



A step towards **better** rural youth work

O3 - Booklet on inspiring practices
addressing rural youth




Contents

- Introduction** **04**
- What is rural?** **08**
- Policies and Strategies on Youth** **12**
 - European Union 13
 - Council of Europe 15
 - The United Nations 16
 - European Youth Forum 16
 - MIJARC Europe 16
 - Euromontana 17
 - Rural Youth Europe 17

Good practices Selection	18
Infrastructure	22
Education & Culture	25
Employment	36
Well-Being	45
Participation and Inclusion	56
Focus areas	68
Funding opportunities	77
Education & Culture	79
Volunteering	82
Employment	84
Participation and Inclusion	86
Regional development	89
Annex 1: Funding opportunities in EU, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia	92
Annex 2: Policies and strategies on rural youth	93

Introduction





In 2018, 29.1% of EU population lived in rural areas, which is almost one third of the whole population. In Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia this number is still higher and equals around half of the population. Urbanization has a big impact on rural areas – young people migrate from rural areas into bigger cities with more employment possibilities.

The population of rural areas is ageing and these areas have a higher share of older people than urban areas. Many young people feel the consequences of deficient public and commercial services, lack of public transportation or housing, social and health care facilities. One of the eleven [European Youth Goals](#) developed through the EU Youth Dialogue is European Youth Goal No 6 – Moving Rural youth Forward, which addresses the challenges of the shrinking rural areas.

At [the EU Youth Conference in Vienna](#) in 2018, which took place in the frame of the sixth cycle of Structured Dialogue, participants (young people and policymakers) have decided that the main challenges of the young people in rural areas are²:

- Poor transport and internet connections
- Limited employment and youth work opportunities
- Limited opportunities (employment and youth work, education, culture ...)
- Lower influence on decision making
- Need for better basic amenities (improved electricity and water supply).

This means that many young people find rural areas less attractive to live in and therefore young people are leaving rural areas all over Europe. On the other hand, rural areas also have advantages – lower crime level, less noise and pollution, and being closer to nature. We should also not forget rich cultural heritage, which can foster identity and bring new opportunities.

² <http://www.youthconf.at/youthgoal-6/>

Empowerment of rural youth workers

Youth work is an important instrument which can address disparities between the rural and urban environment. Youth workers can engage young people in rural areas, including those who are at risk of being left behind, in different types of activities within their respective local communities. In rural areas youth workers have a big responsibility for the development of the young people and are often a motor of change.

This booklet was prepared as part of the Erasmus+ KA2 project Under the Loupe: Rural Youth Work! in a partnership between [NAPOR](#) (Serbia), [Prizma](#) (Croatia), [Idrija 2020](#) (Slovenia) and two research institutes: [Institut društvenih nauka](#) (Serbia) and [Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar](#) (Croatia).

The partnership aims:

- To ensure social inclusion of rural youth by creating preconditions for their active involvement in community life, through building capacity of youth workers and raising awareness of decision makers, underpinned by relevant policy development.
- To establish cross-sectoral cooperation among the research community and youth workers in order to identify the needs of rural youth and introduce and encourage evidence-based practice.
- To increase visibility and recognition of youth work potential to respond to the needs of rural youth at local, national, regional and EU level.
- To increase the quality of rural youth work programmes by introducing innovative and inspiring practices from local to EU level.

By preparing this booklet we want to empower youth workers, active in the rural areas. Although the focus is on the area of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, it's also useful for youth workers in other rural areas across Europe. As it also includes funding opportunities and main policies on youth

work in European rural areas, we hope that it will also serve as a manual for tackling problems of young people in rural areas and as the source of inspiration. COVID-19 pandemic has brought on many challenges, importantly affecting rural areas. Let's tackle them with new innovative approaches!

Inspiration for strategic work

Shrinking of the rural youth population is an European-wide challenge and needs to be addressed through policies and strategic planning. You can read this booklet in any order. If you're looking for fresh ideas for your new project, start first with the strategies and policies aimed at the rural youth work and young people in the first part. This will give you a better understanding of the last trends in the (rural) youth work.

The second part of the booklet introduces good practices in the rural areas in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, collected by the project partners. We've also added some interesting projects in the wider European region, which can serve as inspiration for the future youth work activities in your area. Special focus is dedicated to Idrija (Slovenia) and

Gračac (Croatia) as these two areas demonstrate the potential of youth initiatives to revive the past for the sustainable future. Both areas also understand the role that rich cultural and natural heritage has for future development.

An important challenge to the youth work activities is also a lack of funding. In the final part of the booklet we've prepared a list of funding opportunities in the region with focus on international projects and activities. You can find some additional links for funding opportunities and policies and strategies on rural youth in the annex I and II.

Interactive experience

As the booklet is available only in online form we've included many interactive elements for more vivid experience. Good practices are equipped with video interviews where coordinating persons of the projects explain a little bit more about the projects or their organisation.

We hope that the booklet will provide you with many interesting suggestions for the youth work in your area. Let's make together a step towards better rural youth work!



What is rural?

One of the most interesting questions, also asked many times by partners during the project, has been: what is rural? The answer is far from being clear and it's hard to decide, what makes a territory rural.

As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [explains](#), rural areas have a variety of different characteristics and geographies - from well-served communities near urban areas to remote sparsely-populated places with limited access to basic services - as well as differing cultures.



Eurostat classification

Based on the share of local population living in urban clusters and in urban centres, Eurostat classifies Local Administrative Units (LAU or communes) into three types of area:

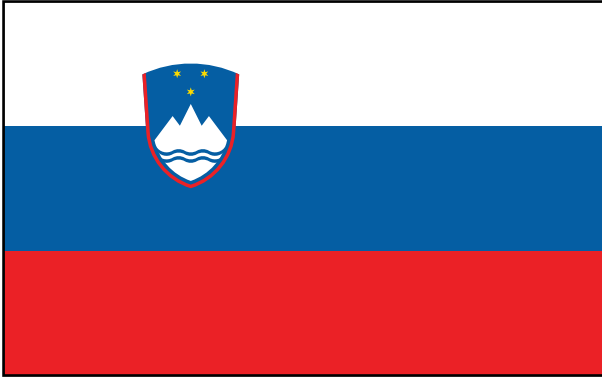
- **Cities** (densely populated areas)
- **Towns and suburbs** (intermediate density areas)
- **Rural areas** (thinly populated areas)

Based on this data, in 2018 39.3% of the population lived in the cities, 31.6% lived in towns and suburbs, and 29.1% lived in rural areas. You can find more data on the EUROSTAT webpage, dedicated to the [Urban and Rural Living in the EU](#).

Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia have a large percentage of the rural population. Based on data from all three countries, Croatia has the biggest percentage of the rural area (97 %), followed by Slovenia (more than 90 %) and Serbia (85 %). This also emphasizes the need of systematic youth work in rural areas.



**Around 97% of the
Croatian territory is rural.**



Around 90% of the Slovenian territory is rural.



Around 85% of the Serbian territory is rural.

Although official methodologies about rural-urban characteristics exist, perception of the rural area remains complicated. It's common to think of agriculture or forestry as the main activities in the rural areas, but the official classifications also often include many (post) industrial or mining areas. Many rural areas have been exposed to the problem of the shrinking population², which usually goes hand in hand with the loss of identity and decrease of employment opportunities after economic decline.

² <https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/ESPN%20Policy%20Brief%20on%20Shrinking%20Rural%20Regions.pdf>

Policies and Strategies on Youth



Although rural population makes about one third of the EU population, rural youth policies in Europe almost don't exist. In the last years, however, there has been more focus on rural youth. One of the European Youth Goals is committed to the rural youth, which is a big step forward.

What is Youth work?

Are you interested in who the youth worker is or you already work as a youth worker and would like to know how to describe yourself to the others? Take a look at this video, prepared in partnership of European Commission and Council of Europe.

https://ec.europa.eu/youth/gallery/what-youth-work-today_en

European Union

EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027

The [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#) provides a framework of objectives, principles, priorities, core areas and measures for youth policy cooperation for all relevant stakeholders. It fosters youth participation in democratic life and supports social and civic engagement. Three core areas of action are in the centre of the strategy – Engage, Connect and Empower. In the youth strategy itself there is no specific focus on the rural area. However, it is associated with the European Youth Goals.

In 2020, European Council adopted [conclusions on raising opportunities for young people in rural and remote areas](#), which recognise growing challenges in the rural and remote regions in Europe, with the emphasis on ageing, accessibility of public and commercial services, quality jobs and education, digital and physical infrastructure, public transportation and leisure activities.

It's an important conclusion which follows [ideas and opinions](#) collected during the 7th Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue consultations, as well as contributions during the EU Youth Conference held in Zagreb in March 2020 within the framework of the specific subtheme "Opportunities for Rural Youth".

Are you interested in the EU Youth Strategy?

Take a look at the video presentation of the strategy:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_zCQNhiwTQ


European Youth Goals

At the 6th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue - Youth in Europe: What's next? which took place in 2017/2018, 11 [European Youth Goals](#) were developed. The most important goal for the rural youth is goal no. 6 - Moving Rural youth Forward.

The goal is an answer to important challenges of the rural area, where young people are suffering from high youth unemployment, precarious and exploitative working conditions as well as discrimination in the labour market and the workplace. The lack of information and suitable skills for future employment are preventing young people to be fully integrated in the labour market.



Main targets of the goal are to:

- Ensure appropriate infrastructure in rural areas in order to provide equitable delivery of public services, data connectivity and housing opportunities for young people
 - Ensure that sustainable, high quality jobs, accessible to young people are created in rural areas
 - Ensure the decentralisation of different activities by, for and with young people in order to support their inclusion and to benefit local communities
 - Ensure that young people in rural areas are actively participating in decision-making processes
 - Ensure equal access to high quality education for young people in rural areas
 - Establish a positive image of rural areas
- 

Youth Participation Strategy

Salto Participation & Information Resource Center has launched a [Youth Participation Strategy in 2020](#), which seeks to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and the European Youth Goals related to youth participation. It intends to enable a variety of actors to harness more effectively the full potential of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes to foster youth participation in democratic life.

Council of Europe

In January 2020 Council of Europe launched the new [Youth Sector Strategy 2030](#). The new strategy will provide policy guidance and a broad political roadmap, or mission statement, for the period 2020-30, and will be the framework within which the next five biennial Youth for Democracy programmes will be implemented. New strategy is based on the Council of Europe's core values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The United Nations

The United Nations has presented and launched [Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy](#) in 2018. The Strategy aims to facilitate increased impact and expanded global, regional and country-level action to address the needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people in all their diversity around the world, and to ensure their engagement and participation in the implementation, review and follow-up of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) as well as other relevant global agendas and frameworks.

Although it's not directly addressed to the rural youth, it also incorporates many objectives important for rural youth (access to services, participation, decent work ...).

European Youth Forum

The [European Youth Forum](#) is the platform of youth organizations in Europe, representing over 100 youth organizations. One of the members is also [Rural youth Europe \(RYE\)](#). As for 2020 no policies or strategies on rural youth were prepared.

MIJARC Europe

[Mijarc Europe](#) or International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth is a coordination network for rural and Christian youth organizations in Europe. It represents around 130 000 young people from rural areas in 13 European Countries. The aim of the organization is to defend the future and the interests of the rural world and the people who live in it – young people especially. They also strive to support young people and to encourage them to take joint action in order to promote training and education in the rural environment. One of the aims is also to develop rural spaces.

Its aim is also to develop rural spaces, through development projects or through actions carried out by the association or its members.

As written in [MIJARC Specific Objectives 2017-2021](#), thematic focus of MIJARC Europe is on:

1. A sustainable future for agriculture and rural youth
2. Our European vision in an interconnected world
3. Citizenship and youth participation in rural development





Euromontana

[Euromontana](#) is the European multisectoral association for cooperation and development of mountain territories.

Young people in rural areas are highlighted as part of the document [Towards a long-term vision of rural areas](#), published in May 2020. As mentioned in the document, young people, particular women, are the predominant category of people who leave mountain areas. To increase the attractiveness of mountain areas, a specific focus should be given to young people.

A [toolbox](#) to better involve the youth in mountain governance was developed as part of the project Alpine Space GaYA (Governance and Youth in the Alps). It was published in 6 languages to support mountain policy makers in better including the youth in public life.

As part of the European Mountain Convention declaration [Improving attractiveness of mountain areas for young generations](#) was adopted, which highlighted the richness and strengths of mountain areas and addressed the current problems that young people (and mountain inhabitants in general) face on a daily base offering transferable solutions to these problems.

Rural Youth Europe

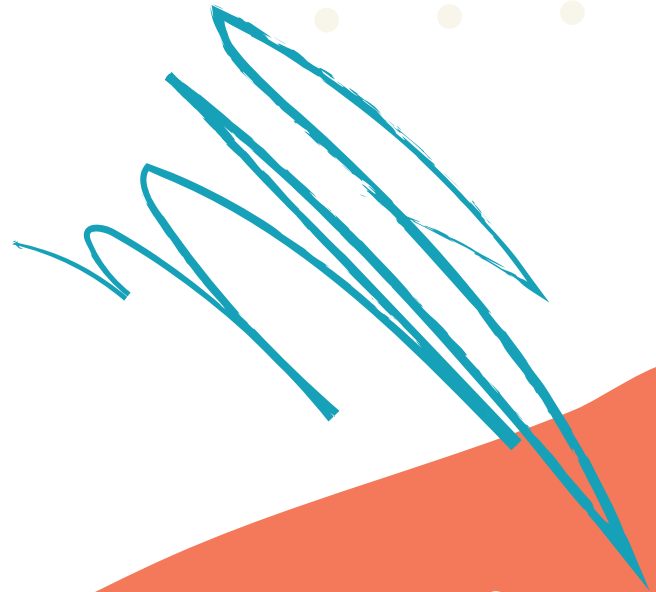
[Rural Youth Europe \(RYEurope\)](#) is a European Non-Governmental Organisation for rural youth.

In 2019 [Rural Youth Manifesto](#) was published together with [European Council of Young Farmers \(CEJA\)](#) and [International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth \(MIJARC Europe\)](#). The manifesto focusses on seven key areas: education, investments, social fabric, health, connectivity, climate change and the organisations in rural communities. Its overarching aim is to raise awareness among politicians and stakeholders about the importance of the EU to rural communities, highlight the challenges rural communities are facing and offer concrete solutions to these problems.

Good practices Selection



Rural areas often provide fewer opportunities when compared to urban areas. Although the situation is sometimes quite grim there are many good examples in Europe. In the following chapter we will present good practices from all over Europe, which have taken advantage of the rural areas. These areas show that also rural areas can lead in the number of new creative ideas.



Become inspired by good practices!

We hope that these good cases will serve as inspiration for youth work in rural areas and successful development of local policies associated with rural youth.

Together with the help of the partners we prepared a list of good cases in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and other European countries. We split them in five sections with specific challenges:

1. Infrastructure

Many rural areas are facing a lack of transportation or suitable housing for young people. A big challenge for the rural communities is also a lack of the mobile and internet signal. All these obstacles have a big impact on the rural youth population. Not many existing youth work projects are dedicated to the infrastructure, mainly due to big costs associated with it.

2. Education & Culture

Rural area is known for a lack of educational opportunities. On the other hand, many organizations understand the opportunities, offered by the rural areas, and organize activities which combine natural or cultural heritage of the region for educational purposes.

3. Employment

Rural areas contrary to popular belief don't offer only employment in agriculture but are much more diverse. Unfortunately, there is a lack of high-educational job opportunities which force many young people in pursuing their career in big cities.

4. Well-Being

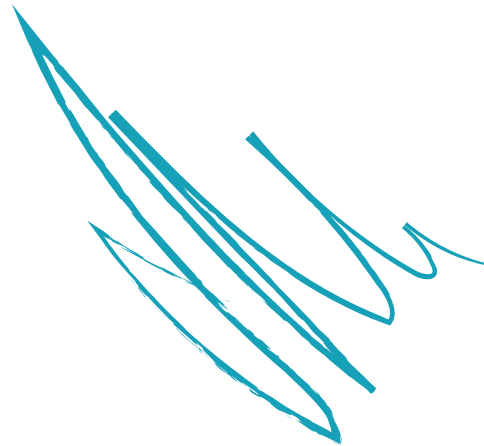
One of the main advantages of the rural area is its proximity to nature and wilderness. This has undoubtedly positive effects on health. Many rural areas are also affected by the negative trends in modern society, especially rising drug consumption. There is also a lack of sport activities which challenges young people in choosing their place of residence in bigger cities.

5. Participation and Inclusion

Many research studies show that youth in rural areas have less opportunities for participation in the local area policies. In many areas there are no organized activities for inclusion of the vulnerable groups due to a lack of dedicated organizations.

6. Focus areas

A special focus is devoted to the areas where project partners are based. Successful participation and engagement of the young people is possible only through long-term devotion, incorporating not only young people, but also decision makers and wider population. Gračac (Croatia) and Idrija (Slovenia) are two municipalities in Slovenia and Croatia who understand the needs of young people and actively work against shrinking youth population.



Infrastructure



Flats for everyone (Slovenia)

ORGANISATIONS:

Inštitut za študije stanovanj in prostora, Inštitut za politike prostora, Društvo PiNA, Zavod PIP, Avanta Largo

WEBSITE:

www.stanovanjazavse.si

Five NGOs came together to form the Stanovanja za vse (Housing for all) network. Their intention is to promote the systemic regulation of the housing sector in Slovenia and to research the current situation and develop suitable alternative models of housing supply, while at the same time to place the housing issue at the center of public debate by connecting key actors, advocacy and communication.

Slovenia is facing an extremely poor situation in the field of housing. The housing stock is dilapidated and there is a shortage of non-profit housing. Dispersed construction is prevalent, quality and affordable housing is out of reach for young people, and there are more and more poor owners who cannot cover basic costs. All this is a consequence of the lack of housing policy,



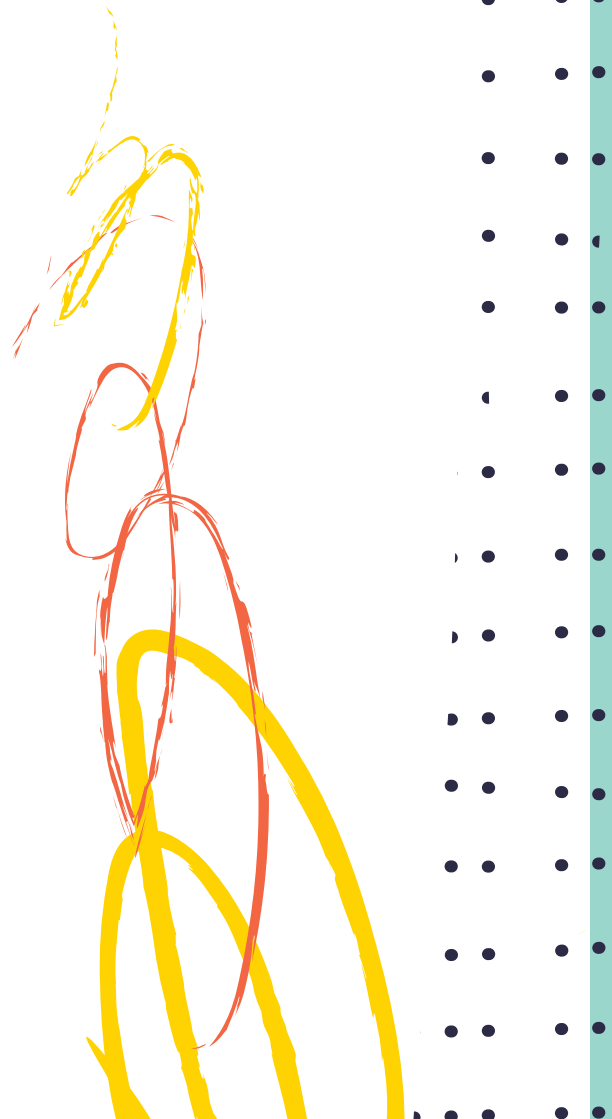
as the state has neglected the housing sector since independence. Organisations involved in the project are Pina Association, IPoP – Institute for spatial policies, PIP Institute – Legal and Information Centre Maribor, ISSP – Institute for Housing and Spatial Studies, Avanta Largo, Institute for Social Communication.

IMPACT

- Preparation and implementation of advocacy campaigns for changing the housing policy of the Republic of Slovenia in the direction of innovative, community and sustainable solutions.
- Identification, transfer and testing of innovative, community and sustainable housing solutions.
- Implementation of a communication campaign on the need to solve housing problems and examples of good practices of innovative, community and sustainable solutions.
- Preparation of an effective consortium business model and start of implementation.

FUNDING

- Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia





Education &
Culture

Drama studio of Center for culture and education Sonta (Serbia)

ORGANISATION:

Center for culture and education Sonta

WEBSITE:

www.cekos.org.rs



Drama studio is the basic programme of the organisation. It has been unofficially established in 2011, it includes children and youth and is based on authentic methodology of theatre in education where participants are included in acting, playwriting, directing, producing and more.

From its beginning, the Drama studio has produced a lot of plays, some of them titled Hair, Our common role, Hand to hand, Comedy about a woman, The world we are used to, Blind passenger, Our story etc. Members of the Drama Studio developed an authentic method that they named Author's Theatre of Children and Youth. It implies that young actors and actresses are involved in the entire process of making a play. They write a script and direct their plays, take care of scenography, costumes and make-up with or without mentoring help.

One of the examples for that is project Naša zajednička uloga (Our common role) that has been awarded the best project within programme Youth rules 2016 – Western Vojvodina which was financed by Ministry of youth and sport of the Republic of Serbia. The play was about different kinds of discrimination such as discrimination against persons with disabilities, against persons that look and act different, against women and young girls and about discrimination

against persons with different sexual orientation. Authors of this play are young people from four drama groups from Apatin, Sombor and Sonta.

The need to publish plays that were created came years ago. Since all of the plays that were played are written by young people and members of Drama studio, they wanted to encourage them to keep creating new stories and plays.

IMPACT

- Annual festival Nedelja pozorišta (Theatre week).
- Engagement of the local young people in theatre production
- Authentic methodology of theatre in education

FUNDING

- Mostly independent from project funding
- European youth foundation



Learn more

Watch an interview with Jelena Šegrt, Programme Coordinator of the Centre for Culture and Education Sonta in Serbia and learn:



1. What are the main activities in your organisation?
2. What are the challenges and threats faced by the local youth?
3. Where are education possibilities for young people in the local area?

e-Hiša, House of Experiments (Slovenia)

ORGANISATION:

Mladinski center Nova Gorica

WEBSITE:

www.e-hisa.si

e-Hiša (e-House) is an educational center that fosters learning through experience. Many workshops in the form of interactive experiments are organised every year for children, young people and adults.

All activities give the opportunity to learn through a fun experience where participants solve problems and search for innovative solutions. E-hiša is a part of the Youth Centre Nova Gorica. Their aim is to foster interest in natural science and technique with the goal to increase interest in study in those fields.



Activities for young people include view of the natural science experiments, experiments in the field, workshops for creativity and innovation development, work with talented kids, course of robotics with LEGO packages, competitions First LEGO League, days of technique, Festival of science Nova Gorica, thematic birthday parties ...

IMPACT

- Raising awareness about the importance of natural and technique sciences at young people
- Fostering of experiential learning
- Linking formal and non-formal learning
- Sustainable environmental operation

FUNDING

- Nova Gorica Youth Center (financed by Municipality of Nova Gorica)



Learn more

Watch an interview with Primož Brankovič, Youth Programme Coordinator at e-Hiša, House of Experiments, Nova Gorica:



1. Do you notice increased interest in technical schools and professions among young people because of your work?
2. Do you work with universities, high schools and similar institutions to implement the programme?
3. Do you also carry out activities that engage vulnerable groups (NEETs, migrants ...)?

Spaces for young creativity (Spain)

ORGANISATION:

Instituto de la Juventud de Extremadura

WEBSITE:

juventudextremadura.gobex.es/web/espacios-y-factorias



The spaces for young creativity are centres for the development of artistic and creative activities related to leisure and free time. They are equipped with all sort of resources for the development of activities related to music, plastic, audiovisual and scenic arts, modern technologies, etc. The spaces for young creation are located in industrial spaces or buildings that were no longer in use (slaughterhouses, silos, Civil Guard's barracks, old churches, etc) and were reconverted to be used by the young people and also to host any initiative (workshops, festivals, courses, etc) that might be of interest for them.

One of the objectives of these spaces is to work on non-formal education to promote the autonomy and entrepreneurship of the young regional population. Their signs of identity are to encourage young people to create young associations, to work in collaboration, to develop networks with other young people, as well as to boost the creativity and the talent, emphasizing their capacity to be independent and able to create their own projects and initiatives, but giving them the necessary support, information and advice at the same time.



IMPACT

- Reuse of former industrial areas
- Promotion of the autonomy and entrepreneurship to the young regional population
- Development of new community places in the rural area

FUNDING

- Local Government



Alternative music in the rural area (Slovenia)

ORGANISATION:

Mladinski informativni in kulturni klub Murska Sobota

WEBSITE:

www.mikk.si

The purpose of the Alternativna godba (Alternative music) project in Murska Sobota is to offer a wide range of musical genres, especially by non-commercial performers.

The project is marked by a considerable educational note, as many performers, in addition to their standard performances, also hold free workshops for young people at the MIKK. At the same time, the project appeals to the general public to think critically, to perceive and accept contemporary music production.

Thus, in a region that is already proverbially outside the centers of power, education, money and decision-making, ie on a statistically demonstrably deprived periphery, the project in MIKK has been providing a quality music offer for many years and a different - supra-genre musical practice. Alternativna godba project has therefore expanded the horizons of critical thinking.



IMPACT

- Promotion of alternative, media ignored alternative genres
- Around 30 concerts every year
- More than 55 independent musical performers
- Free workshops for young people

FUNDING

- Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia



Learn more

Watch an interview with Vladimir Petković, Coordinator and leader of the cultural programme in MIKK Murska Sobota, and learn:



1. How young people participate in the project Alternativna godba?
2. How to engage young people in local community activities?
3. What are the main challenges and threats for young people in the rural area?



Eko centar Latinovac (Croatia)

ORGANISATION:

Eko centar Latinovac

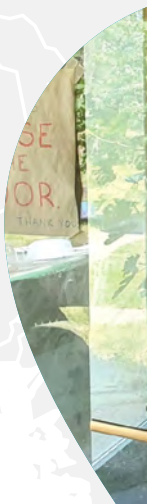
WEBSITE:

www.facebook.com/latinovac.org

Eko centar Latinovac is an organization that gathers people from village Latinovac, permaculture designers, and enthusiasts who are interested in growing organic food, traditional and DIY skills, vegetarian and vegan diet, and volunteering (locally and internationally). The work of Eko centar Latinovac is based on the promotion and application of principles of permaculture, intercultural exchange, and promotion of volunteering in the Slavonija region. They also implement Spring and Fall Festival with various workshops, cultural events and promotion of local producers.

As the Eko centar Latinovac works in a rural area, they face certain problems related to the regular and active involvement of young people in their work. Very poor transport connections and the lack of young people in rural areas (most leave due to job search, educational opportunities, etc.) is a very big obstacle in their work. Therefore, Eko centar Latinovac is working on the implementation of field activities in Požega-Slavonia County (if young people cannot come to the centre, then they go to youngsters).

Because of various activities in the community and the nature of the place they are attracting more young people who want to come to work and learn with them and share experiences, some young people wish to stay longer. Since 2014 five young persons have come to live in Latinovac and one young family is in the process of renovating their house.



IMPACT

- Empowered local community; young people are deciding to live in the village
- The local population is more involved in activities, exchange of skills and knowledge
- Some of the international volunteers are accommodated with locals
- Raising the consciousness of the importance of starting social entrepreneurship through different segments
- Raised consciousness of the importance of ecology and sustainability

FUNDING

- European Solidarity Corps
- Čaglin Municipality
- Fund for environment protection and energy efficiency and the Ministry of demography, family, youth, and social politics of the Republic of Croatia

Learn more

Watch an interview with Mario Miličević, Chairman of the Eko centar Latinovac, and learn:



1. What challenges are you facing and what kind of innovation do you want to bring?
2. Do you carry out initiatives on the topic of social inclusion?
3. Is there any revival of local traditions and cultural heritage in the local area?



Employment



Txe ONA – Empowered – woman brave authentic (Serbia)

ORGANISATION:

Urban Stream

WEBSITE:

www.urbanstream.co.rs

Main objective of this project was to enhance the employability of young girls and women in rural communities through education on entrepreneurship, strengthening social skills, career guidance and counselling.

Project activities were made in such a way that participants had the opportunity to acquire certain knowledge and also, after the main project activities, all participants were provided with further support and monitoring of their development by mentors.



Young people were involved in all phases of the project, from its creation and writing to implementation and evaluation. Any feedback received from them is accepted and in this way young people can influence direct changes within the project plan.

IMPACT

- 20 young women were educated on human rights, equality and discrimination; entrepreneurship and career counselling, planning and employment
- 20 plans were made by participants on personal or career development through mentoring process within 2 months
- research in 2 local communities on local employment policies
- around 2,000 people at the local level were reached through online campaign

FUNDING

- WeB4YES (Western Balkan Civil Society Organisations for Youth Employment Support) -> financed by the European Union



Learn more

Watch an interview with Nevena Stojanović, Assistant to the Youth Programme Coordinator at Urban Stream, and learn:



1. What are the challenges and threats faced by the local youth?
2. Why are young people leaving the local area?
3. Is there a lack of access to quality jobs in the local area?

Bollenti Spiriti (Italy)

ORGANISATION:

Regione Puglia per le Politiche Giovanili

WEBSITE:

bollentispiriti.regione.puglia.it

Bollenti Spiriti is a programme of the Puglia Region aimed at youth empowerment. In the relatively short time since 2006 the Bollenti Spiriti ('High Spirits') programme has been able to mobilise a great number of young people, associations, and municipalities to enhance a network of cultural facilities and social projects supporting creativity as a resource for the region.

The Laboratori Urbani action redevelops public properties using a multi-stakeholder and participative strategy: the regional administration invites municipalities to identify unused buildings in their area and funds a twofold action for their recovery: first, the physical regeneration of the building, managed by the technical offices of the local administration; second, a public call for an organisation to manage the new facilities for training, education and cultural purposes. These organisations are contracted for five years and given a start-up contribution for the first year. Since 2006, 150 buildings have been selected.



Principi Attivi is a programme aimed at young people (18-32) who are required to form a partnership (minimum two people) and propose an idea for territorial, social or entrepreneurial activities. Good ideas are granted up to €25 000 and given full support for the development and communication. The action has financed 610 projects so far.

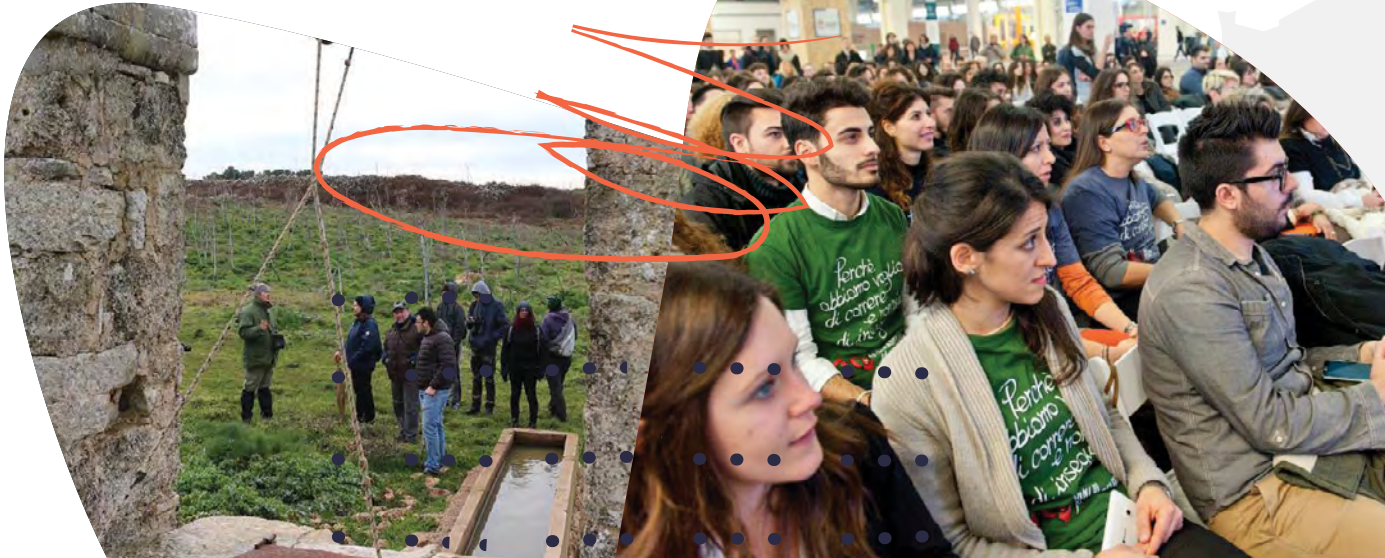
Libera il Bene is a newly started sister programme of Urban Laboratories aimed at the redevelopment of public properties confiscated from the mafia into social facilities, without targeting young operators.

IMPACT

- New approaches to engage young people
- Empowering young by encouraging cooperation, participation and coproduction
- Old buildings make way for young entrepreneurs

FUNDING

- Local government



Empowering young people for a better future (Croatia)

ORGANISATIONS:

Outward bound Croatia, Udruga za održivi razvoj
Pozitiva Samobor

WEBSITE:

www.outwardboundcroatia.com/eu-projekti/europski-socijalni-fond/

"Empowering young people for a better future" was a two-year project for youth from 18-29 years old, promoting the development of social skills and competencies that contribute to competitiveness on the labour market and social inclusion of youth (NEET as well) by providing information and education.



The project had four different programmes:

1. "Violence prevention programme for young people" was based on the methods of experiential pedagogy and experiential learning in nature and encouraged young people to develop communication, teamwork, tolerance, and respect for others, and thus directly affect the prevention of violent and unacceptable forms of behaviour.
2. "Let's sail together into the future" aimed to develop employability skills and increase the competitiveness of young people in the labour market. It was a programme of experiential learning on a sailboat, during which participants acquire skills important for employment (self-confidence, responsibility, initiative, teamwork and communication, organizational skills and work habits), and on the last day of the programme professional competencies that will be used for employment (based on the existing need for workers in sailing tourism, one of the main economic branches in Croatia in rapid development and growth).
3. "Programme for the development of social skills and projects social entrepreneurship" aimed to develop personal and social skills of young people and their information and education on social entrepreneurship.

4. "Workshops on mobility opportunities for young people through EU funds" programme had the purpose to inform young people and educate them on how to get involved and develop mobility programmes themselves (youth exchanges, volunteering, Erasmus + EU programme).

IMPACT

- 48 young persons developed knowledge on social entrepreneurship
- 385 young persons developed knowledge on opportunities of mobility for young people
- through Erasmus+ programme and European funds
- 384 young persons developed soft skills needed for the prevention of violence
- 23 young persons learned sailing skills

FUNDING

- European Union through the European Social Fund



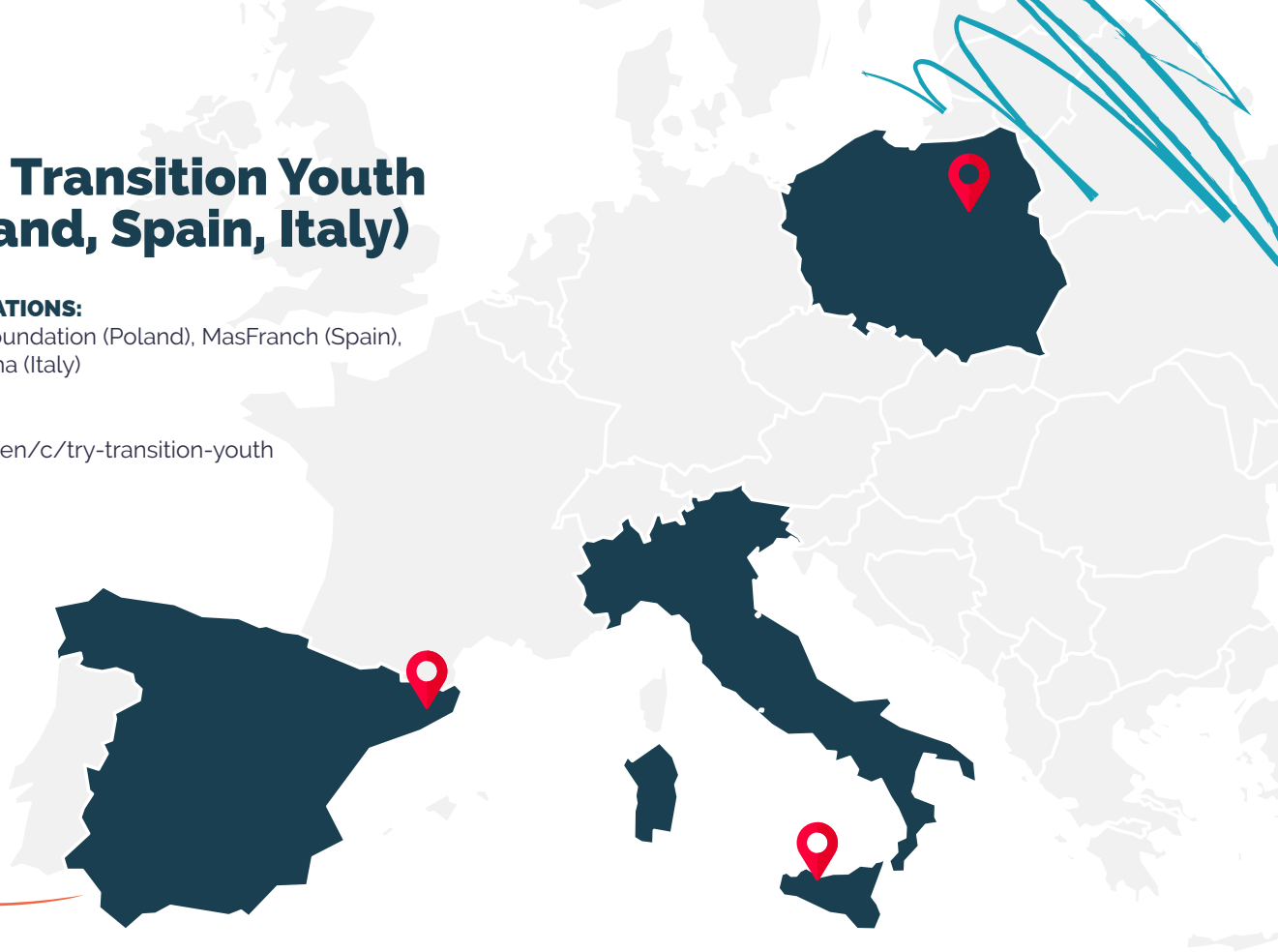
TRY: Transition Youth (Poland, Spain, Italy)

ORGANISATIONS:

4YOUth Foundation (Poland), MasFranch (Spain),
Palma Nana (Italy)

WEBSITE:

4youth.pl/en/c/try-transition-youth



The main goal of the project TRY: TRansition Youth – sustainable development and local entrepreneurship was to prepare groups of young people to act to reduce the negative effects of global phenomena, such as uneven distribution of food in the countries of the global South and North, food waste or lack of respect for the natural environment.

Through learning social entrepreneurship and involvement in activities for the benefit of the local community in the spirit of sustainable development, as well as participation in a series of meetings and workshops, the participants explored their knowledge of the above-mentioned problems and learned in practice alternative methods of solving them. Together with the inhabitants of three towns (Milanówka, Sant Feliu de Pallerols in Spain and Cefalù in Italy), they were also involved in the participatory design and creation of social gardens.

Activities were accompanied by various open events, such as public debates, film screenings, exhibitions, and workshops. The project was implemented as part of the Erasmus+ Program by the 4YOUth Foundation in partnership with the Catalonian cooperative MasFranch and the cooperation of Palma Nana from Sicily.

IMPACT

- Participants learned new lifestyles and alternative ways to run business activities
- Creation of a social urban garden in each of the partner country
- Activation of the local communities

FUNDING

- Erasmus+ grant



Well-Being



Solidarity response to COVID-19 (Serbia)

ORGANISATION:

Okular

WEBSITE:

www.okular.rs



The initiative aimed to preserve mental health in conditions of increased risks for its endangerment, in terms of the presence of fear and uncertainty due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

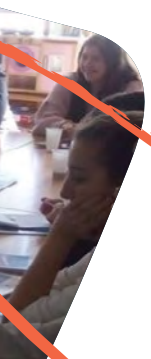
The suspension of workshops in Okular, due to the pandemic, was a loss for children and young people who have had the opportunity to distance themselves from family problems, violence or alcohol abuse in the family. Okular's response to these challenges was to organize informational and educational activities, as well as activities to provide psychological help and support in ways that are possible in a pandemic.



For adolescents and young people, online workshops on mental health were organized once a week on the ZOOM platform. The workshops are led by a psychologist and psychotherapist with experience in working with children and young people. Between workshops, at agreed times, twice a week, they provide them with free psychological support through telephone or online conversations.

IMPACT

- Enable young people in rural area to meet a psychotherapist in the time of COVID-19
- Preservation of the mental health of children and young people, especially those who belong to multiple marginalized categories of the population
- Opportunity to socialize and spend free time together
- Solidarity in the local community
- Networking of actors, active on the topic of mental health



FUNDING

- Trag Foundation "Active communities: solidarity response to COVID-19"
- Balkan Trust for Democracy
- The Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Oak Foundation

Learn more

Watch an interview with Anica Stamenković, youth worker at organisation Okular, and learn:



1. What are the main activities of the organisation
2. What are the challenges and threats faced by the local youth?



Neodvisen.si - Socially responsible programme (Slovenia)

ORGANISATION:

ZAVOD 7, oblikovanje in izvajanje družbeno odgovornih programov

WEBSITE:

www.neodvisen.si



NEODVISEN.SI is all-Slovenian socially responsible programme that is already underway since 2010 and is dedicated to raising awareness and preventing various addiction traps. Programme regularly develops new creative approaches to inform and communicate without moralizing and encourages young people to become actively involved in a healthy social environment, while striving for a constructive dialogue between adults and youth.

The NEODVISEN.SI program seeks to raise awareness of the young people about the importance and values of life. Team transfer knowledge, good practices and experience with the help of recognized domestic experts. There are noticeable drastic differences in the notion of addiction and awareness of this issue among the target group of adolescents. That is why they pay a lot of attention to young people, directly and indirectly they are involved in participating in the program.

IMPACT

- New approaches in dealing with addiction
- Inclusion of young people in the program

FUNDING

- different grants, municipalities, schools, private donations



Learn more

Watch an interview with Bojan Kodelja,
Leader of the programme Neodvisen.si:



1. How is the work with youth in rural area different from urban area?
2. What role does community have in your work activities?
3. How to decrease addiction problems among youth in rural area?



Youth Exchange Eurofanbasket (Slovenia)

ORGANISATION:

Mladinski center BIT

WEBSITE:

www.mc-bit.si

The youth exchange "EUROFANBASKET" took place in Črnomelj in September 2013 during the European Basketball Championship hosted by Slovenia. 48 participants and group leaders from 8 countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Poland, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Latvia and Lithuania) created a fan zone in the city center and renovated basketball court, made baskets, learned and researched the culture of sport in the participating countries. During the preparatory planning visit young volunteers organized a basketball tournament and for this purpose also restored obsolete equipment on the basketball court in Loka. During the project, they learned about the importance of sport as a form of active citizenship and a tool for developing positive

values in society. Participants also learned about the impact of the European institutions and the European elections on their future.

The youth exchange enables young people to spend their free time usefully as they learn about sport as a form of active citizenship. The exchange also has a positive impact on the local community, as we have renovated recreational areas in the city through activities.



IMPACT

- Two renovated basketball courts that young people use every day
- Strengthening the importance of volunteering in the context of local community development
- Sport (free time) as a form of active citizenship.

FUNDING

- European Voluntary Service

Outward bound in service of the community (Croatia)

ORGANISATION:

Outward Bound Croatia

WEBSITE:

www.outwardboundcroatia.com



'Outward bound in service of the community' was a three-year program with the aim of empowering youth with fewer opportunities, working with young people in the social care system. In each year of implementation several one, five, and seven-day Outward bound programs were implemented involving kids and youth without appropriate parental care, kids and youth that are living in foster families, kids and youth with disorders in behaviour and youth workers.

Outward bound programs are based on experiential learning and include activities that are all held in nature (expeditions, rock climbing, kayaking, speleology, raft building). In programs, experiential learning takes place outdoors, in nature. The environment itself is so different from what participants are accustomed to, that their actions and reactions often differ from their usual behaviour in a familiar, everyday environment. Experiencing in a different environment helps participants gain new insights about themselves and the world, as well as a willingness to change their usual behaviour. Experiential learning programs are designed to put participants in a state of "adaptive dissonance."

IMPACT

- 570 children and youth from the system of social care involved
- Development of a system of non-institutional alternative social services
- Lifelong learning, skills acquisition, training, and support for ensuring independent living for young people after a long stay in a social care home or in a foster family

FUNDING

- The Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia



Learn more

Watch an interview with Lana Jošt, Project Manager at the Outward Bound Croatia, and learn:



1. What are the main activities of the youth organization?
2. How is the work of organisation financed?
3. What obstacles does organisation face?

Organised housing with all encompassing support (Croatia)

ORGANISATION:

Udruga Breza

WEBSITE:

www.breza.hr/home-eng

Association Breza implements the project called Organized housing with all-encompassing support. The main goal of the project is to form a support and help children and youth with different needs that they might have. Project is divided into three parts: Socially-Therapeutic Community Breza, Intense Individual Therapeutic Program and Half-day Stay Service.

Association also provides an Intense Individual Therapeutic Program focused on strengthening the users who have difficulties with the socialisation and with every-day functioning, and who have the need for daily psychotherapeutic support.

The Half-day Stay Service is focused on helping and supporting the children to develop work, cultural and hygienic habits, social skills, to develop the habit of healthy diet, free time organisation, and quality personal development.





IMPACT

- Continuous support to children and youth in improvement of their life skills
- Inclusion of the children and youth with different needs.

FUNDING

- European Union through Erasmus+ program
- European Social Fund
- Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia
- National Foundation for the development of civil society
- Croatian Government's office for associations



Participation and Inclusion

LaFábrica detodalavida (Spain)

ORGANISATION:

LaFábrica detodalavida

WEBSITE:

www.lafabrikadetodalavida.org



Project LaFábrica detodalavida (LFdTV) started in 2015, when a group of young architects started to convert two units of an old cement factory, abandoned for more than 30 years and ceded by the local council for its rehabilitation. It is now a shared space with multiple purposes and uses:

- Fábrika Komún: citizen participation program based on the Collaborative Social Management and Community Social Action.
- Saturdays dTV: open workshops to develop networking among the local citizenship around topics of interest and linked with the local context (self-construction and orchards, handcraft beer and free culture, etc).
- Cine al fresco: outdoor cinema sessions during summer.
- PechaKucha: networking meeting place and workshops for young entrepreneurs coming from different points of the region.
- Territorio Komún: integral program for the counselling and support for people interested in developing creative, social and culture contents and other activities in La Fabrika. These people can use the facilities to develop their activities as well.

Thanks to the LFdTV project this abandoned place has been turned into a space for the social management of the territory, as well as of the leisure and culture in this rural area. This initiative has brought life to its closest town, Los Santos de Maimona (a rural area with no more than 8,500 inhabitants)

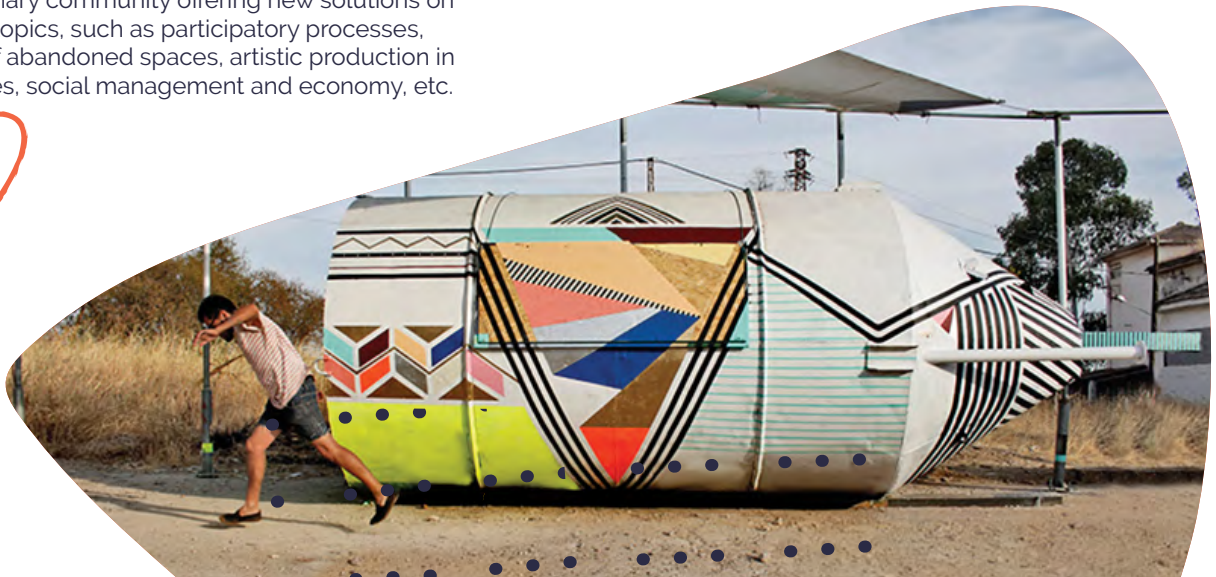
Today, "La Fabrika" develops creative dynamics and methodologies of research and action around common goods, cooperative production, free culture and self-construction. It is managed by a team of different professionals with background in architecture, arts, design, law and anthropology that form an interdisciplinary community offering new solutions on a variety of topics, such as participatory processes, activation of abandoned spaces, artistic production in public places, social management and economy, etc.

IMPACT

- Activation of abandoned space
- Artistic production in public places
- Creating the cultural gravity needed to keep its youth from moving away
- Community building led by young people

FUNDING

- Crowdfunding
- Fundación Maimona



SKOK – Pokret gorana Vojvodine (Serbia)

ORGANISATION:

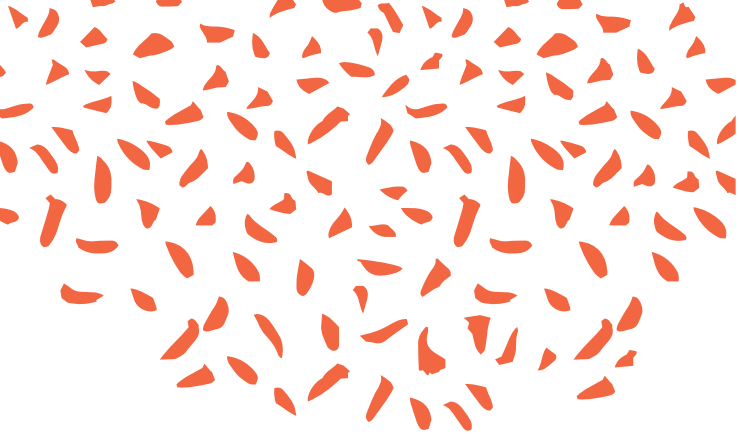
Pokret gorana Vojvodine (Vojvodina Environmental Movement)

WEBSITE:

www.facebook.com/mladisremskikarlovci

SKOK - Sremski Karlovci Youth Club is a youth program of Vojvodina Environmental Movement. The program aims to empower young people to actively participate in the sustainable development of the local community of Sremski Karlovci by providing resources, capacity building and mentoring of young people. Most of the program is initiated and implemented by young people. The youth workers are designing the non-formal education and mentoring programs based on the feedback and needs of young people.





The program has its own youth council, which is made of active members and the youth workers. The council can discuss and give feedback on the plan and program, make decision how the program funds will be spent and have representatives in the assembly of the organization.

The program is divided into two sections:

- Activities for young people
- Youth initiatives for the local community

Topics are various since they are mostly being guided by the needs and ideas of young people, but in general it is mostly focused on board games, culture, environmental protection etc.



IMPACT

- The only program for young people that implements youth work standards and works in continuity in the local community since 2008
- 15 programs and activities per year
- Around 70 events per year
- 100 young people participate in at least one activity every year
- 25 young people are more actively involved in implementing the programme
- Maintaining the only youth club in the local community – work space for young people
- A system for active participation of young people within the organisation – SKOK youth council

FUNDING

- Renting the space of the youth center Eco Center Radulovački
- Funds from the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia
- Funds from the Open Society foundation
- Small scale projects from the Municipality of Sremski Karlovci
- Partnerships on Erasmus+ projects
- Private funds from Radulovački family for working space
- SKOK souvenir corner

Learn more

Watch an interview with Vladimir Budalić, Youth Programme Coordinator at Pokret gorana Vojvodine, and learn:



1. Do you think that cultural and natural heritage is respected? Is it seen as a burden or opportunity?
2. Is your local area exploring any new forms of rural work?
3. Is housing problem the reason why young people are leaving the rural area?

Changing Minds (Romania, Ireland)

ORGANISATIONS:

Aurelia Trust, Skibbereen Community School, Ludgate Operations Limited (Ireland); Directia Generala De Asistenta Sociala Si Protectia Copilului Constanta, Asociația Tinerilor Cu Inițiativa Civică (Romania).

WEBSITE:

www.changingminds.eu

"Changing Minds!" was a project which exchanged practices between a diverse range of youth and community-based organisations in both Ireland and Romania which deal with young people in the area of youth work, disability, challenging stereotypes and influencing policy.

Young people from rural areas of both Romania (in Constanta and Galati) and Ireland (in Skibbereen and Castlebar) got involved via the partner organisations.



Two weeks long transnational learning activities took place, one in Romania and one in Ireland, involving directly working with people with disabilities. This was a challenging work and a very intensive experience for all involved, which led to a strong team bond.

Central to the project was the development of key skills in the young participants, such as leadership skills, entrepreneurial skills and personal growth. These skills were accelerated along with communication skills and confidence. This was largely due to the original project outcomes being met along with so many more unanticipated outcomes, such as their growing interest in creating historical and educational resources.



As well as an interest in disability, an interest in the history of disabilities in both countries emerged and the young participants shared this through the creation of very moving and striking mini-interviews with senior relatives who had lived through communist Romania. The project was documented and evaluated in its entirety through the use of video. This encouraged the young people's use of interview skills as well as allowing for significant self-reflection.

A youth-led conference was held in both countries, encouraging and developing skills in planning and organising, event management and public speaking. The conferences allowed the results and learnings from the partnership to be widely disseminated.

IMPACT

- Leadership, entrepreneurial skills and personal growth for the participants
- Multicultural experience
- Community building
- Over 30 young people worked with disabled people

FUNDING

- ERASMUS+ KA2 Strategic Partnership



+ + + + +
+ + + 63 +

Veles – Vladičin Han (Serbia)

ORGANISATION:

Veles – Vladičin Han

WEBSITE:

www.facebook.com/veles.v.han

Veles – Vladičin Han is one of the few organizations in the county of Pčinja that focuses on youth work. Their team works on creating a safe space for the youth, where they can socialize with like-minded people while working and learning together. They put special effort in reaching and including young people from the rural areas and from the most vulnerable groups in order to demonstrate the fact that anyone can and should be included in the process of making important and beneficial decisions in their local community.



They have realized many workshops and projects with the help from their young volunteers, ranging from social issues, through art and science, and all the way to raising awareness about ecological issues. Over the past six years, the organization has been successfully collaborating with Foundation Ana and Vlade Divac, and through the project of Divac youth funds they were able to include more than a hundred young people in participating in local development processes by choosing the projects (initiated and managed also by the youth) that will be awarded with grants by the Foundation Ana and Vlade Divac, and later, monitoring the realization of the chosen initiatives. Through this collaboration, more than sixty projects were realized and the impact of that work is still relevant and visible, and, as mentioned before, more than a hundred young people were educated on topics of writing, managing, monitoring and realizing projects.

IMPACT

- Fixed or repaired playgrounds, school yards and courts
- Modern equipment in schools
- Physical space for team work and workshops
- Participation of local youth in activism and volunteering

FUNDING

- The Municipality of Vladicin Han
- Foundation Ana and Vlade Divac
- Local businesses and companies



Learn more

Watch an interview with Aleksandra Antić, member of Organisation Veles - Vladičin Han, and learn:



1. Does your organisation cooperate well with the local municipality or other government organisations?
2. How to improve participation of young people in the projects/events?
3. Does local area have problems with young people, leaving the area?

Informing Rural Youth through Info Center activities (Croatia)

ORGANISATION:

Udruga Mladi u Europskoj uniji

WEBSITE:

www.mladi-eu.hr/tocka-info-centar

Youth organization "Mladi u Europskoj uniji" informs youth from rural areas about mobility opportunities through info points and lectures in high schools and faculty. Due to the lack of active youth organizations in Šibenik-Knin County and youth information providers in rural areas of the county, "Mladi u EU" took an initiative and provides youth information in deprived areas of Šibenik-Knin County.

They established first infopoint for youth in the county and through their daily activities they inform youth about:

- Youth culture and leisure time
- Employment and entrepreneurship
- Mobility for young people
- Youth Guarantee
- Counselling and information for young people with disabilities

IMPACT

- Increased inquiries of youth living in rural areas about youth opportunities provided by Erasmus+ and European solidarity corps projects
- Increased number of youth from rural areas involved in volunteering opportunities
- Increased social inclusion of youth from rural areas of the county

FUNDING

- Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia
- European Social Fund
- Šibenik-Knin County
- City of Šibenik



Learn more

Watch an interview with Caterina Rende Dominis and Daniele Pescatore, volunteers at the Udruga Mladi u EU, and learn:



1. What are the challenges of the rural areas and how the organisation deals with them?
2. How to engage youth in activities?
3. How to foster active citizenship in young people?



Focus areas

Idrija
Municipality
revival in the
heritage-rich
area



Idrija Municipality revival in the heritage-rich area

POPULATION:

11 730

YOUTH POPULATION (15-29):

1606



Idrija is a town in western Slovenia and is the oldest mining town in Slovenia, now enlisted on a UNESCO World Heritage list. After discovery of the mercury at the end of the 15th Century, the town gradually became an economical and cultural center of the wider area. Due to the importance of the mercury (extraction of gold and silver) many leading engineers and intellectuals travelled or lived in this tiny town.

The town lies in a narrow valley encircled by hills and plateaus. The whole area of Municipality of Idrija is part of the Unesco Global Geopark Idrija with rich natural and cultural heritage. Except for the town itself the area is full of dispersed small villages and farms, sometimes stretching far into the woods. After the gradual closure of the Idrija Mercury mine back in the 1980s, restructuring of the area took place. More than 1000 former miners found jobs in different fields, mainly in the booming automotive sector which is still dominated by the locally-owned companies.

500 years of mining brought many distinct cultural features. Idrija is home to the famous bobbin lace – Idrija lace. Due to the harsh working conditions wives of the miners haven't worked in the mine and many women found an additional income 'in lacemaking'. Idrija is now recognized as an important centre of lacemaking knowledge.

As miners came from all over central Europe distinct gastronomy developed in Idrija. The most famous dish is Idrija Žlikrofi, filled pasta (dumplings), which received a protected geographical status in 2010.

Youth activities in Idrija

First (modern) youth activities in the town started in the 1960s, when the Youth club was established by the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia. The club fostered many youth activities, not only mainstream socialist but also alternative forms of culture.

After the dissolvment of the Youth Club after the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991 few new youth movements appeared, but most of them disappeared as they were not able to maintain activities in unstable times. At the start of 2000s another youth movement started in Idrija with the creation of alternative club Swenak and the start of the youth festival Čipkarija. The main actor in the youth policy was Idrija Students' Club.

Due to lack of strategy traditional youth organisations were unconnected and separated, there was no youth places, no youth workers and no youth policy. New generation of youth volunteers started discussions on the role of youth in the local community. Idea of the Youth Center emerged with the aim to engage dispersed youth activities in policy planning.



In 2013 Youth Center Idrija was formed as an umbrella organisation by 3 local NGO (Scouts' Association Rod srebrnih krtov Idrija, Association for youth development Idrija 2020 and Students' Association Idrija). Young volunteers renovated the spaces of the former monastery, leased by municipality, and furnished it with second-hand and DIY furniture, donated by inhabitants and businesses of Idrija. In 2018, the youth center acquired another part of the building with the youth hostel, making it easier to host international activities in the town.

In 2015 the first official Strategy for youth was created, which will be updated in 2021 with the new strategy. New strategy will need to focus on a big challenge – how to stop shrinking of the youth population in the Municipality of Idrija. Since 2010 the youth population shrank by more than 20 % which is an alarming number but unfortunately very typical for the rural areas in Slovenia.

Youth population in Idrija focuses more and more on distinct cultural and natural heritage. By motivating young people to explore the natural and cultural heritage, Idrija 2020 Association is seen as a leading organisation in designing new creative solutions with focus on youth activities and entrepreneurial development.

Learn more

Watch an interview with Maša Eržen, Coordinator of the Youth Centre Idrija, and learn:



1. What are the main challenges and threats for Idrija youth?
2. How do young people get involved in the activities of the Idrija Youth Center?
3. Is the work of a youth worker important for community development?

Watch an interview with Tomaž Vencelj, Mayor of Idrija, and learn:



1. How does the Municipality of Idrija support young people?
2. What are the main challenges in the Municipality of Idrija in the field of youth?
3. How are young people involved in local decision-making?

Gračac
Municipality -
Pearl of
nature



Gračac Municipality - Pearl of nature

POPULATION:

4 689

YOUTH POPULATION (15-29):

727



The municipality of Gračac is located in a wide valley in southern Lika, under the mountain of Velebit, and is a part of Zadar County. It is classified as a hilly-mountainous region, and with an area of 957.19 km² is the largest municipality in Croatia. It makes up 26.25% of Zadar County. It includes 38 settlements, whereas Gračac and Srb are the most populated. According to the 2011 census, there are 4,689 inhabitants in the Gračac Municipality, of which Croats are 54% and Serbs 45%. The population density is 4.9 inhabitants per km², which makes the municipality of Gračac the largest municipality with the lowest population density. It has the smallest degree of development in Zadar County, and it is classified as the least developed area in Croatia.

It is surrounded by beautiful untouched nature, wide fields suitable for agriculture and livestock, dense beech forests suitable for forestry and wood processing. Several streams pass through the municipality, one of which grows into the river Otuča. In 2018 renovation and construction of a speleological center near Cerovac caves have begun, which will enable the growth of tourism based on natural heritage. It has a huge potential for a sustainable economy and eco-tourism, hiking, cycling, camping. For the above-mentioned reasons the area is suitable for beekeeping.



Moreover, many beekeepers from the coast escape dry and hot summer seasons into mountain fresh air and flowering summers. In Tomingaj, the village next to Gračac, the mother of Nikola Tesla was born. Her name was Georgina (Đuka) Tesla. The beautiful natural environment and hardworking way of life gave birth to the strongest man in the world, Marijan Matijević, world-known as The hero from Lika.

Until 1991, the municipality always had over 10,000 inhabitants, while after 1991 the population was constantly declining. From the beginning of the year 2013 until the end of 2016 every sixth person emigrates, mostly abroad (16.9% of the population) due to economic reasons. Many of them are families with children. In the same period, 116 children were born and 257 persons died.



Due to the lack of basic infrastructure, cultural and social activities for youth, information, and non-formal education, in 2016 local youth launched a youth organisation Udruga Prizma. Since then they are actively involving youth from Gračac and other rural regions in social and democratic processes, creating and implementing cultural activities and engaging youth in mobility projects. As a starting point of developing local infrastructure for youth Udruga Prizma developed a Local youth programme for the Municipality of Gračac 2019-22 in cooperation with the Municipality of Gračac. They actively participated in the development of the National Youth Programme 2020-24 as a member of the Working group and coordinator of the working group for rural youth work. With the active engagement of youth in 2020 they renovated and opened a Youth club Tamo Iza to provide space and means for youth to quality organize their leisure time and they run the Volunteer center Gračac with the aim of fostering the development of volunteerism.

To foster a change in the community based on local resources, they've started cooperation with UKE, an NGO from nearby small village Lovinac, which is bringing innovation and a fresh view in the field of culture, sustainability and personal development.

Learn more

Watch an interview with Silvestar Petrov, Chairman of the Udruga Prizma, and learn:



1. To what extent is the local community aware of the importance of cultural and natural heritage?
2. Which famous people were born in the area of Gračac?

Watch an interview with Lana Jošt, Project Manager at Udruga Kultura I Edukacija, and learn:



1. What are the main activities of the organization?
2. Why the area is perfect for their activities?
3. What kind of obstacles young people face in the local area?

Funding opportunities



In this chapter you can find a list of different international funds for youth organizations and activities. Focus is on the international level of the funding and funding mostly covers all three countries, involved in the project Under the Loupe – Rural youth work! – Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. As Serbia is a non-EU member country it's not eligible for most of the EU funding. The situation in Croatia and Slovenia is therefore very similar. Serbia is on the other hand eligible for some specific funds for which Slovenia and Croatia are not.

Note: At the time of the preparation of this booklet a new multiannual financial framework 2021 – 2027 of the European Union was not yet finished. Nonetheless, many details were already known – we've included existing programmes that will continue in the new framework in this list of funding opportunities.





Education &
Culture

Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the EU programme that aims to improve the skills and employability of young people, promote their social inclusion and well-being, and foster improvements in youth work and youth policy at local, national and international level.

WEBSITE:

ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

CAN YOU APPLY?

Erasmus+ program is also open to organizations from EU member States, as well as non-EU countries. This also includes Serbia as a non-EU member state.

Creative Europe

Creative Europe is the European Commission's framework program for support to the culture and audiovisual sectors.

WEBSITE:

ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

CAN YOU APPLY?

The Creative Europe program is open to cultural and creative organizations from EU Member States, as well as non-EU countries. This also includes Serbia as a non-EU member state.

Marc de Montalembert foundation grant

The Marc de Montalembert foundation supports projects that enable young people from Mediterranean countries to discover the diversity of other Mediterranean cultures and develop a sense of their diversity and their richness.

Every year, the Foundation gives out a grant to young people from the Mediterranean region to implement intercultural projects.

WEBSITE:

www.fondationmdm.com

CAN YOU APPLY?

You need to be under 28 years old from a Mediterranean country. To apply you should propose a study project in the cultural field of your choice which shall be realized in one or more countries of the Mediterranean region as long as it is different from your origin country.

Young people from Serbia cannot apply.



Volunteering



European Solidarity Corps

The European Solidarity Corps is European Union initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe.

Projects supported by the European Solidarity Corps can last from two to twelve months. They are usually located within the European Union Member States.

WEBSITE:

www.europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

CAN YOU APPLY?

Young people can register for the European Solidarity Corps when they are 17 years old, but they cannot start a project until they are over 18. European Solidarity Corps projects is available to people up to the age of 30 years old.

Employment



Youth Employment Initiative

The Youth Guarantee is a commitment by all Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months after becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

The Youth Employment Initiative is the main EU funding programme to facilitate the roll-out of the Youth Guarantee. It's applied in particular regions where youth unemployment is higher than 25%.

WEBSITE:

ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176

CAN YOU APPLY?

Funding is available to the EU member states. Serbia as a non-member EU state is not eligible for the initiative.

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other Participating Countries.

WEBSITE:

www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu

CAN YOU APPLY?

Eligible entrepreneurs are those in the early stages of their business start-up (new entrepreneurs) and experienced owners or managers of a micro or small enterprise (host entrepreneurs).

The programme is accessible to all European new and host entrepreneurs who have their permanent residence 27 European Member States, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Iceland, Turkey, UK, Ukraine, and Kosovo.



Participation and
Inclusion



European Youth Foundation

The European Youth Foundation (EYF) is a fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial and educational support for European youth activities.

WEBSITE:

www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation

CAN YOU APPLY?

The EYF does not support individuals. It only supports non-governmental youth organisations, which need to be non-profit making and a youth organisation (decision-making structure is composed of young people).

Regional Youth Cooperation (RYCO)

Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) is an independently functioning institutional mechanism, founded by the Western Balkans 6 participants (WB 6): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region through youth exchange programs.

WEBSITE:

www.rycowb.org

CAN YOU APPLY?

Different calls are available for applicants, mostly for young people from 18 to 35 years old or civil organisations that work with young people. Slovenia and Croatia are not eligible to apply. All the project activities financed by RYCO must be placed in the Western Balkans 6 Contracting Parties (WB6): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Slovenia and Croatia are not eligible for calls.



Western Balkans Fund

The Western Balkans Fund (WBF) is an international organization located in Tirana, Albania, founded by the governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Its establishment, as an all-inclusive and regionally-owned initiative, is considered as a clear sign of a new cooperation spirit taking roots in the Balkans.

WBF aims to promote cooperation and the common values between citizens, civil society and people to people contacts, by providing funding for small and medium projects, in the following key areas:

1. Sustainable economic development
2. Education exchange and cooperation
3. Cultural cooperation

WEBSITE:

www.westernbalkansfund.org

CAN YOU APPLY?

Non-governmental, civil society not-for-profit organizations are primary recipients of the funding. Organisations in Slovenia or Croatia are not eligible.



Regional
development



EU Structural & Investment funds

In the new long-term EU Budget 2021-2027 8 main EU funds are expected, one of them is also European Regional Development Fund. At the time of booklet preparation many details about the future funds are not yet known.

WEBSITE:

ec.europa.eu

CAN YOU APPLY?

About 80% of EU funding in the period 2013-2020 was granted through programmes managed in the EU countries themselves. Where the European Commission directly managed funding, it did so by awarding grants, launching tendering procedures, etc.

EU Member states (including Croatia and Slovenia) were eligible for all funds except for Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), which is a financial instrument for candidate countries or potential candidate countries, including Serbia.

If you are interested in specific funds, take a look at the national web pages dedicated to EU funding:

- SLOVENIA: <https://www.eu-skladi.si/>
- CROATIA: <https://strukturnifondovi.hr/>
- SERBIA: <https://www.mei.gov.rs/srl/fondovi/fondovi-evropske-unije/>

Europe for Citizens

The aim of the Europe for Citizens Programme is to contribute to citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity and to encourage the democratic participation of citizens at EU level.

WEBSITE:

eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en

CAN YOU APPLY?

Applicants must be established in the EU member states or in some non-EU members, including Serbia. Eligibility depends on the specific strand.



USAID

USAID is an independent agency of the United States federal government that is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance.

USAID works in Serbia in specific programmes in the topics Economic Growth and Trade and Democracy, Human Rights and Governance.

WEBSITE:

www.usaid.gov

CAN YOU APPLY?

Youth organisations and companies can apply for specific calls in different fields. Slovenia and Croatia are not eligible for the funds.

Visegrad Fund

The Fund is an international donor organization, established in 2000 by the governments of the Visegrad Group countries—Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia to promote regional cooperation in the Visegrad region (V4) as well as between the V4 region and other countries, especially in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions.

Visegrad+ Grants support projects which contribute to the democratization and transformation processes in selected countries and regions, especially non-EU member states in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries.

WEBSITE:

www.visegradfund.org

CAN YOU APPLY?

Serbia can as a country in Eastern Partnership apply for Visegrad+ Grants. Projects must develop meaningful cooperation and ensure active involvement of at least 3 V4 (Visegrad group) countries and 1 entity from the EaP (Eastern Partnership) region or the Western Balkans countries at minimum regardless of the applicant.

Annex 1: Funding opportunities in EU, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia

EUROPEAN UNION

- **EU Funding opportunities for Young People:** ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/who-eligible-funding/funding-opportunities-young-people_en
- **Youth Portal:** www.europa.eu/youth/EU_en
- **Enterprise Europe Network:** <https://een.si>
- **Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs:** www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/index.php?lan=sl

CROATIA

- **Program ruralnog razvoja:** www.ruralnirazvoj.hr
- **Garancija za mlade:** www.gzm.hr

SLOVENIA

- **Slovenski podjetniški sklad:** www.podjetniskisklad.si
- **Zavod RS za zaposlovanje:** www.ess.gov.si
- **Mladi podjetnik:** www.mladipodjetnik.si
- **e-VEM – Državni portal za poslovne subjekte in samostojne podjetnike:** evem.gov.si
- **Startup Slovenija:** www.startup.si

SERBIA

- **IPARD:** <https://ipard.co.rs>
- **Razvojna agencija Srbije:** <http://ras.gov.rs>
- **Ministarstvo poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodoprivrede:**
<http://www.minpolj.gov.rs/ipard-program-2014-2020/>
<http://uap.gov.rs/aktuelni-podsticaji/>
<http://uap.gov.rs/konkursi/>
- **Ministarstvo omladine i sporta:** <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vesti/omladina-konkursi-kategorija>
- **Mladi su zakon (Šta nam teško):** <https://mladisuzakon.rs/stanamtesko-konkurs/>
- **Ministarstvo privrede Republike Srbije:** https://privreda.gov.rs/javni_pozivi/?lang=lat
- **Ministarstvo trgovine, turizma i telekomunikacija:** <https://mtt.gov.rs/informacije/konkursi/>
- **Fondacija Ana i Vlade Divac:** <https://www.divac.com>

Annex 2: Policies and strategies on rural youth

EUROPEAN UNION

- [European Union Youth Strategy](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en): ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en
- [European Youth Goals](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy/youthgoals_en): ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy/youthgoals_en
- [Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Raising Opportunities for Young People in Rural and Remote areas](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44119/st08265-en20.pdf): www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44119/st08265-en20.pdf
- [Youth Participation Strategy](https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4089/20200929_ParticipationStrategy_Online_Final_02.pdf): www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4089/20200929_ParticipationStrategy_Online_Final_02.pdf

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

- [Youth sector strategy 2030](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-strategy-2030): <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-strategy-2030>

UNITED NATIONS

- [Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy](https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-un/): <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-un/>

MIJARC

- [MIJARC Specific Objectives 2017-2021](https://mijarceuropeblog.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/approved-specific-objectives-2017-2021-final-version.pdf): mijarceuropeblog.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/approved-specific-objectives-2017-2021-final-version.pdf

EUROMONTANA

- [Towards a long-term vision of rural areas: Contributions of Euromontana for Vice-President Šuica, May 2020](https://www.euromontana.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-05-Note-Euromontana-VP-Suica_FINAL_EN.pdf): www.euromontana.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-05-Note-Euromontana-VP-Suica_FINAL_EN.pdf
- [GaYA's Youth Participation toolbox](https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/gaya/en/project-results/participation-toolbox): <https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/gaya/en/project-results/participation-toolbox>

RURAL YOUTH EUROPE, CEJA AND MIJARC EUROPE

- [Empowering Young Farmers and Rural Youth](https://ruralyoutheurope.com/2019/04/08/empowering-young-farmers-and-rural-youth-ceja-rural-youth-europe-and-mijarc-europe-launch-eu-elections-manifesto): ruralyoutheurope.com/2019/04/08/empowering-young-farmers-and-rural-youth-ceja-rural-youth-europe-and-mijarc-europe-launch-eu-elections-manifesto

A step towards better rural work

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