


RURA developing quality youth work in rural contexts

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1. Introduction

The Erasmus+ project '**RURA - Developing quality youth work in rural areas**' was created to *improve the quality of youth work in rural areas and is a key initiative to address the multiple challenges faced by young people in geographically disadvantaged regions.*

Often characterised by limited access to essential services and opportunities, *rural areas require innovative approaches to ensure the well-being and active participation of their young people.* This project seeks not only to improve youth policy initiatives, but also to promote the engagement of local entrepreneurs as key stakeholders in this transformative process.

Local entrepreneurs in rural areas have unique insights into the socio-economic landscape of the community and can play a crucial role in promoting youth development. By engaging these entrepreneurs as active participants in youth work, the project envisions a dynamic synergy where entrepreneurship contributes to and benefits from an engaged youth community.

This paper explores the outcomes of an Erasmus+ mobility event held in the Monti della Laga National Park in April 2024, which brought together youth workers and rural social entrepreneurs to discuss and develop strategies for youth welfare.

The mobility highlighted the potential of local entrepreneurs to not only support youth work, but to become an integral part of it. Entrepreneurs can inspire and mentor the next generation, creating a sustainable cycle of community empowerment, by sharing their experiences and engaging directly with young people.

This introduction sets the stage for a detailed examination of the project initiatives, the role of local entrepreneurs and the collaborative efforts to transform rural youth work into a vibrant and inclusive force for positive change.

2. Conceptual framework

RURAL YOUTH

The regulation defining the Erasmus+ Programme defines “people with fewer opportunities” the ones with limited accessibility due to geographical barriers (i.e. those “living in remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/outermost regions, in urban suburbs, in less serviced areas” - Inclusion and Diversity Strategy).

“Two of the most discussed challenges were poor transport, and limited employment opportunities. In addition, many consultation reports highlighted poor internet connections, limited cultural, leisure, youth work and education opportunities as well as challenges accessing health care and housing. An important factor was lack of choice between opportunities, and amount of travel required to access them. Some working group reports highlighted that young people in rural areas felt less able to influence decision making as they were disconnected from town halls and local government by distance.”

RURAL YOUTH WORKERS

In the 2022 Youth Conference (9th Cycle of Youth Dialogue), the role of rural youth networks in conveying information to young people who have fewer opportunities to get involved was a key focus. With regard to their engagement with young people, non-state actors, in particular youth NGOs, encounter difficulties in reaching out to young people in rural areas. Youth NGOs are predominantly a phenomenon of metropolitan areas, but there are indications that even in small or remote communities, young people connect and form associations (CM/REC(2016)7).

Rural youth organisations play a pivotal role in facilitating awareness-raising initiatives tailored to the specific needs of vulnerable young people, offering invaluable expertise in this regard.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social entrepreneurship and social enterprises, which support both social and economic objectives, represent a significant feature in addressing social challenges and providing inclusive employment opportunities. Such enterprises frequently facilitate social innovation in a number of key areas of rural life, including social care and health services, retail, education and training, environmental products and services, food production, culture or tourism. This is achieved through the redesign and re-engineering of business models and value chains, the development of new clusters and networks, and the establishment of new relationships or collaborations between public, private and third sector organisations.

3. Policy framework

EUROPE

TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (TFEU)

stipulates that the EU shall pursue the objective of fostering the overall harmonious development of its Member States and regions. Actions must be taken to support less favoured regions in developing their potential for growth. It is of particular importance to direct attention to rural areas, regions affected by industrial transition, and regions that suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic disadvantages.

TERRITORIAL AGENDA 2030 (TA2030)

provides a political vision and ambition for the territorial cohesion objective. The Territorial Agenda, under the heading 'A future for all places', advocates place-based policy responses to territorial challenges, the involvement of subnational authorities and citizens, and a stronger uptake of EU territorial instruments and other territorial tools for integrated territorial development.

LONG-TERM VISION FOR THE EU'S RURAL AREAS (LVTRA)

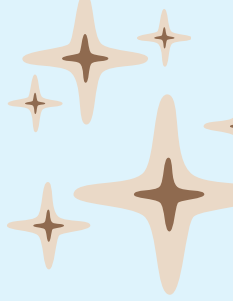
published by the European Commission in 2021, provides a framework for rural development. The vision identifies several areas of action that will lead to stronger, more connected, more resilient, and more prosperous rural areas by 2040. The accompanying EU Rural Action Plan will facilitate the fostering of territorial cohesion and the creation of new opportunities to attract innovative businesses, provide access to quality jobs. To achieve these goals, it is necessary to promote the development of new and improved skills, to ensure the availability of better infrastructure and services, and to leverage the role of sustainable agriculture as well as diversified economic activities.

ITALY

The Italian National Strategy for "Inner Areas" (SNAI) is designed to address the challenges of marginalisation and demographic decline in the country's remote regions. It employs innovative, place-based policies and multilevel local governance as a means of achieving this goal. The "Inner Areas" encompass 60% of Italy's surface area, hosting 52% of its municipalities and 22% of its population. The aforementioned areas are confronted with a number of challenges, the most significant of which is their distance from essential services.

The objective of SNAI is to enhance demographic trends and transform these areas into opportunities by enhancing essential services (education, health, and mobility) and promoting local development through EU structural funds and national funding. This integrated approach is designed to provide new life and development opportunities, with the ultimate aim of aiding the country's overall economic revival (Agenzia Nazionale per la Coesione Territoriale, 2021).

4. Definition of rural areas: the example of the Teramo Province in Abruzzo



WHAT IS RURAL(ITY)?

A common definition of rurality, at international and EU level, doesn't exist. And this is a fact.

Despite the diverse definitions one can find in the world wide web, two main concepts should be highlighted when discussing the notion of rurality and rural areas: **“Lonely Places”** and **“Places of opportunities”** (Proietti et al., 2022), both investigated in the 2022 Science for Policy JCR report “New perspectives on territorial disparities”.

“Lonely Places” is an exploratory concept coined to identify all those locations that are considered vulnerable in terms of endowment of resources and connections.

Non-urban areas across Europe (for the purposes of this publication, rural and disadvantaged areas are given special consideration) face similar challenges, but for place-specific reasons, since the morphology, economy, society and culture differ so much between the various European Countries.

Being rural areas a topic that must be tackled at national and local level, in the first place, there is no lack of national policies addressing spatial disparities according to their individual characteristics. **Some terms emerged within those policies include “España vaciada” in Spain, “Aree interne” in Italy, and “Territórios de Baixa Densidade” in Portugal.**

Those terms have common features as they describe ***non-urban geographical areas characterised by limited accessibility to essential services, social unrest, brain drain, economic decline and growing depopulation.***

These challenges create a **vicious circle** that doesn't favour the flourishing of networks and cooperation between people, both at the level of the labour market and at the level of social participation.

The result is a "lonely place" with limited resources in terms of labour, a strong mismatch with the labour market and emigration to urban areas or other regions and, more often, abroad, thus shrinking the working age population living in the area.

The term "**Places of Opportunity**" first emerged in 2021's LTVRA, which outlines the objective of enhancing the strength, resilience, connectivity, and prosperity of rural areas, while transforming "Lonely Places" into "Places of Opportunity." It is crucial to contextualise the role of the EU's rural areas within the European way of life: these areas represent 30% of the European population and cover over 80% of the European territory, which is predominantly covered in forests, hilly and/or mountainous terrain. For this reason, there is a significant opportunity for non-urban areas to contribute to the bio-economy, ecosystem services, biodiversity and well-being (Pertoldi M. et al., 2022).

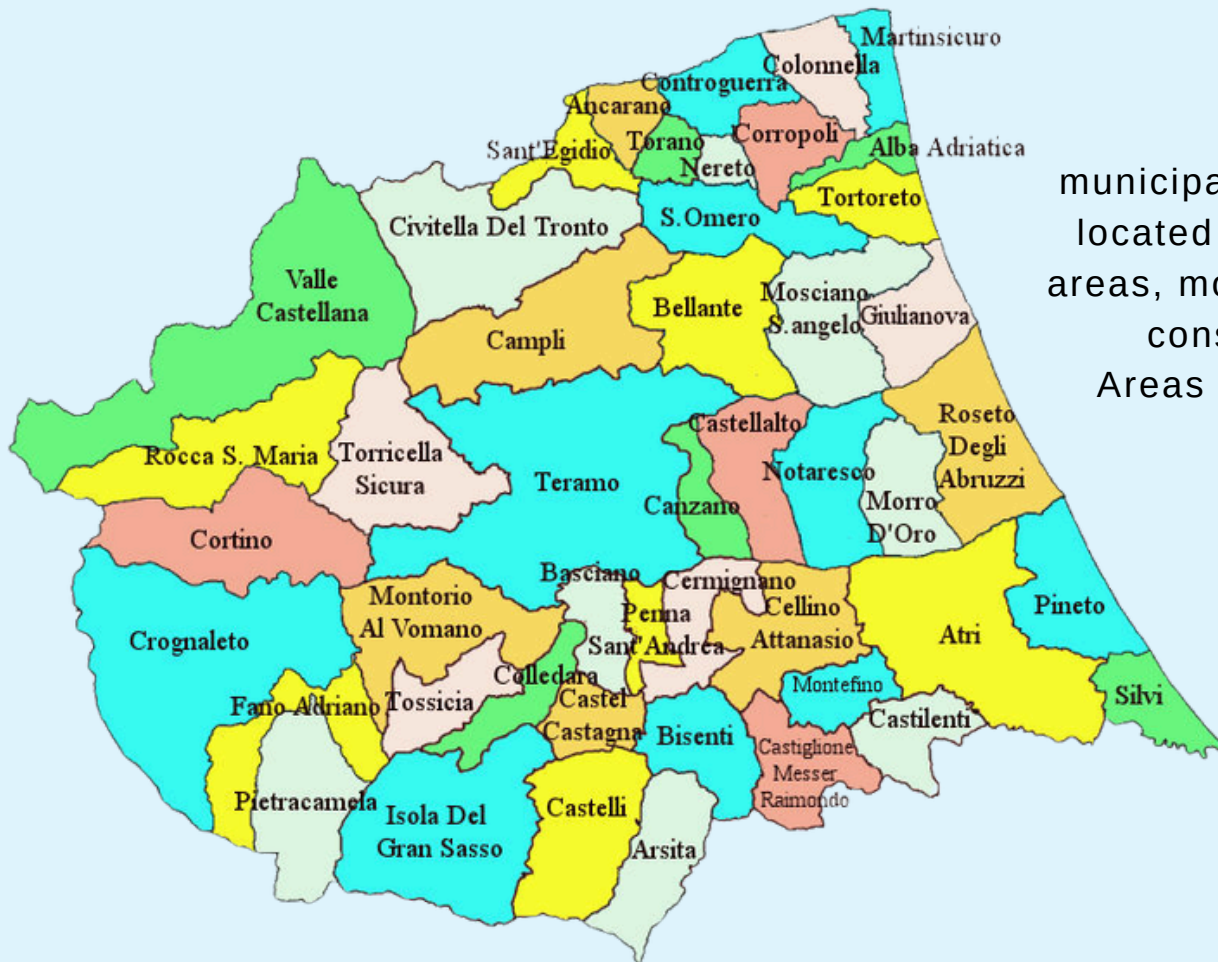
The emergence of **new societal demands**, the potential of the green economy, the advent of digital transformation, and the shift towards remote work **have identified non-urban areas as sites with the potential to contribute to well-being, security, sustainable living, and social and economic renewal** (Pertoldi M. et al., 2022).

European non-urban areas (intermediate and predominantly rural areas) are of considerable importance for their contributions to food production, the management of natural resources, the maintenance of the landscape, recreational activities and tourism.

A considerable proportion of Europe's cultural traditions and festivities, as well as a multitude of aspects of cultural practice, have their roots in rural regions (COM/2021/345 final).

THE PROVINCE OF TERAMO

The Province of Teramo is a small province of the Abruzzo Region, situated in the centre-south of Italy. The distinctive feature of this region is its topography, which encompasses the Gran Sasso-Laga National Park (Apennine Mountains) and the Adriatic Sea.



Of its 47 municipalities, 22 are located in non urban areas, mostly in those considered Inner Areas (SNAI 2023).

In the Province of Teramo, the youth population (15-29 years) is 15% of the total population, while in the Inner Areas it is 13% of the population.

The issue of **depopulation** is a matter of concern for the Inner Areas territory, as evidenced by the fact that between 2020 and 2022 the 22 municipalities subject to this paragraph have experienced a loss of an average of 3.6% of their population. Some municipalities have experienced a greater decline, of almost 9%.

The depopulation situation between 2015 and 2022 is even more concerning, with an average population loss of almost 11% of the resident population (with peaks of 22%).

A study conducted by the **Gran Sasso Science Institute (GSSI)** has revealed that the anticipated decline in Inner Areas is not an inevitable outcome. *Some municipalities exhibit greater adaptability to development as a result of a number of contributing factors.*

The presence of a diversified socio-economic environment, the capacity to capitalise on opportunities arising from the tertiary sector, high rates of female employment and a low level of exposure to social and material vulnerability are key elements that contribute to a municipality's capacity to adapt (De Renzis, A., et. al., 2022, Distant but Vibrant Places. Local Determinants of Adaptability to Peripherality).

The majority of **young people** residing in the province's inner areas express a **desire to seek better opportunities elsewhere**.

Conversely, a **significant proportion of the population remains** in their region, demonstrating a **strong attachment to their roots**, a characteristic commonly observed among inhabitants of the Abruzzo region. For this latter group, the priority is to have access to strong and efficient essential services and to be given the opportunity to emerge and establish themselves as individuals and professionals.

In this context, the role of the youth worker becomes pivotal.

Rural youth organisations play a pivotal role in facilitating awareness-raising initiatives tailored to the needs of young people. They offer expertise, career guidance and facilitate access to non-formal learning experiences through local and European projects.

The number of youth organisations in these areas is relatively limited, largely due to the constraints posed by restricted mobility and the lack of financial resources allocated by public administrations.

Social aggregation activities are conducted by Pro Locos (an association that promotes local culture and tourism) and environmental associations.

5. Why the RURA Project?

THE IDEA

The project idea stems from a youth consultation carried out by Formatalenti in the province of Teramo, which revealed the **desire of young people to participate in the social life of the area**: a desire that the young people interviewed felt frustrated by the lack of quality initiatives aimed at them. **Youngsters also expressed the desire to get in touch with their peers from different EU countries**, who live similar realities in terms of geographical and social peculiarities, in order to compare their daily lives, share their experiences and try out common solutions to improve their well-being.

THE OBJECTIVE

to **SUPPORT** the development of quality youth policy initiatives in rural areas and **PROMOTE** civic participation and European citizenship among young people in rural areas by raising awareness of the opportunities offered by EU institutions.

THE ACTIVITY

Through networking activities between young entrepreneurs and youth workers from different EU countries, the project identified and exchanged good practices to enhance the well-being of young people in geographically disadvantaged contexts.

Partner organisations, selected by Formatalenti staff for their relevant activities and expertise, helped refine the project's objectives. An informal network was established, facilitating the exchange of specific know-how and best practices in youth work. Participants engaged in group discussions, met with local entrepreneurs with strong social and environmental focuses, and analysed "case studies" to identify potential initiatives for promoting youth welfare in rural areas.

Youth workers acted as "special envoys" using their skills to benefit the local community by developing new ideas and projects aimed at enhancing youth welfare. This process provided both local actors and youth workers with new ideas and concrete projects to promote their areas through active youth participation.

Additionally, the mobility program focused on **how partner organisations communicated Erasmus+ program opportunities to young beneficiaries**, enhancing their awareness and ability to utilise these opportunities.

THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

WHEN?

From the **8th to the 12th of April 2024**

WHERE?

Villa Penna, a small hamlet of the Campli municipality, in Monti della Laga National Park in Teramo, Italy.

WHO?

Youth Workers from across **Portugal, Slovenia, France, Greece and Italy** and **rural social entrepreneurs**

WHAT?

The week-long event was the result of a collaborative effort involving a diverse group of participants from different EU countries, all committed to addressing the challenges faced by young people in geographically disadvantaged regions.

Participants in interactive workshops discussed **innovative youth work practices in rural areas**, emphasizing sustainable environments and community engagement.

Local entrepreneurs showcased successful **sustainable business models**, **inspiring youth workers with examples of how entrepreneurship can benefit rural communities.**

The outcome included project proposals to enhance well-being for rural youth, developed collaboratively with the local community.

During the event, there was a specific session focused on the Erasmus+ programme. Here, participants delved into the diverse opportunities provided for young individuals by this EU initiative.

The conversations were designed to raise awareness and comprehension of how social entrepreneurs can effectively utilize these opportunities to contribute their efforts to the local young community, ensuring they can make the most of the resources and assistance provided by the programme.

MOBILITY ACTIVITIES

PRIOR THE MOBILITY

To gain insights into the strengths and weaknesses of young people in rural Abruzzo, various activities were conducted. Here is an overview of the process:

- Cooperativa Formatalenti conducted **data collection** to gather **information on youth work initiatives, community resources, demographics, and socio-economic conditions.**
- The data provided a foundational understanding of the current situation and **pinpointed the main strengths and weaknesses of youth in the Province of Teramo.**
- The collected data was then summarized and analyzed to **develop a SWOT analysis**, focusing on highlighting the **strengths and weaknesses of youth work in rural Abruzzo.**



SETTING UP THE WORK

Formatalenti presented the SWOT analysis to the partners with the aim to extend it by identifying potential threats and opportunities through interactions with social entrepreneurs.

HOW?

1

THEMATIC WORKSHOPS

were arranged for social entrepreneurs, centering on three main topics:

1. **Environment**
2. **Health**
3. **Cultural Heritage**

as they are the driving forces behind rural areas.

INTERACTIVE SESSIONS:

During these sessions, **participants actively engaged in dialogues with local stakeholders to pinpoint possible threats** like environmental degradation, health crises, and the loss of cultural heritage. Additionally, they highlighted opportunities such as ecotourism, health programs, and cultural festivals.

2

3

DAILY REFLECTION SESSIONS

at the end of the day those sessions were organised based on the topic of the day (Environment, Health, Cultural Heritage) and the workshop/ interactive session concluded.

LENS-BASED ANALYSIS

1. **Rural Development:** Evaluating how each topic impacts rural development and identifying strategies to promote sustainable development in rural areas.
2. **Community Engagement:** Discussing ways to engage the community in addressing the identified issues and leveraging opportunities.
3. **Youth Participation:** Focusing on how to involve youth in these initiatives and ensuring their active participation in the development process.

4

5

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Facilitating group discussions to gather diverse perspectives and ideas on each topic.

SYNTHESIS OF IDEAS

Summarising the discussions and integrating insights into the overall project strategy.

6



DAY 1: ENVIRONMENT

Activity: Interactive and reflection session with Godere Agricolo.

RURA partners met **Alessandra**, owner of Godere Agricolo, a family-run hospitality business emphasizing collaboration and self-sufficiency. **The farmhouse's simple cuisine and hospitality make it a rural and cultural reference: one of the last bastions of authenticity in the area.**

Alessandra highlighted the importance of networking with local businesses for awareness and diversification. She aims to enhance online presence. Mobility participants discussed and shared views, concluding with keyword collection. Her presence will be regular throughout the entire stay, providing the chance for a continuous exchange.



DAY 2: HEALTH

Activity: Study visit, bread making and Interactive session with Carpa la Terra.

The second day was dedicated to a visit to Carpa La Terra, a small farm in Garrano Alto, in the Teramo area.

The owners, **Luisa and Massimo**, along with their three children, provided a warm welcome into their home, which also serves as the centre of their business and the origin of their products.

During the morning, instruction was given on **how to make bread, starting with the dough made from ancient grain flour and the shaping of the loaves**. Each participant had the opportunity to create a personal loaf shape, which would then be baked and delivered to Godere Agricolo for tasting.



Between one forkful and another, Luisa and Massimo explained that the **Carpa La Terra agricultural project originated from their desire to return to cultivating their grandparents' land and their belief in making agriculture central to change**.

This change involves rediscovering the value and richness of healthy food and protecting the land through organic and sustainable farming practices.

The farm cultivates ancient grains, spelt, and minor cereals to produce bread and pasta, which are sold in local markets. Additionally, oil, wine, and vegetables are produced mainly for food self-sufficiency. The owners admitted that *maintaining the business is challenging and that they supplement their income with other jobs*. However, **their goal is to grow and pass on the values of rural life to their children and the wider community.**



DAY 3: CULTURAL HERITAGE

Activity: Thematic workshop on typical regional dances and reflection group with Claudia and Marzia, dancers and founders of the Malafèdanza project

The third day was dedicated to the cultural heritage preserved and disseminated by the professionals of the **Malafèdanza project**. Progetto Malafè was born as a traditional dance and music group from Abruzzo and Marche, as the area where the mobility took place is on the border between the two regions, with the **aim of reviving the traditions and folk dances of central and southern Italy**.

In 2015, Progetto Malafè became a cultural association and is active in the organisation of concerts, shows and cultural events aimed at spreading knowledge of popular traditions. The repertoire of the Concert-Show winds between dance and music, a sensory journey suitable for all audiences.

Our partners had the opportunity to try their hand at **two popular dances, the quadrille and the saltarello**, the latter proposed as a form of ancient human dissing. **The thematic workshop, tiring but stimulating, paved the way for a new approach to preserving the cultural heritage of such a diverse rural area.**



DAY 4: CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITY (HEALTH + ENVIRONMENT + CULTURAL HERITAGE)

Activity: Thematic workshop on recognition of wild herbs and reflection group with Valeria Zannoni, herborist and touristic guide.

The fourth guest was **Valeria Zannoni**, a professional originally from Rome who relocated to the rural areas of Abruzzo due to personal choices.

In her new reality, she has had to reinvent herself professionally, while maintaining her original profession (**herbalist and excursion guide**). She has started to organise workshops in which she shares her knowledge and shows all the possible benefits of flowers and plants.

In addition to the medicinal and gastronomic aspects, the wide range of herbs and flowers found in rural areas, and specifically in the Abruzzo countryside, also allows for the production of ecological dyes, which she uses daily for her textiles or for painting

Valeria conducted an **herb recognition activity** with the participants, during which they learned about the properties of common flowers and herbs, including which ones are edible and what they can be used for.

Following this, everyone **painted an image related to the RURA experience with herb colours**, exploring the effects of different pH levels on colour tone. The experience was thought-provoking, and Valeria's demonstration of competence, strength, and resilience was the subject of the afternoon's discussion among all participants



DAY 5: CLOSING OF THE WORK

Activity: reflection groups and final meeting

The last day of activities was dedicated to **defining the observations and proposals gathered during the previous brainstorming sessions.**

The discussion then moved to a more practical level, focusing on the keywords that had emerged during the previous days, with the aim of identifying possible interventions in favour of rural areas.


The opportunity to interact regularly with people living and working in less economically developed regions enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of their circumstances and priorities. The conclusions and ideas most conducive to the growth and development of rural areas have been summarised in this e-book, which represents the collective experience of all partners and participants.

The week-long meeting ended with a **gathering** of all the stakeholders involved in the mobility and their friends and families. **Typical regional food, regional music played by the participants gave rise to a final party under the sign of cultural contamination, laughter and bonding.**



6. Tools to promote quality youth work in rural contexts

WHAT EMERGED



from the **reflection groups** with the partners and during the workshops with the stakeholders involved in mobility is a **strong sense of the need to strengthen community participation**

which can be achieved through a **bottom-up approach**, by bringing together local actors in groups or through a **SYMPOSIUM**

A first set of tools could be derived from these findings:

Community Engagement and Outreach Programs:

Local Youth Councils

Establishing councils to give young people a voice in local governance and decision-making processes.

Youth-Led Community Projects

Encouraging youth to initiate and lead projects that address local issues, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Community Symposiums and Workshops

Regularly organised events to discuss youth needs and potential solutions, engaging various community stakeholders.



The evaluation of the value added by the delivery method may involve shifts in people's behavior resulting in enhanced ownership, advancements in social capital, and betterment in local governance.

These changes can play a part in bringing about structural transformations in the region. Utilizing a suitable range of tools to address this matter could foster **greater cooperation in collaborative initiatives, shared knowledge, and learning**, as well as bolster voluntary, community, and social enterprise endeavors.

OTHER SETS OF TOOLS

Improve the access to Funding and Resources Local, National and European grants

Providing information on available grants, scholarships, and funding opportunities for youth projects and education, to young people, youth organisations and social entrepreneurs.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Collaboration with Schools and Universities
Partnering with educational institutions to provide extracurricular activities, internships, and career guidance.

NGO and Government Partnerships
Working with NGOs and government agencies to develop comprehensive youth programs and policies.

Business and Industry Involvement
Engaging local businesses to provide internships, apprenticeships, and sponsorships for youth initiatives.

Workshops and Training Sessions
Regular training sessions on topics such as project management, fundraising, and youth engagement strategies.

Advocacy and Policy Development

Youth Advocacy Groups Forming groups to advocate for youth interests at the local, regional, and national levels.

Policy Workshops Conducting workshops to educate young people about policy-making processes and how they can influence decisions that affect their lives.

Youth Representation Ensuring that young people are represented in local councils and committees where decisions about community development are made.

Cultural and Recreational Activities

Sports and Outdoor
Activities Organizing sports events, hiking trips, and other outdoor activities to promote physical health and social interaction.

Arts and Cultural Programs
Offering programs in music, dance, theatre, and visual arts to foster creativity and cultural expression.

Community Festivals and Celebrations
Involving young people in planning and participating in local festivals and cultural events.

Improve the use of Media and Communication Channels

Social Media Campaigns Utilising platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to promote youth activities, share success stories, and engage with the community.



By leveraging these tools, rural communities can create supportive environments that empower young people, enhance their skills, and foster their active participation in community life. These efforts can lead to more vibrant, resilient rural areas with thriving youth populations.

7. Opportunities for youth living in rural areas

Local Opportunities

Agricultural and Agritourism Initiatives

- **Regional Agricultural Programs:** Abruzzo offers various agricultural programs that provide training and financial support for young people interested in modern farming techniques, organic farming, and agribusiness.
- **Agritourism Ventures:** Young entrepreneurs can take advantage of the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage to develop agritourism businesses, combining agriculture with tourism to create unique experiences for visitors.

Cultural and Heritage Projects

- **Local Heritage Preservation:** Programs focused on preserving Abruzzo's rich cultural and historical heritage provide opportunities for youth to engage in restoration projects, guided tours, and cultural event planning.
- **Arts and Crafts Workshops:** Traditional crafts and arts workshops can help young people learn and preserve local crafts, with potential for creating artisanal products for local and international markets.

Educational and Vocational Training:

- **Collaboration with vocational schools:** These institutions offer specialised training in fields relevant to the local economy, such as agriculture, tourism, and crafts, and could partner with local entrepreneurs to promote traineeship and PCTOs (the Italian program of school-to-work alternation to provide students technical skills and get a first taste of the working world)
- **Workshops and Seminars:** Regular workshops and seminars on various topics like digital skills, business management, and environmental sustainability are available to youth and potentially led by local social entrepreneurs.

European Opportunities

The European opportunities listed below are intended for the entire rural community of the province of Teramo. The mobility showed that the **European opportunities are completely unknown to the agricultural and cultural entrepreneurs of the area.**

In addition to the work that needs to be done to attract young people who travel to larger cities for leisure, to participate in Erasmus+ youth exchanges, mobilities and participation activities outside the school environment, **entrepreneurs need to recognise the importance of European grants and funds to improve their business activities and transform themselves from mere entrepreneurs to social entrepreneurs.**

Some relevant opportunities in which they could participate are:

Erasmus+ Program

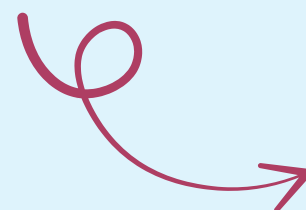
- **Youth Exchanges and Training:** Erasmus+ provides opportunities for young people to participate in international exchanges, training courses, and volunteer projects across Europe, enhancing their skills and broadening their horizons.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Funding for projects that create partnerships between educational institutions, businesses, and youth organizations to develop innovative educational and training programs.

European Solidarity Corps

- **Volunteering Projects:** Young people can participate in volunteer projects across Europe, gaining valuable experience and contributing to community development.
- **Solidarity Projects:** Funding for local projects led by young people, focusing on addressing community needs and fostering solidarity.

Horizon Europe

- **Research and Innovation Grants:** Grants are available for youth interested in pursuing research and innovation projects, particularly in fields relevant to rural development and sustainability.





Creative Europe

- **Cultural Projects:** Support for youth-led cultural projects, including arts, media, and heritage, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and creativity.

Rural Development Programs (RDP)

- **Young Farmers Scheme:** Financial support and training for young farmers under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to encourage sustainable farming practices.
- **LEADER Program:** Funding for community-led local development projects that aim to enhance the economic and social vitality of rural areas.

European Social Fund (ESF)

- **Skills Development and Training:** ESF funds projects that provide training and skills development, helping young people improve their employability and career prospects.



By tapping into these local and European opportunities, youth in Abruzzo's rural areas can access a broad spectrum of resources and support mechanisms. These initiatives can help them develop their skills, start and grow businesses, and actively contribute to their communities' sustainable development.

8. Conclusions and Partners' information

By the end of the mobility, participants left with a renewed sense of purpose and a toolkit of ideas and strategies to implement in their respective regions. The connections made and the knowledge shared during the event **provided a strong foundation for ongoing collaboration and support among youth workers and social entrepreneurs across Europe**. These individuals were united in their mission to enhance youth welfare in rural areas.

The Erasmus+ mobility not only fostered **valuable exchanges of ideas and experiences** but also **inspired tangible actions** that will continue to benefit rural communities long after the event concluded.

The project's mobility has demonstrated the significant impact that collaboration between youth workers and local entrepreneurs can have on improving the wellbeing and opportunities of young people in geographically disadvantaged regions.

Through the initiatives and discussions, it has become clear that **local entrepreneurs are not only economic drivers, but also potential mentors and role models who can actively contribute to youth development**.

Involving local entrepreneurs in youth work draws on their practical experience and deep understanding of the community, creating a robust support system for young people. Entrepreneur involvement can bridge the gap between education and real-world applications, providing youth with tangible skills, inspiration and pathways to sustainable livelihoods. By engaging with youth, entrepreneurs can foster a sense of purpose and community cohesion, ultimately leading to more resilient and dynamic rural areas.

This project has highlighted **the importance of integrated approaches to youth work, combining educational initiatives with entrepreneurial mentoring**.

The positive outcomes of RURA Project underline the potential for replicating such models in other rural areas of Europe, promoting a holistic approach to youth welfare that includes economic, social and educational dimensions.

In conclusion, the RURA project has laid a solid foundation for future efforts to improve youth work in rural areas. By continuing to build on the relationships and strategies developed during this project, stakeholders can ensure that rural youth are not only supported, but empowered to actively contribute to their communities. The engagement of local entrepreneurs as youth workers is a sustainable and innovative way to achieve long-term positive outcomes for rural youth and to foster a brighter future for these regions.

PARTNERS' INFORMATION



FormaTalenti is a Social Cooperative based in the **Abruzzo region of Italy** that works in the field of youth policy at regional level, with a particular focus on the district of Teramo.

The cooperative was founded in 2008 by a group of young people who shared the desire to contribute to the social development of their target area by promoting opportunities for the new generations at local, national and European level. Among Formatalenti's statutory objectives, a priority aspect is indeed the promotion and development of youth protagonism and the improvement of the quality of life of the new generations.



«**Europe en Berry Touraine**» is a non-profit association active since 2009 at the heart of a partnership network that now unites 5 cities of the **Region Centre-Val de Loire in France** with partners from all the countries of the European Union. It promotes unity and accession to active European citizenship.

Its associative network brings together 230 members and some 300 other volunteers in the Centre-Val de Loire region and in Europe.

Together, they generate intercultural and intergenerational synergy in a spirit of solidarity and tolerance, open to the world.



Inter Alia means among others in Latin. Based on a philosophy of cooperation and reciprocity, Inter Alia works to advance political education, social transformation and collective action. Based in **Athens, Greece**.

It expresses the intention to willingly and joyfully stand among others, co-create, make concessions, and enable common progress and collective intelligence. Inter Alia is a civil society organisation. Inter Alia's work is based on three fields: a. the Roots School of Critical and Explorative Learning, b. the Heart Civic Intervention Point and c. the Bloom Space for Culture and Arts. Under these pillars fall the organisation's activities, which are designed and implemented according to strategies developed on the axes of Culture & Arts, Education, Youth and Political Engagement.



propósito inadiável
ASSOCIAÇÃO PARA COSTUMES FUTUROS

Propósito Inadiável, established in March 2014 in **Fortios, in the Alentejo Region of Portugal**, has been actively engaged in various projects at regional, national, and international levels due to the founders' background in non-formal learning. At the local and regional levels, activities such as discussions on leadership, citizenship, inclusion, and sustainable development in rural areas are held with a wide range of local organizations.

Volunteer initiatives supporting farmers are conducted to boost their self-esteem. Internationally, the organization has partnered in projects and secured approvals under the Erasmus+ Programme. The organization has been dedicated to promoting intercultural dialogue, fostering shared understanding, and creating channels for inclusion since the beginning. Recognizing the positive impact of youth work, the organization has developed tools for youth engagement and empowerment. A spirit of cooperation and tolerance is deeply embedded in the organization's culture and reflected in projects that directly address these values or indirectly promote cultural diversity through collaborations with partners worldwide.



DRUŠTVO TABORNIKOV "ROD ZELENA ROGLA ZREČE" is scouting youth organization with 85 members aged between 13 and 25 years old based in **Zreče, in Slovenia**. Main activities include outdoor and sports activities, both in winter at the scout center and in summer camps. Collaborating with multiple partners, the organization implements programs and activities through the Erasmus+ program. Hosting over 12 youth exchanges and international projects, RZR has engaged in more than 15 international exchanges.

With partners across various European countries, the organization actively collaborate on diverse programs and projects. The management team focuses on the continuous informal education of young leaders, enhancing organizational development and recognition within local communities. This effort aims to boost our reputation and credibility.

