contact-making seminars** to meet potential partners or use **feasibility visits** to get to know potential partner organisations better. Find some offers in the European Training Calendar [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/).



## OVERCOMING LINGUISTIC BARRIERS IN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH ACTIVITIES? DOES IT MATTER IF YOU OR YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

*Young people in rural areas do not have as much contact with foreign languages as their peers in urban settings. The opportunities for language learning are rather scarce in smaller places, as well as the opportunities to practise them. This often means their language skills are not as good, and this makes them reluctant to participate in international activities. So how can you get them on an international project anyway?*

### Avoiding the foreign language?

- If you are organising your first international youth exchange and your group of young people is afraid of the language barrier, search for partners whose language is the same (e.g. *German speakers in Austria, Germany, Switzerland or French speakers in France and Belgium*) or similar to your own (*Slovenian, Czech, Slovakian language or mix Italian, French and Spanish speakers*).
- There's nothing to prevent you doing an international youth activity in which the working language is your own language. There might be foreign groups that speak your language (e.g. children of emigrants from your country?).
- Or you get interpreters in. This avoids anybody having to speak the language of the other group(s), but it considerably limits the chances of spontaneous interaction.
- And don't underestimate the power of non-verbal communication. You don't always have to 'talk': you can also use pictures, music, sport, drawing,...



### Brushing up on the foreign language

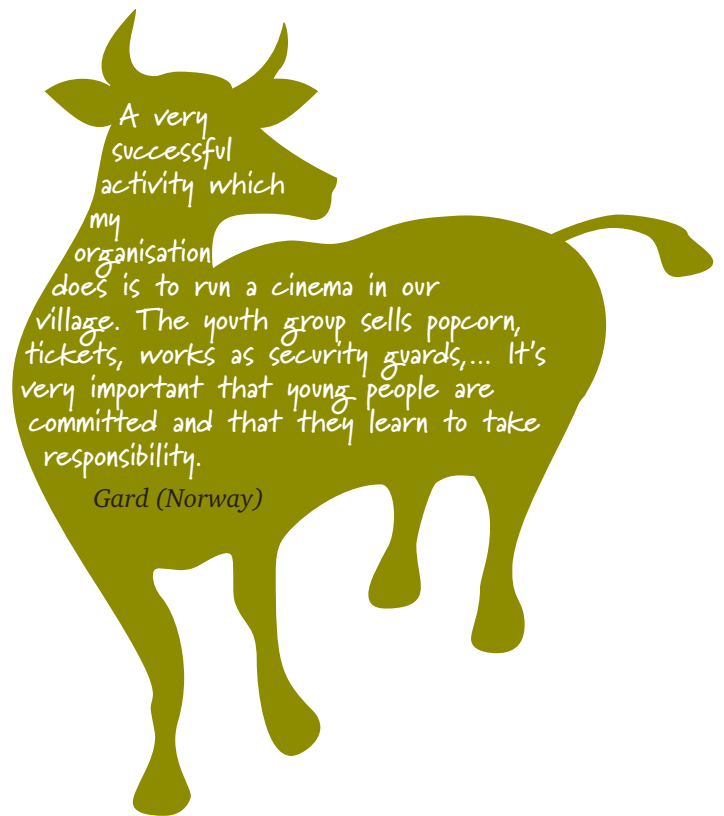
- But maybe your aim is precisely to get your young people more interested in speaking a foreign language. Start from what they know already: maybe fishing out their English course books from a box in the attic can help refresh their ‘school-knowledge’.
- You can offer participants a language course prior to their participating in an international youth event, or give them publications or articles in the foreign language; that way, they will have more contact with the language.
- Organise activities where the young people are confronted with or use the foreign language: listen to music from that country, start writing letters to your partner groups, get a youth magazine from that country and see what you can understand...
- If you know a native speaker (au-pair, EVS, exchange student) in the community, you can organise an informal talk for your youth group once a week at the local café; this way they can try out the language before they actually go on the exchange.
- You can also learn English via computer on the internet – there are many interactive courses, forums, simple chats, etc. around. Or you can– practise!!!

### Step-by-step exposure

- It is important not to scare people away by proposing tough language courses and focusing too much on their language skills. Start with refreshing what they know already (often more than they think) and do some activities around the language you will be using (see above).
- Start off with an exchange where there are no native-speakers, so that all young people are on the same level – everybody is speaking a foreign language.
- Plan some time or activities during the exchange when they can ‘take time off’ from having to speak and think in a foreign language. This can be some exercises or discussions in national groups (in their native language), or activities where no language is needed (mime, sport, music,...).
- International activities can really motivate people to start learning a foreign language; you can help your young people to find language courses or conversation classes after your activity.

### Creating the confidence to speak

- Often the basic words are there, but not the courage to speak. Therefore it is important to create an atmosphere where people feel secure enough to speak.
  - Set a good example and make mistakes yourself. This way you set the tone and people feel more comfortable about not speaking the language perfectly either. Tell participants that language is only a tool and that it doesn't have to be perfect. Try and prevent people laughing at others because of language mistakes. Be patient with people who need more time to find their words.
  - Work a lot in smaller groups. It is easier to dare to make mistakes in front of a few people than in a big group. The more people know each other (use lots of group dynamic exercises), the more they will try to communicate with each other.
  - Give the young people some (backup) tools that they can use during the exchange: a little dictionary with basic words and phrases. You could even develop this together with the young people (asking them what expressions they would be likely to need). Or you can (continue to) build this dictionary during the exchange.
  - Have a back-up system if someone really doesn't feel comfortable speaking the foreign language e.g. team up a participant with good language skills and one with poorer language skills, so that one can help the other and translate if needed.
- 👉 Some National Agencies organise courses that focus on the confidence to speak English (e.g. French-speaking Belgian NA and French NA). More info in the European Training Calendar [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/).



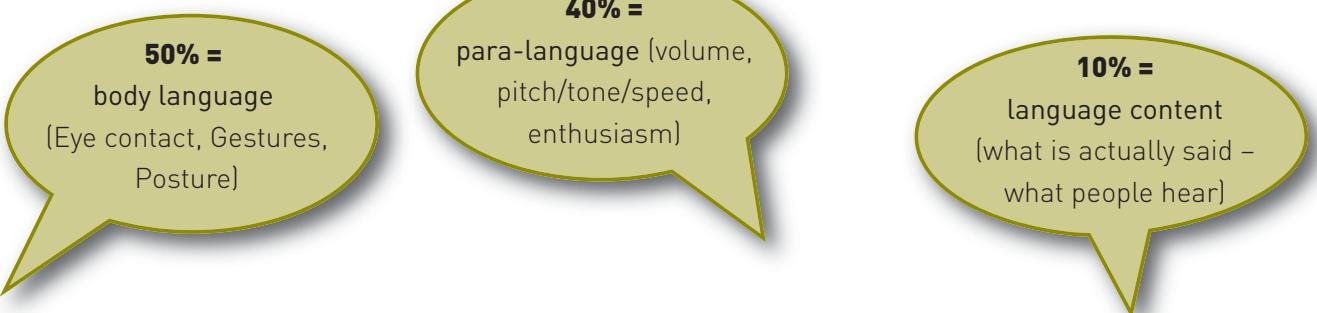
### Communication goes both ways

- Groups in an international project who are lucky enough that the working language is their mother tongue, should also make an effort. Often they have difficulties communicating as well, because they speak the language too fast or they use too much dialect or use words which are too difficult. You should make the native speakers aware that they should also make an effort to adapt their language so that the non-native speakers can understand.
- Have regular evaluation meetings with your participants to see how it is going, and keep an eye out for potential communication difficulties.

### The power of non-verbal communication

- In your international project you can choose methods which involve all senses (smelling, touching, listening, seeing) and not only talking. Give priority to interactive and creative methods e.g. collage, drawing, mime, games,...
- You can do a workshop on body language and encourage participants to use non-verbal communication.
- Non-verbal communication takes more time, so allow for this during your programme.

### HOW WE COMMUNICATE



So we should manage to communicate after all – also without proficiency in a foreign language – what do you think?

- ☛ If you are interested in communication on international projects, have a look at ‘Going International – Opportunities for ALL’ (pages 44-47) [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/GoingInternational/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/GoingInternational/)
- ☛ Also have a look at the T-Kit on Methodology in Language Learning at [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net) or [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/)

## INVOLVING AND CHANGING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



### AN INTERNATIONAL PROJECT COULD CHANGE THE MENTALITIES... A LITTLE BIT.

*The young people you are working with are not 'living on an island'. Especially in rural areas, there are strong ties to the family and to the local community. Everybody knows everybody and there is lots of social control. This could be a strength, because people are very inclined to support you. But on the other hand, traditionalist thinking might also block youth projects that aim for change.*

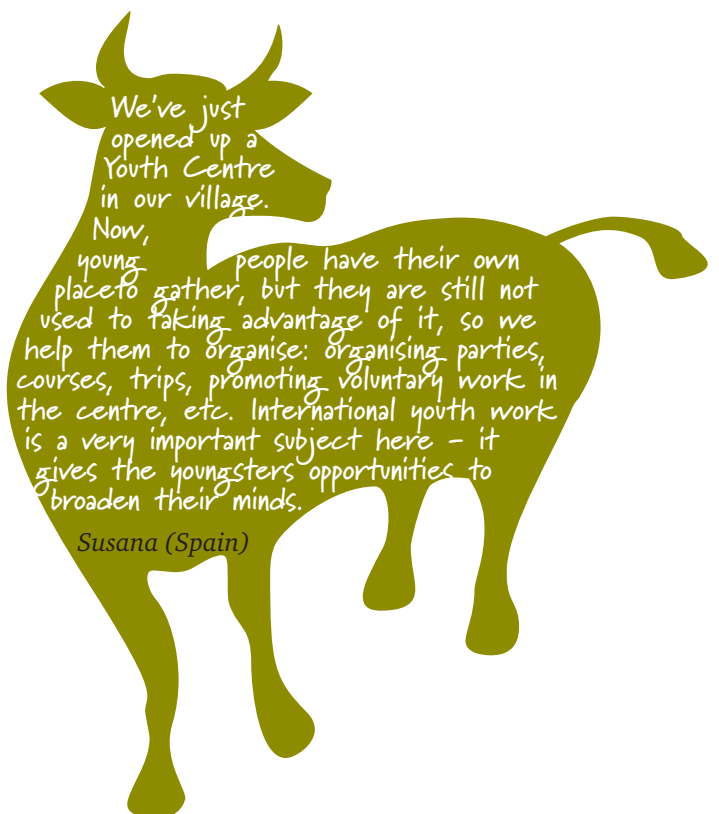
*Families might be reluctant to let their children go abroad on an international project in a strange country. They might not come back to the village again. How can you deal with concerned parents and suspicious villagers?*

### Gain respect for the youth work you do

- It is perfectly normal for parents to not want to let their children go to some strange unknown place or group abroad. Therefore it is important for you, as a youth worker, to show why you are doing the activities you are doing. Make them aware of how enriching this experience can be for their children and for the local community. The benefits on page 18 can help you with this.
- You can also tell the parents or people in the local community about 'positive examples': e.g. other young people (who you know or they know) who have profited from a stay abroad and got a better job, improved their language skills, become more active in the community afterwards, etc. House visits or chatting in the street, in the local shop or at the pub could help.
- Build trust with the local community and the parents. Show that you know what you are doing with their children, and that you have the necessary competencies to do your job (maybe you have a youth work qualification, or a first aid certificate,...).
- You can show that you will manage the project professionally through regular communication about it and other activities. Or you can also try to involve the community in the implementation of the project (e.g. helping out with a fund-raising evening).

This way, they can experience at first hand the way you work and the enthusiasm of the young people.

- Sometimes parents are more inclined to trust people or documents with more 'status'. Get the oldest and most serious looking youth worker (in a suit and tie?) to talk to the parents, or show the 12 stars of your Youth in Action grant contract, or send them the article in the newspaper about your project,...
- Gaining respect is also about not losing respect. Avoid situations that might show your youth organisation or project in a negative light (e.g. getting a bit too drunk at a party, mis-managing the money, complaints about the kids, not responding to problems,...)
- More about the visibility of your project and the dissemination of your project results in 'Making Waves' – a booklet about creating a greater impact with your youth project – [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/)



### Working on stereotypes and changing mentalities

- Small communities tend to stick to tradition. Things are done in a certain way in the village, and most of the people prefer that it stays that way. Combine this with relatively extensive social control and you find yourself quite limited in the things people will accept from you. Therefore you need to find the middle way between respecting traditional values, but still doing a project that aims to change something small or that tries to do things differently (e.g. going abroad).
- Communicating about your project and why you are doing things the way you do them is very important. Put your activities in a broader picture: show that other (respected) people think or do the same. E.g. the prime minister also did youth projects when he was young, the youth exchange is part of someone's social studies, etc.

- Involve important figures from the local community e.g. the mayor, the priest or school teachers. Show off the way in which these people approve of what you are doing e.g. at meetings or in the media. If they support you and your cause, other people from the community will also tend to do so.
  - The people in your village will give you more credit and leeway if there is also something in it for them. Involve them in the project to give them a taste of the international dimension. Do something useful for the community which will benefit all the people (e.g. cleaning a beach or forest path during your project about ecology). This way they will come to respect you more and also approve of the work you are doing.
  - Create visible final products from your (international) projects: e.g. a movie or a theatre-play, write diaries to publish in the local press or on internet blogs, create a website about your project. Present this to as many people as possible in the local community. Make use of the local media (newspaper, radio, TV).
  - If people have stereotypes and prejudices about the partner countries you are working with, you could bring them into contact so that they can get to know what the people are really like. This can be via articles, but also at village parties, meetings or by hosting a group in people's homes.
  - Prejudices only change through positive experiences. It is impossible to change people's minds by force. The opposite is more likely: mostly people counter-react if they are pushed in a certain direction. However, if they have free choice, their change of mind will be more sustainable.
  - You could do this via a 'Living Library' in your community. Invite some international young people or organisations –as books - to an important occasion (festive day/traditional party) in your village. People from the village can use the 'living books' to talk to them and ask them questions about their lives and about certain topics that they have experience with. The unknown becomes known, and the stereotypes become less stereotypical.
- ☞ More about working on stereotypes and prejudice in the All Different, All Equal education pack at [www.alldifferent-allequal.info](http://www.alldifferent-allequal.info) or [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/)
- ☞ More about 'Living Libraries' in the publication "Don't judge a book by its cover! The Living Library organiser's guide" (2005). This book can be ordered from <http://book.coe.int/>

## MAKE YOUNG PEOPLE PROUD OF THEIR RURAL HERITAGE

### HOW CAN YOU MAKE YOUNG PEOPLE STAY IN RURAL AREAS AND PREVENT BRAIN DRAIN?



*It is a growing trend in Europe that young people are leaving the countryside to seek education, a professional career, life and luck in the cities – this phenomenon is called brain drain. In addition, many young people see living in the countryside as a barrier and not as a fortune. They do not identify with their rural heritage and are not proud of their roots. Is there anything you as a youth worker can do?*

#### A conscious decision is a good decision

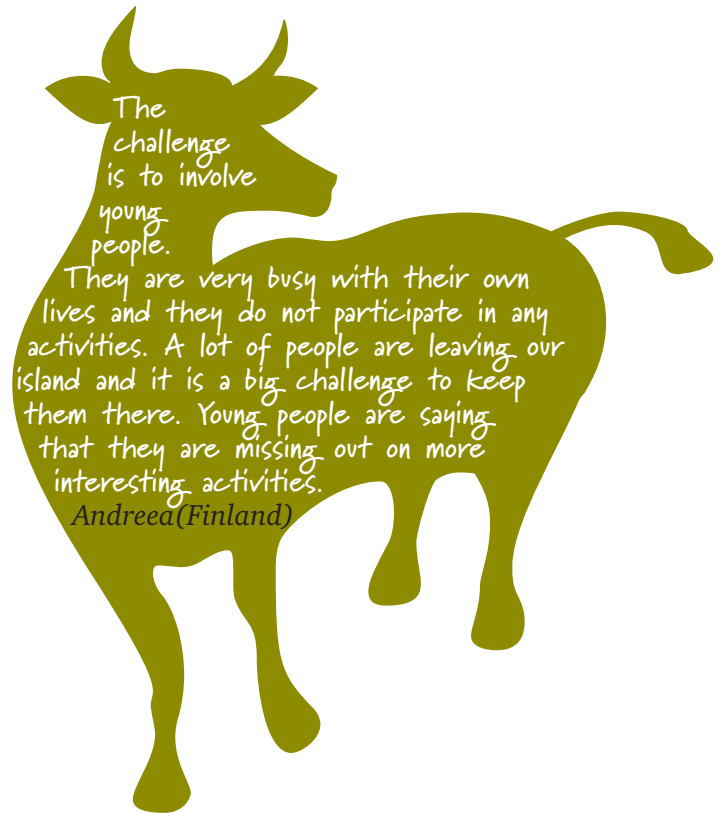
- The rural areas are not better than the cities – but the opposite is also true. Even though many young people see the cities as places full of action and opportunity, this is just as much a biased view as that of a romantic life in the countryside. People do have different preferences – but people cannot make a decision until they know both options.
- Youth workers can help young people consider both the positives and the negatives of living in the countryside and of moving to the cities. Often, young people tend to focus on the negatives of the rural areas, and all the excitement of the city. You can do some activities to counter-balance this. Why not do a plus-minus exercise with the young people, listing all the positive things about the countryside on one side (+) of a piece of paper, and the negative things on the other side (-)? This helps people become more conscious of the pros and cons of staying and moving.
- Remember: It is impossible to change people's minds by force... If it is obvious that you are trying to influence the young people, they will have a tendency to do the opposite... Be warned!

#### Create opportunities for young people

- If you want to have young people staying in the villages instead of leaving for the cities, you will have to provide in the countryside what they would otherwise look for in the cities – and you will have to avoid the reasons that cause them to leave.



- Many young people leave for the cities to study and never come back. If there were more educational opportunities locally (of equal or better quality), they would be less likely to leave. You could think about distance-learning, or professional education with a local craftsman or business person.
- If youngsters want to leave the village because there are no leisure time activities, you could change this by offering attractive and interesting youth work activities. The more young people are committed to your youth work, the more reasons they will have to come back to it whenever they can. Involving them as much as possible in ‘their’ youth organisation (e.g. co-organising activities, participating in decision making, social networking,...) will give them ownership and commitment.
- This is a bit similar within the local community. If they can actively influence life in the village to make it better suited to their needs and wishes, they will work on creating a place that is theirs – and they will be less likely to leave. This could be done by an active rural youth organisation, a youth parliament, participation with or consultation by local politicians... This way rural young people feel accepted and their needs are heard.
- Similarly, if there are not enough sports facilities (e.g. sports hall, fitness studio, swimming pool, etc.) you could develop more outdoor sports activities such as hiking, jogging, skiing in winter, swimming in the lakes in summer, etc.
- If youngsters see a future for themselves within their rural community, they are not very likely to leave the countryside. Job opportunities and housing are vital elements. Of course it is not your job as a youth worker to create employment or affordable housing, but you could encourage the local authorities to do so.
- You could do activities about young people’s roots, something that makes them proud of their rural heritage. Mostly, people are only proud of other people. You could organise a youth exchange on the issue of ‘my countryside’ (see also Project Examples page 68). When the young people can compare their reality with that of others, they become more aware of the positive points about their place and the relatively high quality of life in the countryside.



- ☛ A big issue here is the participation of young people in decision-making on a local level. The ‘**Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life**’ of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe is a useful tool to work on this. Available from [www.coe.int/congress/](http://www.coe.int/congress/) & [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Rural/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Rural/)

### SOLVE TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY ISSUES



#### BUT WE ARE TOO FAR AWAY FROM EVERYTHING! HOW DO WE ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION?

*Limited transport facilities are a big barrier for rural young people who might want to participate in or organise international projects. When there is hardly any public transport system, it is difficult to be mobile (unless you rely on others or have your own car). And even if there is some public transport (or someone that drives you), the geographic distances make it more expensive and time-consuming to travel. What can you do about this?*

#### Be creative and use the means that are there

- To get to your international project in a remote area, you need to arrange transport to the venue. If there is no public transport available, you could try other possibilities: you could arrange some sponsorship with a local bus company, maybe the town council has a school-bus that could come and pick you up, think about any other organisation that has transport (e.g. choir, sports club,...) or parents might organise a shuttle service in their own cars between the nearest station and the village.
- For getting from A to B during your youth exchange, it might be much cheaper to organise alternative transport like bikes, motor-boats, horses & carriages, tractors & trailers, etc. Surely this is even more fun for participants, instead of waiting for a bus. Or you could do a nature hike from A to B instead of taking the bus, and stay overnight in the hayloft of a farm on the way there. It all adds to the ‘rural’ theme of your activity.

### Find extra money for travel and transport

- If you still need to have proper wheels, and you need to pay for those, then you also need to get money for it. Add this mobility cost in your budget.
- The Youth in Action grants (see page 47) usually cover 70% of travel costs. So you will need to get the remaining 30% from other resources. Some organisations ask for a fee from the participants to cover this 30%, but you can also look for co-funding (see page 45): maybe your town council can support you financially, maybe some of the parents want to make a donation or a local company wants to sponsor your event.
- You can also do all kinds of fund-raising activities: organise a party, sell cakes, hold a raffle, wash cars, help out on a farm,... There are thousands of ways to get some more income. Have a look at the SALTO Toolbox [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/) or the fundraising database at [www.fund-raising.com](http://www.fund-raising.com)
- If you are doing a Youth in Action project with young people with fewer opportunities and you can show credibly that your participants would not be able to afford the 30% of the travel costs, you can apply for this extra travel money in the “exceptional costs”.
- Also think about ways to level out differences in purchasing power. Some well off kids would not have a problem coughing up the 30% of an international travel ticket, but maybe people from bigger or poorer families might. You could fundraise some extra money for those participants.

👉 The **Solidarity Fund for Youth Mobility** (Council of Europe) actually sponsors international rail travel for groups of young people with fewer opportunities: [www.coe.int/youth/](http://www.coe.int/youth/)



#### Get Active – Exercise

**Statement exercise regarding rural challenges and linking international projects to local needs**

Prepare a room with a division line in the middle (e.g. tape stuck on the floor, drawn in chalk,...). Put a NO sign on one side of the room and a YES sign on the opposite side.

#### Step 1:

Read the following statements out loud to your participants. If their answer is ‘yes’, they move to the ‘yes’ side of the room; if their answer is ‘no’, they go to the ‘no’ side. Ask various participants for their arguments: Why do they think so? What are their personal experiences?

What are their arguments?

Facilitate the discussion, asking participants from 'both sides' for their opinion. If the participants change their minds while listening to the arguments, they can move over to the other side. You might want to ask them: "What has made you change your mind?" Encourage discussion and also ask 'quiet' participants for their opinion.

Possible statements (feel free to make up your own ones):

- Young people in rural areas are not interested in international activities
- International projects help to make young people 'stay' in their villages
- Parents in rural areas do not want their children to take part in a voluntary service programme because they think they will not return to their rural community
- The lack of knowledge of a foreign language prevents young people from rural areas taking part in international youth activities
- International youth exchanges frighten the local community and could increase xenophobia
- Regional projects are more useful for finding solutions to challenges in rural communities, than international projects

### **Step 2:**

At the end of the different statements and discussions, the facilitator rounds off the exercise with the following questions:

- How can young people benefit from linking up with other youngsters facing similar rural realities in other countries?
- How can you, as a youth worker, benefit from international youth (YiA) activities?
- How can 'Youth in Action' help you to solve the problems and challenges of youth workers and young people in rural areas?

### **Step 3:**

Encourage your participants to come up with arguments in favour of international projects in rural areas. Note them down on a flipchart. This list of arguments can help youth workers become more motivated to run international projects in rural areas. You might also come up with good points in favour of international projects to present to families, authorities, local community,...

- 👉 Also have a look at similar arguments in chapter "Why go international with rural youth? - Benefits" on page 18

# EXAMPLES OF RURAL PROJECTS

This chapter lists some of the many rural project examples we have received. We want to give an overview of different types of projects (exchanges, voluntary service, youth initiatives,...), addressing different types of rural challenges and receiving different types of funding.

- Thank you to all who sent in project examples, and sorry to those whose examples could not be published or were shortened because of space constraints.

## **'Inclusion through rural youth participation projects – Best practices all over Europe'**

Support measures: seminar

**Co-ordinating organisation:**

*MIJARC Europe – Cáceres, Spain*

**What was the project about?**

The seminar gathered young youth workers from rural areas to exchange their opinions, ideas and best practices on the theme of 'Youth participation for a sustainable development of rural areas'. The project focused on different topics, such as sustainable development, rural youth participation and European citizenship. Each participant joined one of the three groups to discuss, to understand and to try to find common positions on those issues.

The main aim was to encourage our member movements to work on the topic of 'Youth participation for a sustainable development in rural areas'. By improving their knowledge on this issue, we believe they are able to start new projects or create new partnerships that can improve their daily lives in rural areas. We think we achieved this aim, even though it is a work in progress... which is part of a long-term project called 'Change the village – Challenge yourself! You(th) can make a difference, a co-operation project of Rural Youth Europe and MIJARC Europe.

**More info:** [www.mijarc.org/europe](http://www.mijarc.org/europe)

### **Our villages are so nice because they are our villages'**

Multilateral youth exchange (cooperation with neighbouring countries)

#### **Co-ordinating and hosting organisation:**

*Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency – SPPMD, FYRO Macedonia*

#### How did you find your partner organisations?

I met partners from France, Finland, Spain, Latvia and Turkey at the SALTO Training Course for Rural Youth (Turkey, 2007) where we started to develop this project idea. We invited four more partners from the South-East Europe region: Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, who we found through our networks in the Balkans.

#### How are you going to address potential language difficulties during the activity?

We were aware that the level of English of the youngsters from these areas was not very high. Therefore we planned 2 months of intense preparation in each of the countries, practising some situations with the participants, which would be common at the exchange: e.g. dinner in the host family, shopping at the market, basic introductions, etc.

At the beginning of the exchange we've planned a one-day language game to break the ice and to establish basic communication, not only between the participants, but also so that they can communicate with the Macedonian host families. In addition, a list of Macedonian words will be circulated among all partners during the preparation period and all participants are invited to learn as much of it as possible. We are planning to organise a quiz on people's knowledge of Macedonian at the end of the exchange and give some very interesting, traditional Macedonian awards to the participants with the best knowledge of Macedonian language and traditions.

#### How are you going to mix the different groups?

Every national group will prepare a drama, role-play, poem or other type of audiovisual presentation from their village, which represents their rural reality. Participants will also cook their lunch together in small mixed groups, facilitated by one leader. Thus, they will improve their intercultural and language skills. They will need to go shopping on their own in order to learn and practise different languages and customs. For the first three days, the group will stay in a youth hostel and this period will be used mainly to build a good group atmosphere. Afterwards, participants will stay in small groups with Macedonian families in three different villages in the countryside – and they'll meet only for some evening programmes.

### 'Country Lifestyle II'

Multilateral Youth Exchange

#### Hosting organisation:

*Landjugend Niederösterreich - Austria (regional branch of Austrian Rural Youth)*

What were the main learning points and results of this exchange?

During the exchange, we addressed three topics in different workshops: alternative energy, migration and regional development. Participants discussed the situation in different countries and they developed an action plan on how the various countries can improve the situation. The group presented these results in public at a closing event, which drew many people from the local community.

How did you solve communication problems and break language barriers?

- Our working language was English. When we divided participants into (working) groups, we made sure that there were always two participants from one country in each group so that they could help each other out with vocabulary, translation, etc.
- In addition, each evening there was a little evaluation with the participants to see if everybody felt comfortable in the group and to detect potential problems at an early stage, in order to counteract them immediately, if necessary.

What were the costs? How did you finance and co-finance the exchange?

We applied for 21.000 euro from the European Youth Programme (predecessor of Youth in Action). In addition we had private sponsors (e.g. the local bank) and some of the organisation's own resources.

How did you find your partner organisations?

We built up the contacts to the various youth organisations involved over several years, when our team members took part in different study sessions and training courses about Rural Youth Europe as well as Youth Programme activities in Austria, Poland and England. Each one of the Austrian participants established new contacts and friendships on those activities, which then led to a successful 'Country Lifestyle I' exchange. 'Country Lifestyle II' was the follow up to the first one.

**More info:** [www.noelandjugend.at](http://www.noelandjugend.at) - [www.landjugend.at](http://www.landjugend.at)

### **'Rural Papparazzi'**

Trans-national youth initiative

#### **Co-ordinating organisation:**

*Obre'tebre in La Aldea - Spain*

#### Where did the project idea come from?

This project idea was born during the SALTO TC Rural in Turkey in 2007 and the partners of the project are participants from that course. We applied for a Trans-national Youth Initiative in Spain. At present we are planning the Advanced Planning Visit in la Aldea. Our youngsters are thinking of organising the welcome party for this visit. They are so excited that they want to celebrate their arrival with bulls (an important and very traditional welcome).

#### What does the context and the preparation for your project look like?

We are going to plan and share responsibilities and tasks. But the most important thing is that we get to know each other a bit more. Right now, many youngsters are studying English intensively and they are very happy to host our partners. It is going to be a big event in the area and the first international youth activity that the EU is financing in the village and in the province of Tarragona.

#### What is the project all about?

The project is about an online gallery with 5 countries. Every month, all the groups of rural young people will take photos according to the theme of the month (agreed themes: culture and people, landscapes,...), which will be uploaded onto the online gallery. The youngsters will be able to vote for the best 'shots'. The best pictures will be printed out for an exhibition. This exhibition will rotate between the five partner countries involved in the project. If everything goes well, we will organise an exchange at the same time as the photo exhibition in Poland next summer.

**More info:** [www.obretebre.org](http://www.obretebre.org)



**Direction → Youth Centre'**

Youth initiative

**Organisation:** *FARMa - Poland.*

The coordinating group consists of ten young people. The 3 main goals of the youth initiative

- Create a youth centre. We almost succeeded, meaning that we got a place for ourselves, but not a big one. Anyway, it is very important that youngsters feel they have their own place. We organised different workshops, with up to 50 participants altogether.
- The TOTU festival. This is a youth culture festival. Hundreds of kids and youngsters took part in it, in addition to all the young music groups, young photographers, etc.
- Internet youth information service. We are working on it now and are organising workshops for a group of youngsters to learn how to run such a service. There will be about 10 young people working on this information website.

**Where do you get the funding for this project?**

The main funding is from the YOUTH programme, plus a lot of voluntary work, and some services are for free. For example, we didn't have to pay for many things we needed to rent for the festival and we even managed to get free permanent hosting for the new webpage. It is much easier to get contributions and services in kind in our rural area, rather than money in our bank account.

**How did you involve the local community and authorities?**

After last year's local elections everything has changed. Our local authorities don't see a partner in us anymore and they want to use us for their private (political) aims. That's why we are now reluctant to cooperate with the local government.

Our youth NGO has built up 2 years of experience, and many local institutions are willing to cooperate with us now. The beginning was hard, but now they see how much we can do and that we are a good partner.

Regarding the people in the community, we first of all needed to involve more young people. The key to our success is that our organisation is, in fact, the young people themselves. It works really well: new youngsters see that their friends from school do projects with us and they gradually start being interested in participating as well.

**More info:** [www.fundacjafarma.pl/en](http://www.fundacjafarma.pl/en)

### '4H Job shadowing'

Practical training experience - Job shadowing

**Organisations involved:** *Finnish 4H Federation, Danish 4H and Landboudom*

#### What was the project about?

Staff and volunteers from rural youth organisations can learn a lot from their colleagues abroad. Therefore, the Danish Education officer of 4H took part in a 'job shadowing' programme, visiting the Finnish 4H Federation in Helsinki, which has years of experience in international rural youth work.

The Danish 'shadow-person' stayed for one week, getting an introduction into the Finnish 4H Federation, the organisation and its structures. Furthermore, she visited specific projects, like school activities and youth clubs in Tampere and Mikkeli, as well as the headquarters in Helsinki. She had the chance to learn about different Finnish 4H activities on a local, regional and national level.

The aim was to familiarise herself with the youth programme and to find out about the possibility of future co-operation, making use of the European Union Youth (in Action) programme.

#### Where did the funding come from?

For this 'job shadowing' project, the EU youth programme covered 90% of the costs. It was a big success and resulted in many fruitful co-operation projects together.

#### Why would you recommend a job shadowing project?

If you want to know how rural youth organisations work in other countries, you could profit a great deal from such an exchange. Staff or volunteers from different youth organisations can learn from each other, exchange good practice and set up Youth in Action projects in the future. This type of 'job shadowing' makes you think about how you can adapt ideas from other countries and organisations: very inspiring.

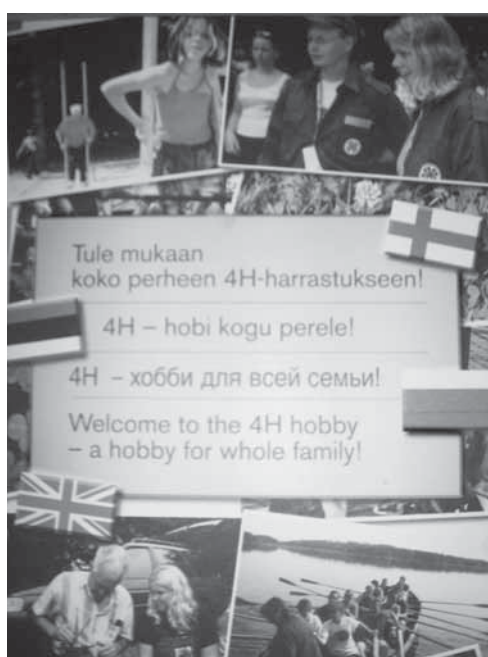
It's also possible for more than one person from an organisation to visit another for 'job shadowing'.

**More info:** [www.4h.fi](http://www.4h.fi) - [www.danmarks4h.dk](http://www.danmarks4h.dk)

### 'Multilingual 4H brochure'

Support measures - youth information

**Implementing and applying organisation:** *Finnish 4H Federation*



#### What was the project about?

The aim of the project was to make a leaflet in 4 languages: Finnish, Estonian, Russian and English. The leaflet was a co-operation project between Finnish 4H and Estonian 4H. It gives basic information about 4H activities both in Finland and in Estonia, as well as about the Youth in Action Programme. In both countries, Estonia and Finland, it is important to give information in different languages about 4H: in Finland there are many immigrant families involved in 4H and in Estonia, information also needs to be in Russian to include this big local minority. In addition, at local level, associations do not have enough information about the Youth in Action Programme of the European Union and its possibilities. Therefore more information is needed – in local language at the grassroots level.

#### How did you go about the project?

The project team consisted of 4 members of Finnish 4H and 4 members of Estonian 4H. The project team met twice, once in Finland and once in Estonia, to agree on all details of the publication. It was written by themselves and finally, 7000 copies were printed. The publication became a big success and is used in many local, regional, national and European rural youth activities.

**More info:** [www.4h.fi](http://www.4h.fi)

### **'Intergenerational Integration'**

European Voluntary service (EVS)

#### **Hosting organisation:**

*Movimiento de Jovenes Rurales Christianos - Spain*

#### **Context – problems - needs**

The project is taking place in a rural area, in Plasenzuela, a rural village of 620 inhabitants in Western Spain, which is a mainly cattle-farming area. It is an under-privileged rural area because of high levels of emigration towards big cities.

We are in the first phase of the project which will last for 5 years. There are currently two European Union volunteers from Germany and Estonia, who work jointly with the Spanish staff members to create opportunities for young people, so that they stay in the village.

#### **Outcomes**

The project is very positive for young Europeans, as it totally changes their idea of Europe, as well as their opinion of small villages and of Spanish young people. For the village, having EVS brings an outside view on how to do things and solve problems. The foreign volunteers create new a dynamic in the village, with the young people, but also with the other inhabitants.

#### **People involved**

The project is having quite a wide impact, not only on the young people of Plasenzuela and on the EVS volunteers. The adults of local associations (e.g. housewives' club, hunting group, sports clubs,...) are also supporting the project and are interested in cooperating. Having EVS volunteers assembles 'all the social strengths of a village'.

**More info:** [www.ruralescristianos.org/MJRC.html](http://www.ruralescristianos.org/MJRC.html)

# GOING FURTHER, REFERENCES TO OTHER PUBLICATIONS & WEBSITES

## FURTHER READING

Some more SALTO 'Inclusion for All' publications:

- **Going International - Inclusion for All (2004)** – a booklet with practical inclusion methods and advice for preparing, implementing and following-up on international projects for young people with fewer opportunities
- **Use your Hands to Move Ahead (2004)** – using practical tasks to increase participation by young people with fewer opportunities in short term European Voluntary Service projects
- **Fit for Life (2005)** – using sport as an educational tool for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in youth work and international youth projects.
- **No Barriers, No Borders (2006)** – a practical booklet on setting up international mixed ability youth projects (including people with and without a disability)
- **Over the Rainbow (2006)** – a practical booklet on setting up international projects with young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and young people questioning their sexual orientation
- **Inclusion & Diversity (2006)** – how to make your youth work and youth projects more inclusive and reach more diverse target groups (co-operation SALTO Inclusion & SALTO Cultural Diversity)
- **No Offence (2007)** – exploring opportunities and setting up youth projects with young ex-offenders and those at risk of offending
- **Village International (2007)** - A practical booklet for youth workers about setting up international projects in rural and geographically isolated areas
- **Making Waves (2007)** - Creating a greater impact with your youth projects, a booklet about visibility, dissemination and exploitation of your project results
  
- **Coaching Guide (2006)** – a guide that explores the concept of Coaching, including practical tools, methods, advice and information (by SALTO Participation)

👉 Find them all at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/)

**Looking for youth work and training methods on Inclusion and other topics?**

Browse through the SALTO Toolbox for Training at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/)



**T-Kit Series:** *The training kits are thematic publications written by experienced youth trainers. They are easy-to-use handbooks for use in training and study sessions, published by the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission on European Youth Worker Training.*

- Social Inclusion
- Project Management
- Organisational Management
- Methodology in Language Learning
- Intercultural Learning
- International Voluntary Service
- Under Construction... Citizenship, Youth and Europe
- Training Essentials
- Funding and Financial Management
- Educational Evaluation in Youth Work
- Euromed Co-operation

👉 Downloadable from [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net) or [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/)

### **MORE LINKS TO RURAL RESOURCES**

SALTO has created a specific page with resources for rural youth projects at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Rural/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Rural/). This page will be updated regularly.

## ABOUT THE RURAL AUTHORS

This booklet was written by:



**SABINE KLOCKER** (Author & Trainer)

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Sabine comes from a tiny alpine village in Austria and has been actively involved in rural youth work and non-formal education for over 15 years. She has been working and volunteering at local, regional, national and European level. In her capacity as Secretary General of Rural Youth Europe and as a freelance trainer, she has organised many international rural youth activities. Youth participation on a local level and international youth activities for rural young people have always been close to her heart and at the core of her interests. Already as a teenager, she founded an International Committee for rural young people in her region, in order to make her village more international. She made good use of the European Youth Programme to open a window on the world for many rural young people in Europe.

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**TONY GEUDENS** (Author & Editor)

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Tony is the coordinator of the SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre in Flanders, Belgium. Coming from a small village in Belgium himself, he felt very connected with the topic of the SALTO TC Rural. When he organised a youth exchange in his village some ten years ago, people looked at him in awe, asking: “How did you manage?” The answer was simple: “Keep your eyes and ears open (to find out about different opportunities) and give it a try.” Tony wants to stimulate youth workers in rural and isolated areas to try out an international youth project themselves, because it can change people’s lives – as it did for him.

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**NOTES**

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Half of the European Union's population lives in rural and geographically isolated areas... and still rural young people don't find their way to European youth projects easily.

'Village International' is a booklet for rural youth workers and youth leaders, about how to set up international youth projects, for and with rural youngsters, in geographically remote and disadvantaged areas.

'Village International' shows you that it's worthwhile to embark on an international adventure, and enjoy the benefits of international projects: for the young people, for your organisation, for the community and for yourself.

'Village International' gives you an overview of where and how to start organising your international rural youth project. You will find information on partner finding, project funding and tips and tricks from experienced rural youth workers on how to address specific challenges when setting up your international activity.

We hope this booklet will inspire you to bring an international dimension to your rural youth work and to make your Village a bit more International.

Based on the SALTO 'TC Rural' youth worker training course (2007).

This booklet is part of the SALTO "Inclusion for All" series. Download them for free at:  
[www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/)

