

NEWSLETTER

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5TH NEWSLETTER OF THE YURA PROJECT

FEBRUARY 2013

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the last edition of our YURA newsletter. Unfortunately, the YURA project will end soon. However, is that really true? Does it really end? The official project implementation will end but – as I am convinced - results and activities of the project as well as friendship and cooperation will remain beyond YURA.

Just one result: More than 50 local enterprises and 3.560 pupils participated in YURA activities. They helped to establish about 40 cooperations between local businesses, schools and other educational institutions in the project regions. Even more, our work on demographic change will go on with our new transnational project WOMEN.

Please find more information about the results of our successful YURA project in this newsletter or in our YURA final results brochure.

Thanks to all our project partners, to our project secretariat core-consult and to the Joint Technical Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Wilfried Köhler

Head of Unit

Ministry for Regional Development and Transport of Saxony-Anhalt

Stories about youth in demographic change
Final Results Brochure



The final brochure of the YURA project provides an overview of current challenges for regions in the Central Europe Programme areas. The publication can be ordered and downloaded (in English and German languages) here: <http://www.yura-project.eu>

Successor project – “WOMEN”!

Within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, another important project on demographic change has been approved. Under the acronym “WOMEN” six European regions collaborate in the elaboration and implementation of measures aiming to counter outward migration of young well-educated women from peripheral rural areas. Lead Partner of the project with a lifetime until the end of 2014 is again Saxony-Anhalt's Ministry for Regional Development and Transport. Management will once more supported by core-consult, Dresden.

YURA Final Conference

How do rural regions become more attractive to young people? At YURA Final Conference on 29 January 2013 in Magdeburg this question was in the centre of discussion.



The YURA Project Partners at the Final Conference in Magdeburg

At the event, the YURA project partners presented the experiences they gained in the development and experimentation of different educational programmes targeting youth. All speakers underpinned the added value of a transnational exchange between the participating regions: Sharing the same challenges borne by the emigration of young people, varying regional conditions require different approaches in addressing them.

Identification with the region

Youth must receive more support in their vocational orientation and education to convince them to stay. Especially young people are leaving their home regions to seek their luck elsewhere. Detlef Gürth, President of the Saxony-Anhalt's Landtag (regional parliament), and Thomas Webel, Minister for Regional Development and Transport, spoke about the drastic development in their region.



The active participation of youngsters contributed to the great success of the innovative YURA closing conference in Magdeburg, Germany.

Attractive educational programmes, unimpaired social infrastructures and good transport connections are insufficient – the identification of young people with their region needs to be strengthened, said Gürth. Young people need to see and experience that a joint effort of everybody can bring the changes they wish. Politics and policies only create the necessary framework. Youth should get involved and design their region's future, taking matters into their own hands, added Webel.

Future with perspectives

The importance of the project for Saxony-Anhalt was emphasised by Klaus Klang, State Secretary in the Ministry for Regional Development and Transport, in his conference conclusions. YURA successfully brought together people from politics, business, science, education and culture to recognise and discuss the perspectives of young people in each region. A stronger cooperation between youth, schools, businesses and training institutions is absolutely necessary to enhance the quality of vocational training and to tie potential skilled workers durably to their home regions. In its transnational context, YURA led to valuable results for both each of the participating regions and for European policy-makers.



Representatives of politics-, and science as well as entrepreneurs participating in a quiz on the transnational youth strategy developed within YURA.

Regional and transnational effects of the YURA project

Within the YURA pilot actions, concepts to actively involve young people in educational offers were developed and tested. To obtain a clear picture of the lasting impacts in the regions and for potential future actions, the pilot actions underwent a detailed evaluation before and after implementation. The pilot actions' impact on political structures, learning cultures and cooperation processes has also been evaluated.



YURA pilot actions: working on the kart body, working in the chemical lab, pupils discussing the future of their region, working for solar energy

Altogether approximately 50 local enterprises and 3.560 pupils participated in the pilot actions. They helped to establish nearly 40 cooperations between local businesses, schools and other educational institutions in the project regions.

The high motivation and engagement of the youth showed that the didactical approach of the pilot actions has potentials for future activities. 25 apprenticeships or internships arose out of the activities, and around 60 small follow-up projects have been planned. Some of them are already being implemented.

The pilot actions improved the communication between the responsible players and initiated working approaches towards a higher quality of youth education in the regions. Through the active involvement of regional political stakeholders and representatives of local businesses, the need to counteract the demographic trend by designing attractive social infrastructures. They were admonished to dedicate resources for the long-term support of young people in their vocational orientation. The YURA pilot actions have been successful according to a survey among the project partners. They have

- increased trust among the players involved (73,7 %),
- raised political discussions (73,7 %),
- induced a common learning process (68,4 %) and
- initiated a regional cooperation process (58 %).

The transfer of the pilot action concepts to other regions dealing with the improvement of the situation of young people within demographic change is only possible through continuous and strong communication. As the YURA project was presented to a wide audience involved in regional development, the approaches and results spread and inspired other areas. For instance, other districts in Saxony-Anhalt/Germany have adopted the Business Academy concept. The Future Laboratory model has been extended to all municipalities in the Austrian region of Styria.

Success factors

The cooperative power between schools, companies and partner institutions, as well as specific organisational and political structures, were responsible for the successful implementation of the pilot actions. For instance, in the German Burgenland District an experienced project promoter organised the pilot actions and received support from the regional chamber of trade and a foundation supporting youth education. In regions where vocational perspectives of young people within demographic change were already major topics on the political agenda in the respective region, the perception of the pilot actions and the support of regional stakeholders was bigger. All activities provided important inputs for the revision of youth strategies in the Burgenland District as well as for South-West Styria regional development concept.

Furthermore, the activities have induced collective learning processes and have led to the "refreshment" of institutional arrangements through the creation of situations that differ from daily routines.

Yura Partner Regions Province of Novara (Italy)



A wide view over the Maggiore lake from Arona, with the Alps in the background.

The Province of Novara, situated in the Eastern part of the Piedmont region, is rich of beautiful sites and enchanting panoramas, a great variety of environments and landscapes: stretches of paddy fields whose waters reflect the sky of the Southern side of the province, rice cultivations flanked by rows of poplar trees and farmhouses scattered around the countryside, woods, rivers and parks inhabited by herons, gentle slopes covered with vineyards...

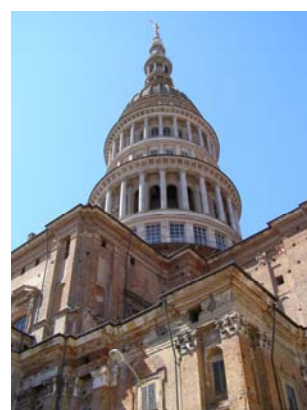
Unique and worth visiting sites occupy the lands between the Lakes Maggiore and Orta: a thick network of paths rich in ancient testimonies inherited from the people who have inhabited such lands, who have strolled along them together with their animals, who have used them to trade their goods produced with great fatigue, or even to escape from the numerous wars and battles the territory has gone through; the same people who have also succeeded in modelling their environment in a respectful and wise way - unforgettable sights which reveal the natural bond between man and the territory. Whoever desires to experience and get to know these extraordinary lands has several ways to "taste" them: a walk on foot, on a horseback or by bicycle. Whatever choice is taken, one will experience "wellness to the spirit" while discovering the breathtaking aspects of an uncontaminated nature, the chiselled rocks testifying the ancient times and the numerous villages which have maintained their own cultural, sport and culinary traditions, contributing to increase the natural appeal of the lands stretching between the hills and the lakes.



In Springtime the rice starts growing in flooded fields



A rich cultural, artistic and architectural panorama is revealed where ancient and modern themes merge harmonically; the memories and traditions of the past re-emerge while the great events of the official history are supported by the most intimate ones which have characterised each local community. Imagination, legends, heritage, tales and narrations make of every local area a very special one, enabling numerous unexpected cultural and artistic discoveries to take place even in the most hidden corners of the province.



The basilica of San Gaudenzio in Novara. Its cupola is the true symbol of the town.

And then, how to forget the rich wine and gastronomy traditions? A blend of creativity and experience has led the Colline Novaresi wines to the high-quality and prestigious international recognition they deserve, while the local cuisine permits to re-discover old, lost traditions whose past is rooted in the farmers' world.

A better perception of the needs of young people

In order to find out about YURA's impact, we asked regional coordinators and political stakeholders about the experiences they have made. How could the project improve the situation of youth in their region, and what added value will remain after YURA has come to an end?



Andreas Schweitzer, Ministry for Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt (DE)

"YURA enabled direct exchange between youngsters, enterprises, policy-makers and stakeholders. The participating regions benefited from new ideas and concepts. YURA – a good example for vivid transnational cooperation in Europe."



Claudia Krobath, Innovation Region Styria GmbH (AT)

"The youth got to know the companies of the region and their branches, activities and career perspectives. They tested their skills in technical vocational fields and established contacts within the enterprises. The interest of young people in technical businesses has increased; this applies to female students in particular."

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Helena Matuščinová, Ústí Region (CZ)

"The YURA project activities helped to define issues that the young people perceived as relevant in their city or region. This increased the strength of the link between young people and their town or region. In face-to-face meetings with the municipalities' representatives, the students presented their views as well as possible solutions, while gaining first-hand experiences in local development processes."



Gerald Stöger, core-consult GmbH & Co. KG (DE)

"Youngsters in European rural areas need attractive living and working conditions with future prospects. It should be the main aim to counteract current trends of emigration and problems of population ageing in a sustainable way. Even more, these trends may motivate us to work even harder for the future of these youngsters."