



EURUFU

European Rural Futures

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Editor

LEAD PARTNER EURUFU

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Preface

Demographic change is not a political fad, but a tangible socio-political challenge for Thuringia and Europe. Demographic developments induce changes in society, which influence the face of our continent. Population decline, growing proportion of older EU citizens and strong regional differences in the development provide us with major challenges. These must be tackled and opportunities must be exploited courageously.

Central Issues for the Future are the maintenance and development of technical and social infrastructure, especially in rural regions. Answers to this question affect not only individual parts of the country or states but the European Union as a whole. The EU itself has adopted the Strategy "EU 2020" and thereby set the objectives and tools to make all European regions fit for the future.

Against this background Thuringia with the Lead of the Thuringian Ministry for Construction, Regional Development and Transport together with seven European partner regions has developed the idea for EURUFU - "European Rural Futures". With this project the demographic change in rural European regions was investigated and supported by a new international network in the field of public services and regional economic development. In this process, pilot projects were tested practically, transferred and further developed across borders.

EURUFU has developed strategies for regional self-supporting solutions that provide equal-opportunity and living conditions. It is about very practical issues that affect the lives of people in Europe in many ways. In Thuringia for example it is ensuring patient medical care by care assistants or a simplification of access to public transport with the help of a mobility consultant. Such projects help to secure the future of rural areas in the Free State.

One thing has been clearly shown in recent years: We can only shape change if we are willing to question the status quo, to test new approaches and to walk uncommon paths. This brochure aims to present the results of three years of intensive work to a wide audience and to feed into the debate about useful approaches to demographic change.

I thank all those who contributed and hope all readers will find many ideas, suggestions and contacts for their future work!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Christian Carius". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Christian Carius, MdL
*Thüringer Minister für Bau,
Landesentwicklung und Verkehr*

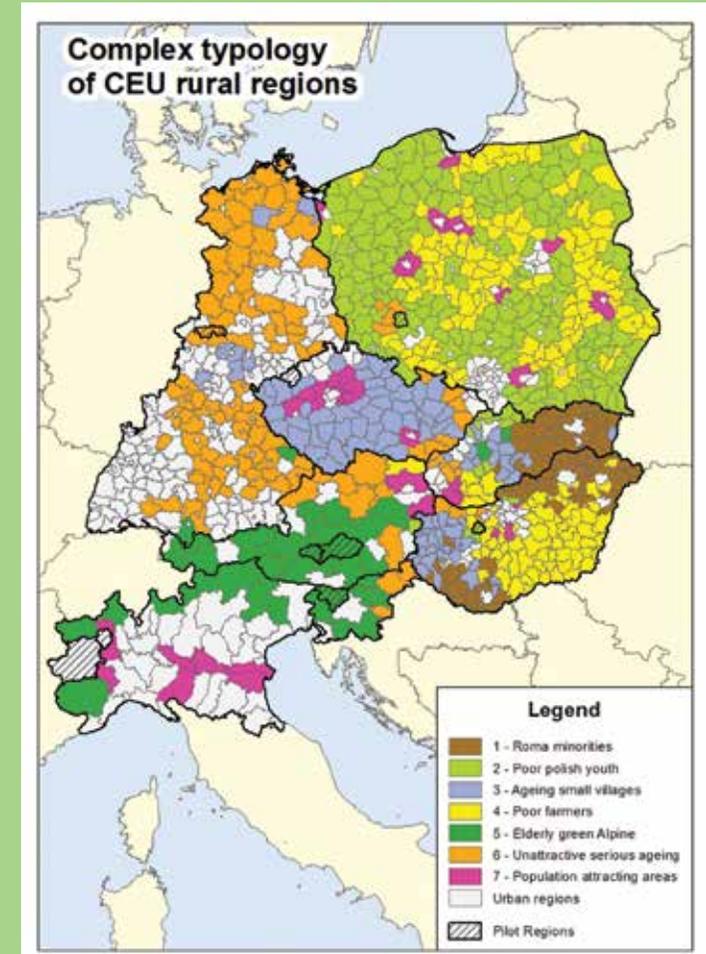
Final definition and delineation of rural areas in Central Europe

The main objective of work package 3 of the project was to analyse the problems and identify the potentials of rural areas in Central Europe. But what is rural?! How do you define it?! The question is simple; the answer is far less evident. Just stop for a minute and think about it. The longest you think, the more you will be confused about the definition and characteristics of rural. Probably one of the first pictures which come into your mind is a landscape dominated by agriculture, fresh air and nature without traffic jams, noise and crowd. Nevertheless, small and medium sized towns could also be considered rural, especially when they are situated in remote areas, far from big city centres. However, even if we have our personal impressions about rural landscapes, it is not an easy task to define rural regions in general. At this stage we have to call for the help of statistics.

But why should we define rural areas at all?! There are several definitions and categorizations already exist; some of them are international (OECD, EUROSTAT), and some used on national level. Of course, we did not want to reinvent the wheel, but we did intend to synthesize and adjust the given methodologies to the special characteristics of Central Europe. The overview of the existing methodologies proved that a comprehensive, official definition of rural areas does not exist. Even in Central Europe, in such a small region, different definitions are used by the member countries. The economic, demographic and cultural situation differs from country to country; however, common characteristics of rural areas can be defined within the territorial scope of Central Europe.

We used the OECD methodology as a base applying it for different territorial levels (LAU1-NUTS3) and incorporating additional criteria (land cover/use, accessibility, importance of agriculture) into the model. At the end we concluded that a region considered as rural if more than 15% of its population live in settlements with population density less than 150 inh./km² and if at least two of the following criteria are satisfied (comparing to the Central European average): 1) remote, 2) dominantly covered by natural vegetation and 3) the role of agriculture is important. In this way we managed to create a Central European rural definition; however, we have to admit that it is too general. A touristic alpine region in Austria cannot be compared with a really poor region in eastern Hungary characterized by agriculture and Roma minority. Both of them are rural, but in a quite different way.

In order to be able to characterize the different types of rural regions in Central Europe we went one step further. We used a complex clustering method called: "K-means cluster analyse" with 8 initial input indicators describing the main characteristics of the regions in the field of demography, land use, economy and settlement structure. The outcome of the analysis can be seen on the following map. Please note that some of the pilot regions of the project were characterized as urban because of the statistical effect caused by a dominant urban centre. However, the pilot projects showed that in these regions outside the urban centres there are areas which have typical rural characteristics and problems.



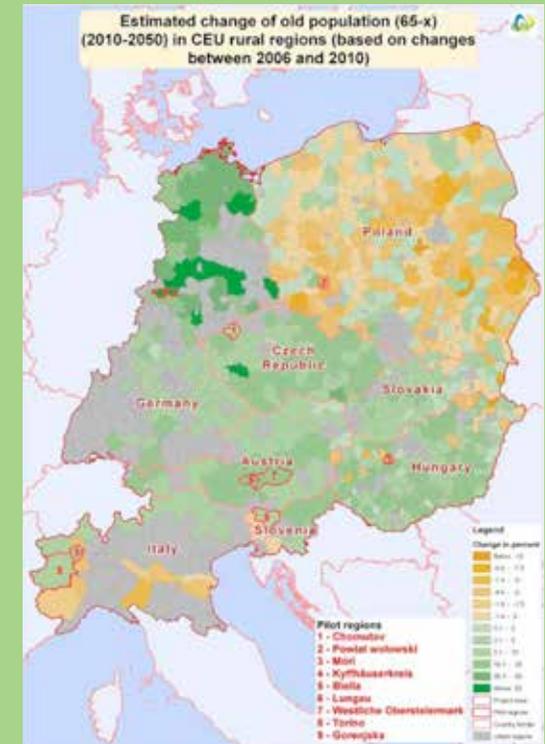
Legend on map	Name	Main characteristics
1	Roma minorities	Low GDP; High proportion of Roma population; Negative net migration; Presence of small settlements; Younger age structure
2	Poor polish youth	Young age structure; Low GDP; Lack of small settlements
3	Ageing small villages	Growing proportion of old population; High proportion of small settlements
4	Poor farmers	Dominant agricultural land use; Low GDP; Lack of small settlements
5	Elderly green Alpine	Old age structure; Dominant natural vegetation land cover; High GDP; Positive net migration; Low proportion of small settlements
6	Unattractive serious ageing	Growing proportion of old population; Old age structure; Negative net migration; High GDP; Low proportion of small settlements
7	Population attracting areas	Positive net migration; High GDP; Agricultural land use

Most of these rural regions have to face serious ageing and the decline of their population. (See maps below) The predictions for the near future (based on trends 2006-2010) show that the proportion of elderly population (65 year old or above) will significantly increase in most of the rural areas of Central Europe. Especially the new federal states of Germany run the risk of ageing, but the rest of Germany, the Czech Republic, the whole Alpine area and most parts of Hungary and Slovakia will also suffer from ageing to a certain extent. Poland and the agricultural parts of northern Italy seem to be exceptions since in these regions the proportion of elderly population are likely to decrease (or just slightly increase) in the next couple of decades. In eastern parts of Hungary and Slovakia the predicted decrease can be explained by the high fertility rate of the significant Roma minority.

When it comes to the scenarios with regard the whole population number, we can see that Germany (especially the new federal states of Germany) and Hungary show the most unfavourable predictions. In some regions even half of the population could disappear in 40 years unless the current trends change. In the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia population increase could happen around city centres, while remote areas will likely suffer from population loss. In Austria the regions around the Danube tend to absorb the out-migrating population of the Alpine region. Slovenia and northern Italy has the most promising scenarios since almost all of their rural regions can expect population surplus in the near future.

As we can see above, the rural areas of Central Europe have to deal with different demographic scenarios, which require different solutions to maintain the sustainable provision of public services. During the EURUFU project we have learnt that several best practices and development ideas already exist which could be transferred to other regions to solve or at least mitigate the upcoming difficulties that rural areas have to face mainly due to demographic change. In order to facilitate the transfer of these ideas, we developed a kind of benchmarking system, where any Central European rural region can place itself based on the main characteristics of the region. In this way a region can easily look for similar regions in Central Europe, where the problems are likely to be similar in certain terms. The developed benchmarking system contains ideas and best practices – collected during the project – divided into four categories which were the key topics of EURUFU: 1) Social and health care, 2) Education and training, 3) Job opportunities and local economy, 4) Mobility and transport. Every idea is briefly described and the related basic criterion of adaptability as well as their relevance and feasibility are presented. Then specific pilot regions of the project were identified where the idea could be applied.

By using the EURUFU benchmarking system a region can have the opportunity to get in contact with relevant stakeholders from abroad, discuss the problems and find solutions together, or just “import” a best practice. Moreover, the system helps all local and regional target groups like the persons responsible for municipalities, schools, health and social care providers to be able to negotiate better with the national authorities in order to fulfil their needs related to negative influences of demographic change.



Benchmarking is a good start, but if we really want to support rural regions we should draw up a guideline for them, a general common strategy which they can follow. Hence, based on the knowledge we gained during the analyses and desk research phase of the project, we developed a joint strategy, where we tried to find common answers to the challenges for rural areas in Central Europe. The overall, common „core-strategy“ is formulated based on the common features of all rural areas. It takes the key topics of EURUFU as focus points for intervention, since these are the thematic fields in which it is the most necessary (and possible) to define interventions being implemented either on local level or at national level. As means of the common strategy the following tools have been identified: usage of local strategy (1); inclusion of the business sector (2); regulation and coordination (3); lobbying (4). Addressing the business sector is an important tool in several regions, and can be nowhere neglected since it has wide-spread effects on the region. Traditional branches (and crafts) should be adapted to the requirements of the 21st century, in a way taking into account also problems of rural CEU areas. Regulation, coordination is another important but in several aspects an underrated and not enough emphasized area. Although by its application more significant impacts can be gained than via financial interventions (subsidies), the tool is not used widely enough currently.

The chart below presents the types of interventions at each territorial level, and identifies the respective possible tools in each EURUFU thematic field.

Intervention logic of the core strategy

Tools		Handling social challenges		Handling economic challenges	
Intervention level for problem handling	Tool	Education and training	Social and health care	Mobility and transport	Job opportunities and local economy
The focus points for intervention					
Local level	Application of local strategy – with interventions on local level (EU financing)	• „Coming Home“ – local programmes focused on the young generations	• The development of the institutional system of the health and welfare of the ageing population	• Developments of the public transport – in favour of the commuting to work. Innovative solutions in the area of mobility. (e.g. car sharing) • Transport development (?) in the sensitive natural areas and touristic destinations	• Capitalizing local take-off points . e.g. RandD, innovation, strengthening traditional industries • Local Smart Specialization strategy • In case of touristic regions touristic action plan aiming at the preservation and the strengthening of the attractiveness. • Tele-work, telework centres, smart work centres
	Inclusion of the business sector	• Company scholarships • Intern/apprentice programmes • Company kindergartens	• Building of social and health care institutions • Silver economy	• Special offers of the service providers (e.g. for employees)	• Strengthening the local supply-chains, local economic interventions • Local products
National level	Regulation and coordination	• The consideration of demands of the companies during the creation of the training programmes • Handling migration problems (in case it is relevant)	• Measures encouraging willingness to have children: - Taxation policy favouring families - The encouragement of part-time employment - Daytime childcare institutional system • The preservation of the basic health and welfare services in rural areas	• Creating the cross-border commuting of employees in the regions align borders	• Encouraging entrepreneurship • Special bank loan constructions for rural areas
	Lobbying			• For necessary infrastructural interventions	• Encouraging young farmers to stay in the rural areas. (Framework conditions of the CAP 2014-2020)



Nándor Horkay
Director of Research and Strategy
Coordination at Research Institute
for National Strategy, Hungary

„The transnational project of EURUFU is an outstanding and exemplary pilot project of the Central European professional and methodological cooperation. The high-standard and creative work on examining the future of rural areas in a Central European context and its achieved professional outputs (especially the definition and categorization of rural areas, the research and integration of best practices and the several thematic workshops) are such results, to which the project team can be reasonably proud.“



WP4 is the key working package where the pilot actions and investments of the project are developed and carried out.

17 Pilot Actions have been implemented with reference to the main EURUFU topics: social infrastructures, social housing, education, job opportunities, mobility and public transport.

A common feature of EURUFU pilot projects is their multi-disciplinary approach: this character, that emerged during their implementation, can entail an higher capability to affect local development policies and higher chances of sustainability.

The territorial reference area is mainly classified as NUTS 3 and all pilot areas are clearly rural territories with commons problems such as: depopulation, aging population, lack of social cohesion and unemployment.

EURUFU pilot actions had to involve actively as much stakeholders as possible, in order to develop local actions using a bottom-up approach. The transferability of the pilot action is a common aim for all the EURUFU projects, as a subsequent step after the implementation phase. Therefore, the conditions by which transferability of actions is possible had to be created during all the implementation processes.

The most effective channel for ideas and conceptual frameworks seems to be consultancy and sharing of expertise. This is why the interactions among stakeholders and target groups are not based on mass communications processes but on local meetings, discussions, trainings and social-recreational areas.

A report called "Joint Concluding during development" has been realized, with the aim of deeply describing for each project: problems tackled by each Pilot Action, the areas involved, the stakeholders and target groups involved, the main and specific goals, the actions foreseen, the expected results, the timing of the Pilot Action, the added value at a local level and for Central Europe Programme, the sustainability of the Pilot Action, the approach and the elements of transferability.



Then, since the direct interaction among stakeholders and target groups is fundamental, for each pilot action, one or more seminars took place. Indeed, stakeholders' direct participation is an opportunity for individuals to influence public decisions and shape the projects processes into a direction that meets target groups' interests. Through this kind of events, the inhabitants can develop their capabilities and creativity, and bring about new innovative ideas for a more direct involvement. In this way, all actors reduce prejudices about each other and realize a synergy and surplus value, reaching a win-win strategy. Cooperation and participation of all the actors involved reinforce collaboration, conflict resolution and democracy.

Since EURUFU Project is not a combination of detached actions but, on the contrary, it is a whole big approach to the problems shared by rural areas and small villages, a report called "Combined testing" has been produced, in order to highlight the common traits of the Pilot Actions. This tool can be seen as a "how-to book" about how to achieve the aims concerned: having an objective in mind, it could be useful to check which EURUFU strategies have been used to achieve it and then choose the one that suits best to the area concerned, adapting it to the environment involved.

Indeed, of the Project's main aims is to set actions that are transferrable to other territories, and EURUFU actions have proved themselves as good tools for the development of rural areas. Therefore, they should be used as an example of good practices.

The report highlights that some of the aims that have been pursued by more than one Pilot Action are: the decrease of social isolation, the decrease of the emigration of young and highly skilled people from rural areas, the increase of the investment for public social infrastructure, the adoption of new solutions to improve transport services in rural areas, the focus on young people, the adjustment of public social infrastructure to the new social challenges and the guarantee of good health services to old people in rural areas.



As a conclusion, the experience of EURUFU Project allows to formalize a simple but effective model, under a precise sequence:

- Careful analysis of the local context and collection of the concrete needs of the population, encouraging a wide participation;*
- Suggestion of solutions to submit again to the exam of potential beneficiaries and stakeholders;*
- Realization of the shared actions, directly involving the actors;*

Monitoring and evaluation through specific workshops, not just to “present” the projects, but to “elaborate” proposals e action platforms;

Permanent exchange of information among transnational partners, not only to assure a functional project management, but mainly to highlight the strong and weak points of the actions, in order to adjust the path if necessary, and to draw up a strategy that other actors will be eventually able to follow, adapt and improve;

Transfer to the local actors that, taking possession of the general project objectives, will be able to continue to pursue them with their own means and without losing the collaboration of EURUFU partners who initially realized the pilot action;

Capitalization of the experience, modeling tool and diffusion of the best practices on a European level.

The report called “Pilot Actions global evaluation” is a detailed description of the Work Areas of EURUFU Project and the analysis of the Pilot Actions results, on the basis of the self-evaluation grids provided by all the partners for each Pilot Action. So, for each Pilot Action, this Output supplies a description of the action context, objectives, results, beneficiaries and stakeholders. Then, all the projects have been summarized following a thematic classification, allowing an evaluation concerning issues which pilot actions have been dealing with, suggested solutions and contribution to EURUFU operating goals.

EURUFU

Improvement of ambulant medical care in the districts Kyffhäuser and Greiz

Thuringian Ministry of Construction, Regional Development and Transport

Kyffhäuserkreis / District (Landkreis) Greiz



The name of the pilot action (PA) is the “Improvement of ambulant medical care in the districts Kyffhäuser and Greiz”. The institution responsible for the action was the Thuringian Ministry of Construction, Regional Development and Transport in Germany and the pilot project region were the districts Kyffhäuserkreis and Landkreis Greiz.

The reasons for carrying out the PA were wide ranging. Shrinking remote rural areas in Germany are suffering from a decline in the number of physicians (GPs) available because young medical graduates prefer to settle in more urban regions with improved chances of better income. Many GPs need to continue working well into retirement because they are unable to find a successor, and they are usually overloaded with patients. To exacerbate the issue, the ageing population means there is a rising need for medical care. Typical diseases suffered by older people include diabetes, dementia and bone illnesses, amongst others. The number of patients who are immobile is also on the rise. In terms of the practical challenges faced, the main issue was bridging the prospective gap between the decreasing number of doctors and the rising number of immobile patients.

A number of tasks were carried out in this process, the first of which was to get an overview of the state of medical care in the Kyffhäuser and Greiz district pilot action areas, and to establish contact with certain stakeholders. Ideas for the measures to be taken were developed, and the feasibility of these measures being implemented was evaluated in and around discussions with stakeholders. A survey entitled “Accessibility of GP practices in the Kyffhäuser district by means of transport” was carried out by the Erfurt University of Applied Science in order to show the SWOTs in the field of transport in relation to the doctor’s offices and to obtain basic information about the transport needs and usage of the patients. Furthermore training sessions to doctor’s assistants were offered with the aim to lighten doctors’ workloads with regard to delegate home visits by patients and other tasks.



Christian Carius
*Thuringian Minister for Construction,
Regional Development and Transport*

“EURUFU demonstrated new perspectives for the medical provision in the Thuringian rural area. Country doctors can be lasting relieved and patients are better served.”

The network created took the form of a project assisting committee, with representatives from district administrations (Landratsamt) Kyffhäuserkreis and Landkreis Greiz, department medical care, Thuringian Doctor's Chamber (Landesärztekammer), Thuringian Association of National Health Doctors (Kassenärztliche Vereinigung), General Physicians Association (Hausärzteverband), General Physicians Practices, Thuringian Ministry for Social Affairs, University of Jena - Chair for General Medicine - and the Thuringian Ministry for Construction, Regional Development and Transport.

When considering the expected and achieved effects of the pilot action, these are many in number. Due to the extra training courses held, the doctor's assistants learned several practical skills, helping them to work more efficiently and ease the doctors' workloads. The evaluation of the measure in Kyffhäuser district figured out that more than 700 additional home visits per annum will be carried out. Facing the young age of the qualified staff, the regions will benefit in the long run from these measures. Thus, there will be a significant long-term effect with regard to stabilizing medical services for immobile patients. The workloads of elderly physicians will be eased, with some tasks and duties to be assumed by their assistants. The assistants learned new skills, which allow taking over new tasks in the practices. Moreover, the quality of the assistant's work will have positive impacts on the medical services available in shrinking rural regions. Both, physicians and assistants detected a plenty of positive effects of the further training.

Through the “field work” accessible to doctors' practices, the regional administration and communities have a database at their disposal to plan future measures such as improving the interfaces between bicycle and local rail transport networks. The survey drew conclusions in the form of a couple of suggestions and solutions which will also have a bearing on regional transport. For example, it was determined that public transport does not play a significant role in how a patient gets to the doctor.

The rise in demand for the second course in Greiz, where 14 participants subscribed, is quite remarkable and demonstrates the transferability to similar regions.

The regional network on medical care that has been developed is valuable and may be used for further actions.

When considering the outlook and sustainability of the PA, the following is envisaged. Starting with the Kyffhäuserkreis pilot region in Northern Thuringia, a second course for doctors' assistants could be held in the Greiz district (Landkreis Greiz). The pre-conditions there with regard to demography and medical factors are similar to the Kyffhäuser district. This confirms that this particular model for investing in skills and knowledge is transferrable to other regions and meets the needs of the population as well as the medical service providers.

Synergies with the pilot action of the University of Applied Science in the same region can be observed: the living conditions for elderly people have been improved.

EURUFU

**Citizen consultants for mobility“ (Mobilitätsberater)
- citizens support fellow citizens using public transport**

University of Applied Sciences Erfurt

Kyffhäuserkreis, Northern Thuringia / District (Landkreis) Gotha, Western Thuringia



Ferdinand Fischer
Voluntary mobility consultant in the pilot project region Kyffhäuserkreis, Thuringia, Germany

I had never thought that it is so easy to do something important for the bus and train system in the region. Especially during my consultation-hour or during the user trainings at the ticket machines in the regional train stations I saw how easy it is to support people who are unexperienced with the use of public transport or who are newcomers to it. Through the multigenerational house, where I could offer my consultation hours, the service became popular quite soon.

The name of the pilot action (PA) is “Citizen consultants for mobility (Mobilitätsberater) - citizens support fellow citizens using public transport”. The institution responsible for the action was the University of Applied Sciences Erfurt from Germany and the pilot project region was Kyffhäuserkreis, Northern Thuringia / District (Landkreis) Gotha, Western Thuringia.

There were good valid reasons for carrying out this PA. People face the increasing risk of becoming less mobile when they age, and can no longer use their cars, a mode of transport they may have used all their lives. Especially in rural surroundings, they can soon find themselves in a very difficult situation if there is no social network in place to substitute their car driving ability and bring them access to essential services such as the doctor, shops, etc. However, this is not only an issue for older people, but also for those who are not familiar with public transport as it may become complicated keeping up with social activities like visiting family and friends, and remaining socially engaged. In other words, the opportunities for an autonomous lifestyle and social participation decrease in many cases. This problem is exacerbated if older people do not know how to stay mobile through existing public transport services (e.g. buying the most appropriate ticket at the sometimes complicated ticket machines, finding the best connections, or knowing whether they can easily board a bus with an age-related mobility impairment). On the other hand, the provision of public transport in rural areas is very often threatened by a shrinking number of regular users, and often only maintained through public funding to secure the carriage of pupils to schools.

Nevertheless, this growing number of elderly and less mobile persons represents a significant target group for suitable public transport offers, particularly in rural areas (provided the services are accessible and suitable for older users in terms of barrier free infrastructure and cars, clear information, etc.). The objective should also be that less people use cars, in order to reduce pollution and environmental damage.



how does it work - mobile consultant in thuringia

During a planning workshop held at the beginning of the pilot project development phase with regional stakeholders and specially invited representatives of senior organizations from the project region in attendance, it was stated clearly that the ticket machines located on the regional railway stops represent a major challenge and barrier for many older people. Therefore special focus was devoted to this aspect in the organization of the pilot project.

The intention behind the PA was to support a sustainable public supply in a region with a shrinking population by easing these burdens and facilitating access to public transport. A number of tasks were carried out in the process, the first of which was a search for and focus on already-established, successfully run projects from Germany and neighbouring countries. A search was undertaken for citizens to be “trained” as volunteers to work as mobility consultants (senior citizens, experienced PT-users, etc.): two motivated young men were found from the very outset, and two senior citizens from another rural area in Thuringia thereafter.

In addition to this, three training workshops were carried out, with the involvement of local/regional stakeholders (transport companies, the public sector, tourism, etc.), and two hubs were set up in the western and eastern parts of the pilot region, where users could take advantage of a local number telephone hotline installed there. News coverage was used to provide information about the project and promote the service (through the ongoing publication of articles in regional newspapers and the regional train company on-board magazine, regional radio, the official journals of the project region, the websites of the cities and municipalities, posters in public spaces, etc.)

Monitoring and mid-term-analyses of the pilot action were carried out in order to identify and discuss options for improvement and to determine the success factors for a permanent installation of the service and for its transferability to other regions (e.g. the development of training modules (PowerPoint presentations for different topics such as reading bus timetables, using the ticket machines at train stations, etc.))

In addition to this, a master seminar was held in the summer semester of 2012 at the University of Applied Sciences Erfurt entitled: “Integrated concept for improving the connectivity of the tourist facilities in the region of the Kyffhäuser-mountains under special consideration of the public transport”.

The service was also rolled out to the other rural parts of Thuringia (District Gotha), where volunteers had heard about the service in the pilot region and wanted to do the same in their home region (information meetings, press articles, etc.). Therefore, the pilot project was extended until the end of 2013.

The partners/stakeholders involved in the pilot action came from all areas. They included voluntary mobility consultants from the regional population, who were responsible for delivering the consultancy services. At the Kyffhäuserkreis District Administration (Landratsamt), there was a department responsible for public transport and a department for the promotion of economic development, who were responsible for providing a room with an internet connection and a telephone for delivering the consultancy service. They also provided meeting rooms and promoted the service.

DB Regio, NVS Regionalbus-Gesellschaft Unstrut-Hainich- und Kyffhäuserkreis mbH provided the public transport in the region. Multi-generation-houses were used for the provision of rooms with a telephone for consultancy services carried out by the voluntary mobility consultants. The Regional Planning Authority of Northern Thuringia (Regionale Planungsstelle Nordthüringen) provided a room for workshop/organisation meetings, and the city of Sondershausen (namely the division for the promotion of economic development and city marketing), the Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung regional newspaper and the Antenne Thüringen regional radio station all promoted the service.

The effects of the action were wide in scope. It has contributed to the aim of ensuring sustainable public supply in regions with shrinking populations by reducing burdens and easing access, especially access to public transport as a sustainable transport option for the regional population. The local and regional networking between different public actors, service providers and voluntary private actors in the rural pilot area’s small and medium-sized towns in the rural pilot area both play a key role in the pilot action.

By strengthening the mobility options of the regional population in the places where they live, this activity, carried out within the framework of the EURUFU project, contributes to the goal of facilitating a better quality of life and retaining the population in rural areas. The aim of the pilot action was also to create a social effect by establishing and strengthening social contacts between the mobility consultants and the users of the service, thereby further supporting social cohesion among the regional population. Moreover the involvement of stakeholders from different regional and supra-regional institutions (public administration, public transport operators, NGOs, etc.) could be included in order to bring together the actors that deal with the challenges of demographic change and mobility issues on the regional level, all of whom have different perspectives on these issues.

In terms of the future outlook/sustainability of the pilot action, it focuses primarily on the near future and the mid-term in order to tackle the current challenges, which will become more serious with a shrinking and ageing population in the future.

The approach chosen for the pilot region was an innovative solution that has already been implemented in different ways in other regions. Those projects were identified during the preparation phase for the pilot action in the field of mobility, and were found to be a good solution for the rural areas because they would integrate the citizens and attempt to deal with the serious problem of suitable public transport usability and maintenance against the backdrop of the influences of demographic change.

The action can certainly be transferred to other Central European countries. It could be difficult to establish mobility consultants in very rural areas where there are no longer any public transport services. However, the pilot action shows that it is worthwhile involving the regional/local citizens, with their specific skills and knowledge (e.g. mobility consultants’ knowledge of the public transport system in the region and how it is to be used), in such an action because many of them would like to do something, on a voluntary basis, to cater for sustainable development and the upkeep of good living conditions in their region.

Nevertheless it is quite difficult to calculate or plan the level of demand for the use of the consultancy service by their fellow citizens. In our case, after the service had been established for a while, there was also a demand by groups, e.g. of older people or long-term unemployed people, who wanted to learn more about using public transport in order to stay mobile. In general, a good level of regional cooperation between the various actors could be established as a basis for further actions to improve the standard of public transport.



EURUFU

Language and jobseeker`s competences courses

Regional Development Office, Regional Authority of Usti Region

Vejprtsko (Northwest part of Czech Republic, rural cross-border region)



Jitka Gavdunová
Chair of the Union of Communities in the
Vejprty Area (Svazek obcí Vejprtska)

"With EURUFU we did not only get to know new places and interesting new people, but we learned from good practices from many other parts of Europe. We found that the main issue, troubling us, is the unemployment among young people. That is why it is so important that we were able to find work for a dozen people from the Ústí region thanks to this project. I am certain that the various courses and training programmes held in this training centre will help to provide better opportunities to find work in our region and reduce unemployment."



The name of pilot action is "Language and jobseeker's competences courses" and the institution responsible for its implementation was the Regional Development Office, the Ústí Regional Authority, Czech Republic. The PA was carried out in Vejprtsko (in the northwest of the Czech Republic, a rural cross-border region).

The reasons behind the implementation of the pilot action were many in number. A common EURUFU target is to secure the future viability of rural areas, and the pilot action was aimed at developing the Vejprty Region, one of the peripheral areas of the north-western Bohemia Region which has been affected structural changes in the economy, population ageing and other serious challenges.

The aim of the activities carried out by the Regional Authority of Ústí nad Labem, in cooperation with the Vejprty Regional Association, was to foster the development of job opportunities and local business in the Vejprty Region.

The pilot activity mainly comprised German language courses complemented by training on jobseeker's skills and German language competences useful in the service industry. The aim of the German language courses was to boost jobseekers' opportunities in the local and cross-border labour markets, and to improve the German language knowledge of tourism industry employees and, as a result, the quality of services provided for German speaking clients.

The pilot activity began by renovating the training/study room. The room was equipped with furniture and audio-visual technology. Language and educational courses for unemployed people, and people recently employed in the tourism and service industries, were carried out there over a 12-week period. A regional job fair was held as the final part of the pilot activity of the EURUFU project. There, four employment agencies from the Czech Republic and Germany were introduced to the local labour market. The meeting focused on theoretical knowledge, basic conditions and labour law in relation to the labour market in the Czech Republic and Germany. Jobseekers were also given the opportunity to ask questions and register their interest with Czech and German employment agencies in the second part of the meeting. Some jobseekers



found a job as a result of an offer made during the meeting.

The partners/stakeholders involved in the pilot action were as follows: Vejprtsko Municipalities Association, employment agencies from the Czech Republic and Germany – Job centre Chomutov (CZ), Job centre Annaberg-Buchholz (GE), and two private agencies, one German and one Czech – Vejprty Townhall and the Agency for Social Inclusion.

The effects of the pilot action were wide ranging. The language and educational courses comprised two classes of recently unemployed people visited by 25 clients, and one class of recently unemployed people in the service and tourism industry, with 14 clients. The clients gained some German language skills as well as competences useful for the labour market.

The Regional Job Fair was attended by over 60 jobseekers. It helped 10 jobseekers find a job either directly or indirectly (i.e. jobseekers from the pilot area who found a job during the following 2 months through the employment agencies involved).

With a view to ensuring the future outlook and sustainability of the pilot action, the EURUFU project and the Ústí Region pilot activity were presented to the mayors of the villages in the Sluknov region (in the north of the Czech Republic, a rural cross-border region). The mayors stated that involving Czech and German employment agencies in the regional jobs fair was a good way to combat unemployment in rural border areas.

There is a training/study room in Vejprty and it is leased for the implementation of training courses carried out within the EURUFU project, and for other training courses implemented during the lifetime of the EURUFU project.

As a result of the good experiences gained through the Regional Job Fair, the Ústí Region is helping cross-border villages prepare similar activities.



EURUFU

“Begegnungszone” Tamsweg

Salzburger Institute for Regional Planning and Housing

region Lungau / District Tamsweg

The name of the pilot action was “Begegnungszone” Tamsweg, and the institution responsible for its implementation was the Salzburger Institute for Regional Planning and Housing from Austria. The project region for the PA was District Tamsweg in Lungau.

The pilot action was carried out for the following reasons. Particularly in rural areas, the main focus when planning public space is motorized traffic. In Tamsweg it is clear that pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people are at a disadvantage to cars. The challenge faced was to find an adequate public space design for Tamsweg city centre. Another challenge was to respond to the requirements and needs of a modern society.

The following were carried out within the framework of the PA. Links were forced with Gemeindeentwicklung Salzburg and the Municipality of Tamsweg. Several architects were involved in the planning and mapping process for a public tender. Various ideas which arose during summer university were processed, and examples of potential designs for a shared space were presented during a stakeholder meeting. A master plan for the municipality was developed, as well as a feasibility study and promotional material. A series of measures to be put in place for the implementation were also identified.

The following partners/stakeholders were involved in the pilot actions: Gemeindeentwicklung Salzburg; the Municipality of Tamsweg; Regional Management Lungau; Biosphere Reserve Management Lungau; University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna; University of Salzburg; University of Innsbruck; and Vienna University of Technology

The effects of the pilot action were many. Shared Space is an innovative solution for designing shared space. The user is obliged to interact with the other road users, with the result being that the personal responsibility of the user is activated and attention is increased. In all instances where Shared Space has been applied in the Netherlands, the traffic accident rate has decreased dramatically. As well as the ongoing discussions in the regional council for the implementation of Shared Space in the municipality of Tamsweg, other municipalities have also been involved. They accompanied the pilot action from the very outset. These may encourage further discussions about public space solutions in their own municipalities.

The architects who accompanied the project learned a great deal about the demands on a modern city and village centre. This kind of promotion will support further development in the direction of shared space.

In essence, the project linked up all the attending partners and supported further discussions and possible implementations.

In terms of the outlook/sustainability of the PA, as stated in the previous chapter, the pilot action linked up all the attending partners, thereby proving its effectiveness.



Heidi Humer-Gruber
Participant of the summer university

“Students gained a practical insight into regional politics and regional development. They learned lessons which are not taught at universities but essential in working lives. They also took home great impressions from the biosphere reserve and will spread the word about the beauty of the area and the welcoming people they met there. What happens with their projects remains to be seen, but some might be realized and this would be a great honor for students.”

Summer University Lungau

Salzburger Institute for Regional Planning, Biosphere Reserve Management of Lungau

region Lungau



The name of the pilot action was “Summer University Lungau” and the institutions responsible for its implementation were the Salzburger Institute for Regional Planning and the Biosphere Reserve Management of Lungau from Austria. The location of the pilot action was the Lungau region.

The reasons for carrying out this pilot action were manifold. The rural region in Lungau suffers from a serious “brain drain” issue. There is a significant lack of skilled people in this area. A symptom of this situation is an ageing society, which is accompanied by other problems such as a shrinking public budget and older people staying in the villages. These worrying trends require new solutions in order to cope with the effects. Therefore, on the basis of a migration study entitled “Heidi wohnt hier nicht mehr” (Heidi doesn’t live here anymore), the idea of bringing young people with potential back to Lungau was born. The Summer University is an opportunity to bring some young people back to Lungau, at least temporarily. The preparation undertaken for the Summer University posed a significant organizational challenge.

The following tasks were carried out as part of the pilot action: organizing the Summer University (preparation, pre-processing, processing, post processing); involving several stakeholders in the process and holding meetings with them; promoting Lungau’s rural lifestyle; discussions with stakeholders; developing concepts and projects together with professors from different Austrian universities in order to “stop rural emigration”; public lectures were held during the summer; a “network” was created by connecting the people involved; 12 ideas and reports were produced; and a final presentation was delivered to the stakeholders.

The partners and stakeholders involved in the PA were as follows: Gemeindeentwicklung Salzburg; all 15 of Lungau’s municipalities; Regional Management Lungau/ Biosphere Reserve Management of Lungau; the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna; the University of Salzburg; the University of Innsbruck; and the Vienna University of Technology.

The effects of the pilot action were many. Based on the 12 projects, 37 students from different study facilities developed interdisciplinary, economic and ecological concepts during a three-week period. These concepts are development opportunities for the Lungau region. Several concepts are close to being implemented, such as an adventure cycle path in Thomaatal or the conversion of a barn and the adjacent fields. The Biosphere Reserve Management of Lungau has deemed the Summer University a great success. They are still fielding queries from the inhabitants of Lungau about how to further pursue certain projects. Furthermore, the knowledge exchanged between the stakeholders, teachers and students has been invaluable.

The outlook/sustainability of the PA is, of course, vitally important. As the pilot action is sub-divided into different stages, there are also different approaches to be taken for the future. Since the overall effects from the Summer University are still ongoing, there is a very good chance that further projects like the Summer University will be established. A 60-page report was written on the Summer University. The municipalities in Lungau also have new innovative solutions to implement. Actually the pilot action is just starting...

EURUFU

Generationendorf

Salzburger Institute for Regional Planning

region Salzburg



The name of the pilot action, which was carried out in the Salzburg region, is Generationendorf, and the institution responsible for its implementation was the Salzburger Institute for Regional Planning.

The reasons for carrying out the pilot action were many. In areas where an aging population is becoming a reality, the isolation of older members of the population is noticeable. The ratio between old and young seems to be so imbalanced that the older generations do not even have the actual opportunity to meet younger people. Most of these isolation problems are caused by indifference, a lack of dialogue, apathy and a lack of attention being paid to one another and of insufficient inter-generational interaction between the different generations, who no longer communicate, and are therefore likely to become more and more disparate and distant. These changes require innovative concepts for young and old people living together.

Hardly any other topic has provided communities with so many new challenges before. Practice shows that citizen participation is the best way to deal with these problems. This provides an opportunity for quality of life, community life and intergenerational solidarity to be strengthened: therefore, for example, older people visit pre-schoolers to read and play music with them, older people in need of care receive help from the neighbourhood. None of this will just happen on its own: good conditions in the community are required. For example, contact points are required for citizens who want to get involved in community life or to get professional advice. It requires citizen-oriented communities where everyone from the mayor down to the administrative staff helps to "open doors" to create attractive opportunities for civic involvement.

Many tasks were carried out as part of the pilot action. As well as involving several stakeholders, several different age groups were encouraged to become involved in activities to encourage intergenerational communication and interaction (communal games afternoons for young and elderly people, cooperation between kindergartens and homes for senior citizens, shared cooking days, advent windows). In addition to



this, the level of inter-generational, social and cultural co-existence in Salzburg was improved, possible sponsors were identified, and various concepts for a possible generation village were created.

Project support has been secured for the following generation villages: Elixhausen, St. Koloman, Ramingstein Bruck at the Glocknerstraße, Elsbethen, St. Martin at Lofer, Salzburger District Parsch, Unken, Zederhaus, Hallein-Rif and St. Michael. The importance of these activities has been recognized and is now supported in the form of a national programme. The municipalities of Ramingstein, Zederhaus and St. Michael are located in the rural region of Lungau.

The “Neubesetzung” project was implemented in the Municipality of Ramingstein under the direction of the House of Architecture in Graz. The citizens of the municipality worked together in order to put chairs at different locations in the territory of the municipality so as to strengthen community life through joint activities on the one hand, and to draw attention to the emigration issue on the other hand. Each chair represented a person who had emigrated from the Municipality of Ramingstein over the last five years.

The network of partners and stakeholders involved in the project includes Akzente Salzburg, Pastoral Care Office, Department of Community, Archdiocese Salzburg, State Salzburg, Family Department, Youth-State Salzburg and Hilfswerk.

The effects of the pilot action were wide ranging. The process of identifying possible stakeholders, sponsors and officials made it possible to establish a network with them. These present an opportunity for using the pilot action for further projects. Furthermore, by organizing various activities, people from different generations, social and cultural groups became aware of the problems associated with the isolation of these individual groups. By giving them the opportunity to attend these events, they build up a network among themselves. This community structure can be enhanced and may start to organise similar events of its own volition.

Since so many municipalities are involved in the national programme, it can be assumed that more municipalities will follow.

In terms of outlook and sustainability, the main idea behind the project is to find innovative and sustainable solutions for the coexistence of people of different generations, genders and cultures. By presenting solutions to communities that are vulnerable to aging populations, they have the opportunity to continue to pursue these ideas themselves. A design idea for a generation village is currently being reviewed by the Tamsweg community.

EURUFU

1. Promoting social inclusion of minorities through educational and social events
2. Mobility examination in Mór district
3. Social time card implementation in Mór district

Central Transdanubian Regional Development Agency

Mór district



The pilot actions were as follows: (i) Promoting social inclusion of minorities through educational and social events; (ii) Mobility examination in Mór district; and (iii) Social time card implementation in Mór district. Each of these was implemented by the Central Transdanubian Regional Development Agency from Hungary, and the location chosen for the pilot action was Mór district.

The reasons why the pilot action was considered were manifold. The content of the pilot actions implemented by Central Transdanubian Regional Development Agency was suggested at regional stakeholder workshops organised in October 2011 and March 2012 within the framework of the EURUFU project. The participants faced the challenge of selecting actions which could effectively contribute to achieving the project's objectives, namely the sustainability of public services and maintaining the attractiveness of rural areas, during the brief implementation period.

The workshops revealed, amongst other things, that despite a developed health care / social care system and the existence of mobile health and social services, there were some deficiencies in care for disabled people. A significant problem was the lack of recognition for the need to ensure the social inclusion of people with disabilities. In order to tackle social exclusion and better integrate these disadvantaged groups, they need more support and better awareness raised about their social needs. Furthermore, promoting voluntary work among young people could be a very good way of integrating underprivileged groups into the local community.

The workshops also highlighted the importance of reviving and preserving ethnic German (Swabian) customs and traditions in the area, since Germans are the main ethnic minority in Mór and its surroundings. Preserving the ethnic character of the area and the identity of people of German ethnicity are important factors in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization.

Based on the suggestions put forward by local stakeholders, a study on the regional mobility and transport situation was carried out in order to help the development of project ideas during the programming period 2014-20.



Péter Fenyves
Mayor of the town Mór

“EURUFU project strengthened the dialogue among local actors and experts of different topics e.g. mobility, education, health care, job opportunities. The main achievements of EURUFU actions in our town were that hundreds of children had the opportunity to learn about local Swabian traditions, volunteerism and the project also improved the living-together of people of different ages and the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups.”

Three pilot actions were selected for implementation on social infrastructure and mobility demand related topics. The aim of the “Promoting social inclusion of minorities through educational and social events” pilot action was to better integrate different minority groups and also to preserve the customs and traditions of the Mór district. In order to achieve these objectives, four interactive events were carried out focusing particularly on young people. This pilot action involved the Swabian Family Day, dialogue between people of various disabilities and pupils aged 14-18, a sports day for schoolchildren and people with disabilities, and interactive lessons on local history presented by local citizens.

The main objective of the mobility examination in the Mór district, which served as the second pilot action, was to contribute to solving the transportation problems of the area. The pilot project included research on the mobility demands in the district and delivered district-specific recommendations on how to effectively organize the transport system. The analysis revealed that, in areas dominated by car traffic, there is a need to develop cycle tracks between downtown Mór and the industrial park, as well as between rural settlements. The standard of bus transport in the microregion does not properly meet the demands of its inhabitants, so it would be vital to modernise the standard of rail transport in the area in the future in order to raise public transport passenger numbers. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a need for a web-based car-pooling system, which could also serve as an effective and flexible way of connecting the microregion’s small rural settlements with Mór and its neighbouring towns.

The overall broader objective of implementing the social time card pilot action was to indirectly promote social volunteerism in the region by analysing the current situation regarding volunteering services. The specific objective was to provide a feasibility study on both the supply and demand sides of social volunteerism and to make recommendations for the possible introduction of a social time card system.

The partners and stakeholders involved in the network were as follows. The Central Transdanubian Regional Development Agency collaborated with Tourism Destination Management (TDM) Association of the Mór Wine Region in carrying out all the interactive events. TDM Association involved a wide range of local stakeholders such as the Bice Bóca Association for Disadvantaged and Large Families, the town of Mór’s primary and secondary schools, the Municipality of Mór and its mayor, along with the President of the General Assembly of Fejér County. The local media also played a key role in raising awareness of the importance of social inclusion in the area. The Agency hired ENIGMA 2001 on a sub-contract basis. The Publisher and Research Institution from Székesfehérvár is to conduct mobility research and will compile a feasibility study on social time cards.

With regard to the effects generated from the pilot action, these were many in number. Thanks to the EURUFU, the interactive events held helped instil values such as a sense of cooperation and trust in young people. The preservation and revival of traditions and customs in rural areas is of high importance, especially in regions with ethnic characteristics. By organising the Swabian Family Day and history lessons, the EURUFU raised awareness of traditional and local values among young people. The implementation of the social time card system also served as an innovative tool to address young people in the local community. In rural areas, it is also essential that the public transportation system is properly organized, because its effectiveness has a bearing on the region’s attractiveness. From the mobility study conducted, local stakeholders gained a broader insight into local mobility circumstances and, based on its findings, there is potential for successful projects to be initiated in the region during the next programming period.

EURUFU

“ABITARE” - New housing opportunities for young people

LAMORO Local Development Agency

Municipality of Sordevolo (Piedmont, Italy)



The name of the pilot action is “ABITARE” - New housing opportunities for young people, and was carried out by the LAMORO Local Development Agency from Italy in the Municipality of Sordevolo (Piedmont, Italy).

Sordevolo is a small village located in foothills in the north-west of the Italian Alps. It is located in the province of Biella (NUTS 3). Sordevolo has a population of around 1300, and the municipality extends from 590 m.a.s.l. on the east bank of the River Elvo up to the rocky peak of Mt Mucrone at 2335 m.a.s.l. The name “Sordevolo” means “above the Elvo”. It is located 8 km from the provincial capital, Biella. Along with 14 other small municipalities, it forms part of a Union of Municipalities called the “Municipalities of Elvo Valley”. The local economy has always been based upon the waters from the river Elvo and the alpine pastures. The soft water of the Elvo is ideal for processing wool, and fine woollen clothes have been produced using wool from local sheep for centuries. In the 19th century the first Italian mechanized textile mills were constructed. Unfortunately many of these mills were forced to close down because of the textile crisis at the end of the 20th century.

There were many reasons for the implementation of this pilot action. The main demographic trends in the rural area identified were as follows: a population decline, population ageing, and a fall in the number of young people. The municipality of Sordevolo suffers from a progressive depopulation trend: some villages have been badly affected and run the risk of becoming “ghost” villages. In the coming years there is predicted to be a further decline in the population’s 25-39 age group. In fact there was a declining birth rate in the 1980s with a consequent fall in the current number of young people in the 30-year age group. From now on, a further decline in births is to be expected. The progressive and steady ageing of the population was been registered: there is a significant old age index (for every young person, there are more than two older people). Youth associations complain of the difficulty in implementing housing autonomy. Therefore, a policy is required which offers young people concrete opportunities and combats rural depopulation for younger generations.



Luca Capasso
Councillor for Urban Planning, Private and Public Building of the Municipality of Cirié (Turin).

"In a time of urgent economic crisis and diminishing resources, EURUFU has developed innovative solutions to meet the requests of people in need and of those citizens that want to live and to work in our territory. We can think up new services and housing opportunities in the city and at the same time we can create new job opportunities in agriculture through the support of trade associations and municipalities. The pilot project implemented in Cirié has allowed us to work on new forms of social innovation."

The pilot project aims to find new solutions to promote the housing autonomy of young people in rural communities. The long-term goal of the pilot project is to fight the gradual depopulation of the area by keeping young people in the rural areas. In order to keep young people in the valley, it is essential they have the opportunity to be supported with a rewarding personal and working life, and housing autonomy is a key index for a good quality of life.

The specific goals of the pilot project were to promote the housing autonomy of young people living in the village of Sordevolo and in the Elvo valley; to provide new opportunities for young people in order to convince them to remain in the area; to find innovative housing policy solutions in order to promote the empowerment and the autonomy of young people; to create a place for discussion, collaboration and joint planning among the young people of the valley and the various stakeholders; and to find an innovative architectural solution to promote the autonomy of young people in terms of housing.

The action undertaken can be summarized as follows. All the stakeholders affected by the housing issue (professional associations, public bodies, etc.) were involved, and local meetings were planned to increase the participation of young people and professional orders. A local "agreement" was also signed to promote the housing autonomy of young people, and an innovative package of discounts, subsidies and tax exemptions were determined in order to promote the autonomy of young people in terms of housing. In addition to this, an innovative architectural solution for a sustainable housing policy (taking into account the sustainability of the different solutions concerning house building costs, energy efficiency, etc.) was identified. Various stakeholders were involved during the implementation of the pilot project. These included local administrations (municipalities and municipality unions), decision makers, local non-profit associations, professional organisations such as the Order of Architects and the Order of Engineers, and the inhabitants in rural areas.

The effects of the pilot action were as follows: an agreement was signed by interested stakeholders in order to facilitate housing autonomy for young people in the rural communities; specific measures were identified in order to facilitate housing autonomy for young people (concessions, exemptions, tax exemptions, incentives, orientation, etc.); young people and other citizens actively participated in the initiatives carried out for the revitalization of rural areas; conditions conducive to the needs of young people were created in order to encourage them to remain in rural areas; and a definition of new architectural elements setting out the membership of young people in the rural community of reference were defined.

The pilot project helped to strengthen the identity of the rural community. Young people were able to contribute to the evolution of the aesthetics of rural places, building a new concept for living in small rural communities as a special place in which to live and build social relationships. The pilot project contributed to the cohesion goals of the Central Europe Programme. Young people discovered the added value of remaining in rural areas as real protagonists, favouring the social identity of rural communities. The project dealt with all the difficulties that young people deal with in "settling down", favouring social policies in order to fight the depopulation of rural areas. Therefore, demographics becomes one of the strategic policies to improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of rural areas, in coherence with Central Europe Programme issues. The sustainability of the pilot project is ensured by the involvement of policy makers. Other neighbouring municipalities are involved in the pilot project (Pollone, Muzzano, Graglia, Netro and Donato). This will ensure a multiplier effect in rural communities with similar demographic characteristics. The non-profit association "Elf-Youth Agency of Elvo Valley" is in charge of the pilot project management and this will ensure the implementation of the action, even when the EURUFU European project has concluded.

EURUFU

“Integrated project for urban recovery and development of biological agriculture”

LAMORO Local Development Agency

Cirié (Piedmont, Italy)



The name of this pilot action is “Integrated project for urban recovery and development of biological agriculture”, and was implemented by the LAMORO Local Development Agency from Italy. The pilot action was carried out in Cirié (Piedmont, Italy).

The city of Cirié is located in the north-west of Piedmont, at the mouth of Lanzo Valleys, a mountainous area. It has almost 20,000 inhabitants and is located approximately 20 km northwest of Turin. Cirié benefits from a foothill location, which has historically granted the town a role of centrality in the Lanzo Valleys. Cirié is a municipality in the Province of Turin.

Along with six other municipalities, Cirié forms part of a Union of Municipalities for the joint management of functions and common services. Cirié is recognized as the hub of the area (taking into consideration the range of services on offer, the location of economic activities, the transport system, etc.) One of the key reasons for this pilot action was that local stakeholders had realised that the housing issue was becoming increasingly urgent. The current economic situation exerts great pressure on families as there is an increasing difficulty in meeting rent payments and there are no public projects or plans in place to deal with the situation. The services (public or private) required to support individuals in need are lacking. Furthermore, in recent years the average number of people in a family has constantly fallen: today, the average number is just above 2 units and reflects the changes in the social and demographic situation that have affected the entire country. The change in lifestyles in recent decades has had a significant influence on family composition: the family is no longer enlarged and patriarchal, but mononuclear, with fewer children, and often consists of a single component, often old and lonely women, but also young singles. This epochal transformation poses new challenges for residential buildings because existing buildings are predominantly made up of large houses. At the local level, the town takes the role of a “supra-municipal reference framework”, the most appropriate level to implement actions to increase the attractiveness of the area.

Therefore, the goal was to create new services (housing opportunities) in the city of Cirié and, at the same time, create job opportunities in agriculture in the valley, through the creation of bio-gardens and the support of trade associations and municipalities. In



cooperation with the municipality of Cirié, a public building in a state of dilapidation was identified and a feasibility study for restoring the building has been completed. The architectural project included the construction of some environments, which were structured as follows: part of the building has been reserved for people in emergency need of housing (this emergency may be severe, but temporary in nature), while another section has been devoted to the creation of housing for elderly and young people. Some common areas have been built in order to encourage socialization. A special place has been reserved for the retail sale of bio-garden products.

The specific goals of the pilot action were as follows: to promote the housing autonomy of people (older people, young people and people with serious social needs); to provide new opportunities for young people in order to persuade them to remain in the area; to find innovative housing policy solutions to promote the empowerment and autonomy of people; to create a permanent network of cooperation between private companies, social care associations, and public sector decision makers; and to create job opportunities in the field of agriculture (the bio-shop). At first Cirié municipality was involved in the role of promoter and, along with the many stakeholders, a reference point for the consultation actions to be taken. Then, together with Cirié municipality, the pilot project was defined, taking into account the concepts, actions foreseen, timing of the action, and the subjects who were to be involved in the different phases of its implementation. Several opportunities for consultation and questioning were established. The municipality identified a public building in a state of dilapidation. A feasibility study was then carried out for the building's refurbishment, and the planning of innovative solutions to achieve the pilot project goals. Furthermore, an estimate of the cost for completion of the recovery project was included in the feasibility study. With the help of participants involved from the local area, the critical factors in the demographic change to have occurred were defined and analysed. The involvement of the Union of Municipalities and of Coldiretti, an employment association that deals with agriculture, have been key to this.

The building recovery project has been presented to the population and to all the local actors. Cirié Municipality adopted the project, ensuring the sustainability of the action and identifying the possible methods of financing available (also through public-private partnerships). During the implementation phase of the pilot project, a variety of different stakeholders were involved: the municipalities, the Union of Municipalities, decision makers, local non-profit associations, associations for the social care of disadvantaged people, social welfare organizations and the citizens themselves.

The effects of the pilot action have been wide ranging. A local network of public and private entities has been established, and a plan detailing the renovation of a public building has been approved. Innovative architectural elements have been included and new job opportunities created. The pilot project increased the levels of cooperation between private and public bodies. Although a strong and collaborative network of public and private entities for the provision of services to the territory was already in place, the implementation of the pilot project further strengthened these levels of cooperation.

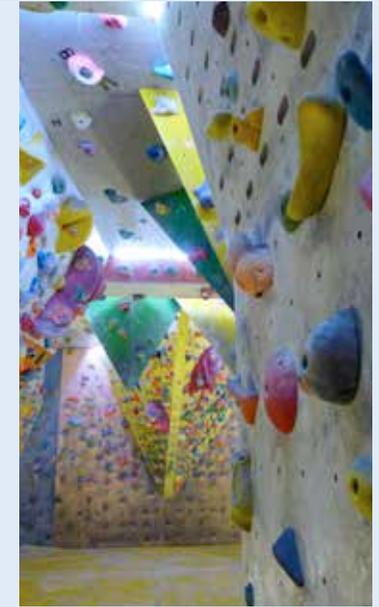
In order to improve regional competitiveness, the Lisbon Agenda recommends looking both at urban and rural areas. The aim of the pilot project, in line with this recommendation, was to create a strong cohesive bond between Cirié's urban area and the large rural area that opens onto the neighbouring valleys. The cohesion between these two realities has been reinforced through the creation of housing opportunities in the city and employment opportunities in rural areas (organic gardens and the marketing of biological products). The sustainability of the pilot action is ensured by two elements: the implementation of the network between private and public bodies at the local level, and the involvement of the municipality of Cirié (the decision maker) in the renovation project for the existing building.

EURUFU

Job opportunities, starting business and promoting the local identity in north-west Slovenia: a series of workshops entitled “Discover innovative solutions to sustainable development”

Development Agency Sora Ltd.

Gorenjska region (North-West Slovenia)



“EURUFU partners’ visit of PP8 Pilot sites”



Pilot action: Visit good practices at local area



“EURUFU partners’ visit of PP8 Pilot sites”

The pilot action pertains to job opportunities, starting new businesses and promoting the local identity in north-west Slovenia through a series of workshops entitled “Discover innovative solutions to sustainable development”. The institution responsible for the implementation of the pilot action is Development Agency Sora Ltd. from Slovenia, which was founded as a business support centre for municipalities in the Škofja Loka region in north-west Slovenia. The agency promotes entrepreneurship as well as the development of rural areas and other local potentials in the region. It serves as a link between the companies, chambers, local communities, institutions and other stakeholders that influence the development of the economy and rural areas in the region.

Gorenjska is an Alpine region which is characterised by a diverse mountainous landscape, and is situated in the northwest of Slovenia. The Gorenjska region is the sixth largest of all Slovenia’s regions, and represents 9.9% of the national population, covering 2,137 square kilometres, which is 10.5% of Slovenia’s total surface area.

The idea for the pilot action was born from a combination of the context of the present situation and the challenges faced in the Gorenjska region. We wanted to develop a pilot action that would mitigate the demographic challenges in the region, which include problems pertaining to unemployment issues in rural areas, and to discover interesting trends such as the growth of certain sectors in the local economy.

The pilot action was designed in the form of a training programme entitled “Discover innovative solutions to sustainable development”, and serves to encourage local communities to deliver unique value to the local environment. Our value promise is to deliver tools and methodologies that can be deployed as job opportunities in the local community and to immediately build sustainable growth engines. Through the pilot action, the existing social and economic know-how and infrastructure in the region is presented, and any practical ways in which to synergise these to mitigate the demographic changes in local environment are identified.



Author: Jana Jocič



Sergej Vrhovec
participant of Pilot action Job opportunities

The workshops have significantly altered my perception of entrepreneurship. The examples of good practice, together with the reflections and experiences of the lecturers, have especially helped me to achieve the state of mind that anything is possible. Later, the transition from words to actions followed.

The motivation training programme comprises a series of workshops for target groups such as unemployed people who are seeking new opportunities and young people who are motivated to start and develop their own business – pre-entrepreneurs. The pilot action starts with an introductory meeting and follows with a series of four motivation workshop modules, as follows: Module 1: Dream and reality; Module 2: Sustainable development and growth; Module 3: Visits to examples of good practice in the local area; and Module 4: Final discussion on visits to examples of good practice and introducing these to business model development.

An important motivation issue is to observe examples of good practice in the local area which sustainably and successfully use the strengths and opportunities that exist in the local environment for their own job opportunities. An important part of the motivation programme is also the opportunity to mentor participants on their ideas/business models for job opportunities in the local area.

The motivation programme flows from a general view of the global environment to the responsibility of each participant for the future, how to define themselves, as well as how to explain their role in the future development of the local and global environment. The motivation programme is a combination of socializing, group dynamics, understanding the role of the individual in society, independent thinking, drawing sketches and writing plans, teaching and discussions.

The pilot action was developed on the cornerstone of close cooperation between different partners and stakeholders in the region, such as development agencies, regional unemployment institutions, the education sector, the economy, local entrepreneurs and local communities. The stakeholders were involved in developing and carrying out the pilot action programme. It is very important that the political parties also understand sustainable development and the importance of protecting local valuable resources in the long-term as a future job opportunity pool in the region.

The effects of the pilot action were many. On the one hand, the pilot action tackles the weaknesses and economic challenges confronted by the region's participants in their everyday life. On the other hand, it searches for positive solutions to the challenges posed by identifying the strengths and opportunities that exist in the local environment. Through the pilot action, we presented the opportunities and challenges associated with sustainable entrepreneurship in the local area, and helped the participants develop an evolutionary model for their own job opportunities in the local area. The participants are more motivated, are equipped with more information, and possess the knowhow required to find job opportunities in local rural areas.

The pilot action supports sustainable growth with lesser regional disparities by acting on the demographic changes identified. The pilot action uses the strengths and successes of the locality as a springboard for local development. It is focused on local potential, on positive local stories to find opportunities for job opportunities locally, and thereby achieve an improvement to quality of life through the efficient use and management of the rural resources.

EURUFU

Educational programme: “Developing opportunity – Discovering the potential”

Biotechnical Centre Naklo, Strahinj, Slovenia

Gorenjska region (North-West Slovenia)



Biotechnical Centre Naklo, Slovenia



Tomaž Cör
*Head of Agricultural advisory service in Gorenjska Region
Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia*

“During the pilot scheme of the EURUFU project at Biotechnical Centre Naklo the participants have shared many different ideas about different services that can be performed for the rural society and the visitors of the rural areas. That helped both, participants and trainers, to get wider look on needs and opportunities in the rural areas that can bring higher income by using local potentials. The participants showed so much enthusiasm for action that we are sure that in the near future a lot of their ideas will be realized.”



Presentation of good practice during pilot action

The name of this pilot action is “Developing opportunity – Discovering the potential” and was carried out by Biotechnical Centre Naklo - Secondary School, Higher Vocational College and Enterprise Educational Centre from Slovenia.

Naklo Biotechnical Centre has been recognized as one of the main “generators” of development in the Gorenjska region (north-west Slovenia), with an important synergetic effect not only in the field of education, but also in the economic, employment, scientific and agricultural sectors. The Gorenjska region is an Alpine region with a characteristically diverse mountainous landscape, where an important part of the region enjoys national park protection. There are 18 municipalities in the Gorenjska region, covering an area of 2,137 km² in total.

Biotechnical Centre Naklo has had a very pragmatic objective regarding the development and implementation of the pilot action, and this was to offer the inhabitants of rural areas the opportunity to obtain knowledge of the systems in place in order to be able to take an active role in activities and services aimed at the development of rural areas. The purpose was to provide useful theoretical and practical contents that would lead to greater employability, social inclusion, an awareness of unexploited opportunities in rural areas, and the development of further activities which could be integrated into a specific environment.

We discovered opportunities in building new networks and consortiums between educational institutions, the economy and the labour market, thereby promoting creative and innovative thinking. In parallel to this, special emphasis has been devoted to promoting the values of sustainability. Therefore, high standards in public services and the maintenance of the basic network of primary, secondary and adult education are of crucial importance.

The flexibility of an educational offer based on “tailor-made” approaches is required in order to enhance and strengthen each person’s creative potential and employability, as well as the economic competitiveness and social attractiveness of rural areas.



A crucial factor in the development process behind the pilot action was to invite critical stakeholders and external experts to define the contents and core competencies for potential service providers in rural areas, in order to include them in the educational programme (pilot action).

Biotechnical Centre Naklo developed and implemented the “Developing opportunity – Discovering the potential” pilot action (educational programme), which combines theoretical and practical contents in an integrated manner, and is divided into 5 separate modules which are interdependent and complementary in terms of their content. The modules are 1) Specific local features –identification of needs, 2) From business vision to action – entrepreneurship, 3) Legislation – understanding and usage, 4) EU funds and projects, and 5) Green economy, sustainable development and ecological agriculture, and food production in rural areas.

The educational programme, which is 80 hours in duration, was carried out by experts with a wealth of experience in their respective fields. The participants were actively involved in the implementation of the pilot programme, which included lectures, presentations, discussions, practical demonstrations of examples of best practice, and visits to and discussions with some successful local entrepreneurs. The participants were given plenty of opportunities to incorporate the new knowledge gained during the programme into their thinking.

The specific objectives of the PA were as follows: to identify the undiscovered possibilities /potentials offered by rural areas; to stimulate the development of various services and activities in rural areas; to improve quality standards in terms of the promotion of activities and services in rural areas; to create a balance between activities and services with sustainable development and the protection of natural and cultural heritage; to raise awareness that each activity also serves to promote the area and village (town), thereby opening up possibilities for development and additional sources of income; to ensure that development is in line with the revitalization of rural areas; to foster a deeper understanding of sustainable development and decision making strategy, which lead to improved quality of life as well as long-term environmental, economic and social welfare; and to assist with the acquisition of the theoretical and practical knowledge required to help individuals become more actively involved in the

development of the local environment, taking the specific features of rural development into account.

The network of different sectors involved in the design and implementation of the project (Agricultural Advisory Service, Employment Service, development agencies, the Statistical Office, representatives from the private sector with examples of best practice) agreed to participate in the process of enhancing the pilot action and coordination in the event that further similar projects are applied for.

While the pilot action was being developed and implemented, its effects manifested themselves through various beneficiaries. The participants in the educational programme, as final beneficiaries, acquired the skills and competences required for self-employment or re-employment, able to move with the times and react to specific local, regional, national or EU demands.

Biotechnical Centre Naklo, together with the hosting lecturers and the representatives of best-practice companies and organizations, were considered intermediate beneficiaries. Through the preparation and implementation of the project they have been acquainted with the development strategies in place and the development problems in the region being dealt with, which resulted in a well-organized team, capable of continuing to develop the problems tackled within the pilot action.

Indirect beneficiaries are the participants from local entities and institutions (local employment offices, regional development offices, agricultural centres, schools, public universities, municipalities, companies, firms, farmers, tourist agencies, etc.) where the participants in the pilot action are able to present their ideas and search for an available environment which is suitable for developing the competencies and knowledge acquired during the pilot action training sessions. Indirect beneficiaries also comprise other educational institutions that show an interest in implementing the pilot action – the educational programme – enhanced and adapted to the specific requirements of their regions.

From an outlook/sustainability perspective, the pilot action was very successful in strengthening the accessibility and efficiency of public services in rural areas and peripheral regions, developing new and existing inter-sectored networks, and motivating individuals’ opportunities through training programmes tailored to the specific demands of the area.

One of the crucial dimensions is the phenomenon of “regional interdependencies”, which can only be proactively achieved through successful international projects and by a more developed strategy for the transfer of the results of specific projects.

EURUFU

Symposium “Ripe performance and vital health”

- **ROW Regional Management Upper Styria West GmbH – PP13 (former EU-Regional Management Upperstyria West – PP10)**
- **Naturpark Zirbitzkogel Grebenzen**
- **Business Doctors – Sozial- und Gesundheitsmarketing**

Region Upper Styria West - Naturpark Zirbitzkogel Grebenzen



This pilot action is called “Symposium Ripe Performance and Vital Health” and the institutions and partners involved in the pilot action were as follows: ROW Regional Management Upper Styria West from Austria; Naturpark Zirbitzkogel Grebenzen; and Sozial- und Gesundheitsmarketing Business Doctors. The pilot action was carried out in Naturpark Zirbitzkogel Grebenzen (a very remote and rural area with low industrialization) in the Upper Styria West Region.

The reasons behind the pilot action were manifold. This kind of rural region needed a special USP (unique selling point) which was of a good fit and would only be applied in these areas. Issues concerning burn-out and employee health are becoming more and more important human resource problems. The steady rise in the number of staff on sick leave points out to take action. Moreover, the aging workforce is also becoming an increasingly important topic. More funding will be invested in employee health and burn-out prevention programmes. Remote rural areas have the perfect conditions for special health programmes and provide an extended range of wellness facilities and recreation areas. This fact signalises the USP. In connection with the often already existing tourist resorts, a cure-programme especially for employee health and burn-out prevention could be a good opportunity to add another valuable asset to the tourism business. This pilot project has the potential to enhance the attractiveness of the rural regions for domestic and international guests. The pilot-project also could serve to reposition the region as a competence region for health tourism and burn-out-prevention. Within the framework of EURUFU, we launched the first “European Symposium for the Prevention of Burn-Out and Stress”. In addition to this, we supported the initial phase of re-positioning the Naturpark as a “Region of Competence for Burn- Out- and Stress-Prevention”.

Among the effects of the pilot action, it was instrumental in creating new partnerships between the SMEs and experts based not only in the “Naturpark” region, but also urban areas such as Graz and Vienna. An international USP for the Naturpark region as a “Region of Competence for Burn-Out- and Stress-Prevention” was developed. Increased revenue streams (“health-tourism”) were generated, new jobs for highly skilled people within the

region were created, and new businesses attracted (either start-ups or established).

Naturally, the outlook and sustainability aspect is of great importance. As a result of the pilot action, new services and improvement to existing services are provided by existing SMEs, and expert-networks supporting the region are expanded. Additional capacity building is to be fostered within the region, and new sources of income sought, along with the creation of employment opportunities, as well as the attraction of new businesses and start-ups through innovative services for the prevention of stress and burn-out.



Peter Donabauer MBA
General manager of the nature park
“Zirbitzkogel Grebenzen”

EURUFU contributed to orientate the nature park Zirbitzkogel-Grebenzen to the “European health centre for mental health”. We have already started with the implementation of the reorientation of the region by means of the awareness-raising events and network events. Experiencing health in and from the nature, using the healing power of the nature, regaining energy/strength in the nature and finding oneself are our targets.

EURUFU

“Clothes make Stories”

- ROW Regional Management Upper Styria West GmbH – PP13 (former EU-Regional Management Upperstyria West – PP10)
- Retirement Home Castle New Teufenbach
- UniT - Verein für Kultur an der Karl-Franzens Universität Graz

Region Upper Styria West – Retirement Home Caste New Teufenbach



The institution and partners involved in the pilot action “Clothes make Stories” were ROW Regional Management Upper Styria West from Austria, Retirement Home Castle New Teufenbach and UniT - Verein für Kultur an der Karl-Franzens Universität Graz. The pilot action was carried out at the Retirement Home Caste New Teufenbach in the Upper Styria West region.

The needs for the pilot action were varied. A characteristic of the region is its steadily aging society. A critical number of young people leave the region for better education or work prospects elsewhere (the “brain drain”). Most return only for holidays or to visit relatives. In most of the remote rural areas, older people stay in the villages. Little by little, older people need to be relocated to retirement homes, because of illness or restrictions in movement or mental health issues. This is a difficult challenge for the municipalities and retirement homes, especially in rural areas. In times where the budget available for social infrastructure is on the decline, it becomes harder to guarantee good nursing conditions and the ability to grow old with dignity.

“Clothes make Stories” supports older people, especially dementia-patients, with their orientation. Workshops are held with the focus being to help older people to remember old memories and maintain social contact. The pilot action helps older people to age with dignity and enhances quality of life in challenging times. The main goals are to foster the integration of older people into social structures; to encourage focused and worthwhile contacts between young and older people; to focus on the existing resources of older people (rejecting the seniority-deficit-model); and to implement interdisciplinary and innovative health-care-services for older people. The effects of the pilot action were far reaching. The project resulted in the creation of new partnerships between associations and institutions for social- and health-care in the “Upper Styria West” region, and associations for creative art in the city of Graz. Furthermore, interdisciplinary and innovative health-care-services for elderly people suffering from dementia were implemented and developed, and awareness of the specific needs of dementia patients was improved. Moreover, the levels of sensitivity for the positive effects of inter-generational communication and learning (the learning of society) were enhanced, and the pilot action also contributed towards fostering a positive attitude towards “Active Aging” (providing “aging” with a new and meaningful image). From an outlook and sustainability point of view, the intention is to implement innovative healthcare services in the “Schloss Neuteufenbach” retirement home, as well as in other retirement homes in the “Upper Styria West” region.

EURUFU

„Triple III“

- ROW Regional Management Upper Styria West GmbH – PP13 (former EU-Regional Management Upperstyria West – PP10)
- Mayermayer Consulting
- Municipality of Weißkirchen

Region Upper Styria West – Municipality of Weißkirchen



The institutions and partners involved in the “Triple III” pilot action were ROW Regional Management Upper Styria West from Austria, Mayermayer Consulting and the Municipality of Weißkirchen. The pilot action was carried out in the Municipality of Weißkirchen in the Upper Styria West region.

A broad range of traditional knowledge exists in the region. The people of the region know how to handle difficult situations and have demonstrated highly developed problem solving skills. This existing reservoir of knowledge is an important resource for new approaches in dealing with the new challenges posed in rural areas.

The aim of the innovation-and-learning workshop of the Triple III pilot action was to engage the “local community” (regional stakeholder, inhabitants, key-actors, entrepreneurs) in a learning and brainstorming process for social and health-care related activities within the region. These social and health care related activities should lead to new and innovative services. Consequently, new job opportunities for well-educated people could stem from these activities. The main goals were to develop innovative approaches to solving problems, to find contacts for innovation-questions, to map a network of innovative people in the pilot region, and to identify appropriate education facilities for a potential external workforce.

In the long term we wanted to be a strong basis for new business models. These models are referred to when innovators create business plans, prototypes and generate new projects. The project created new partnerships between the SMEs and experts based not only in the local region but also in the urban region of Graz. Moreover, the innovation potential within the region was leveraged and the problem-solving capacities of the region’s inhabitants were strengthened, the effects of which were related to demographic changes. New jobs were created for highly skilled and well-skilled people within the region, and entrepreneurial talent were attracted to business opportunities presented there.

In terms of outlook and sustainability, it is important that the ideas implemented address regional challenges, that inter-generational team-building is encouraged in order to implement regional development projects, and that additional capacity building for innovation is fostered.

EURUFU

Creating a social, educational and recreation place in the village Grodzanow

Municipality of Brzeg Dolny

Village Grodzanow



The name of the pilot action is “Creating a social, educational and recreation place in the village Grodzanów” and the institution responsible for its implementation was the Municipality of Brzeg Dolny in Poland. The PA was carried out in the village of Grodzanów, a typical rural area, with very low levels of industry and manufacturing. The key problems that the village struggles with are unemployment, a lack of social infrastructure, and no internet connection. There is a general problem with an ageing population and demographic declines. The total area of the pilot action is 1.5 ha and includes a historic park.

There were good reasons to carry out the pilot action. It had recently become noticeable in the municipality that the inhabitants of rural areas wanted to have places to meet in their villages, like they used to have in the 1970s and 80s – almost like social clubs where people could meet and spend their free time together. Those sentiments have also resulted in the formation of many new village associations (made up by the respective village’s inhabitants), which present a bottom-up approach for actions in their homes. It is for this reason that the renovation of old common rooms has its place. These buildings have a multifunctional role for education, social life and heritage purposes, with the adjacent area serving as a space for sports and recreation. As a result, a more attractive place to relax can be created.

As the pilot action phase of the EURUFU project drew closer, the Municipality of Brzeg Dolny put great emphasis on public participation in the development process. There were 2 workshops organized that involved local inhabitants in planning a future for their area.

The first meeting, which was held on 24 June 2012, focused on an Idea Contest, a general brainstorming of ideas and opinions from the inhabitants of the pilot action area in the village of Grodzanów as to the future possibilities and the inhabitants’ expectations.

The second meeting was held on 12 August 2012. This meeting focused on the forthcoming pilot action development and the investment phase in the village of



Grodzanów. The information collected in the questionnaires disseminated in June served as the basis for the Municipality of Brzeg Dolny's cooperation with the students of the Technical University of Wrocław who prepared and presented concepts for the pilot area revitalization. There were 3 such concepts presented during the meeting and the best (as voted by the inhabitants) has been used by the municipality in the public procurement process to contract a company responsible for construction design, which was delivered in April 2013.

After that another public procurement was carried out, in order to hire a contractor for the investment phase, the finalisation of which ended the pilot action. The partners/stakeholders were the local inhabitants in the area, local authorities and local SMEs. The implementation was carried out with the active involvement of the village's inhabitants as we attempted to improve their relationship with the village and with each other. The local inhabitants have had a great impact on the actual layout of the construction design and hopefully will take full advantage of the pilot action implemented.

The effects of the pilot action were wide ranging in nature. In the planning phase we used and tested the actual knowhow of public participation in the planning of public spaces. We started with the broader context in terms of time and location. With the involvement of the local people, we considered the history of the location as well as its connectivity and relations with its surroundings. New schemes were developed that took the green/landscape aspects as well as the cultural/art aspects into account for solutions.

We hope the project's implementation will encourage other rural areas to change their thinking (from just demanding to cooperating) and start developing in their own directions. The investment will serve as an example for other rural areas in the region, and also on a transnational level owing to the strong twinning activities with Brzeg Dolny. The project meets people's needs, enables them to identify with their area, and offers more ways to spend their free time. It also integrates different age groups together. Some traditional practices such as knitting, weaving, pottery have now become "trendy" again, and young people want to learn those skills.

Upon the conclusion of the co-financing process, the Municipality of Brzeg Dolny will be financially and technically responsible for the continued sustainability of the investment.

The local community in the rural areas will be responsible for managing the "life" of the investment, carrying out local activities, perhaps creating new associations, propagating local traditional food and local customs.

Thanks to elaboration of the construction design and other external expertise involved in the EURUFU project, the Municipality will continue to take further steps towards improving the local area after the project has concluded by creating an external square – a meeting place for inhabitants with a barbecue shed, an outdoor area, a playground, a football/basketball/volleyball court, table tennis, field chess, internal paths, etc.

Strategic Plan

1. Choice of the area

Rural Area (EURUFU definition of rural areas according to WP 3.2.2 p.19 et seqq.)
Categorization (Indicators of ageing, Migration balance, Land use characteristics, Economic differences, Settlement structure)

Issues

EURUFU typology of rural regions (Ethnic minorities, Ageing small villages, Small farmers are increasingly unable to survive due to declining income, agricultural policy and support mechanisms, Rural exodus, Young unemployment, especially)

2. Identification of key players

Key players (Local entrepreneurs, inhabitants of the area, public sector (e.g. employees of health, educational and cultural beings), inhabitants of the area, farmers, etc.)
Establish contact to the key players

3. Synthesis and Analysis

Evaluation of the challenges of the area (Careful analysis of the local context and collection of the concrete needs of the population (or specific population groups, encouraging a wide participation through public events, enquiries, focused questionnaire diffusion, and so on)
Workshops (Once the key players are identified and some data is collected, workshops will help to raise ideas and to get a different approach to certain topics.)

4. Solutions-Implementation

Suggestion of solutions (even innovative or partially innovative) to submit again to the exam of potential beneficiaries and stakeholders)
Implementation and financing opportunities (Regional management assistance)
Realization of the action (also ambitious, even if it will not necessarily be concluded – because of its wideness – within the strict limits of the EUROPEAN projects forecasts, but will directly involve the actors (institutions and organizations) that may carry on the work.)

5. Evaluation-Sharing

Evaluation of the results and the process (Monitoring and evaluation through specific workshops, not just to “present” the projects, but to “elaborate” proposals with the help of action platforms.

Sharing of experiences and the evaluated results (Permanent exchange of information among transnational partners, not only to assure a functional project management, but mainly to highlight the strong and weak points of the actions)

Capitalization of the experience, modeling tool and diffusion of the best practices on a European level.

EURUFU Experience

The Pilot actions showed that the identification and clear definition of the area is a fundamental step for an effective project start. A categorization and a definition of the typology were important (cf. WP3 and WP4.3.7)

Key players such as in the Pilot action „Developing Opportunity – Discovering the Potential“ can be: Agricultural Advisory Service, Employment service of Slovenia, Developers, Lecturers, Enterprises small and medium size and Biotechnical Centre Naklo (cf. WP4.1.7 p.56).

The SWOT analysis carried out by the project partners was summarized and described for example as weakness the following: The basic education in all regions is sufficient but there is a lack of further education like high schools and colleges and the interface to SME's (cf. WP3.2.1)

The participants of the Workshops should be trained to recognize their weakness, their strengths, their opportunities and their threats which they are facing and how to develop strategies to deal with each. These key areas were identified during EURUFU workshops: public social infrastructure - social housing in rural areas - adult education, training courses and promotion of local identity - job opportunities - social infrastructure, mobility demands - public transport and non-motorized transport (cf. WP4.3.7 p6).

EURUFU projects were suggesting solutions which are realistic, concrete and sometimes innovative (cf. WP4.3.7 p.60).

The regional management was assisting the PP4 during the PA “summer university”.

Due to the fact that every region has its specific problems it is not possible to develop “the” solution, even though EURUFU can provide some ideas and possibilities to cope with the problems in rural regions. However, they can serve for inspiration and to be further evaluated and improved (cf. WP4.3.7 p.51 et. seqq.).

EURUFU tries to define relevant criteria for a valid benchmarking of key topics of public supply in the area of social – health care, education, local economy – job opportunities and mobility (cf. WP3.3.1 p.4 et seqq.).

The best example for transferring knowledge at European level and initiate a long-term intensive and continuous dialogue between actors of regional development is EURUFU itself.

