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# #LET'S GO RURAL



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## 1. Introduction

Dear readers,

In front of you is a short interactive brochure with many different contents that will bring you closer to the life of young people in rural areas and their needs.

It was created as a result of a one-year online campaign #LetsGoRural conducted as part of the project "Under the Loupe: Rural Youth work!".

The goal of the campaign was to raise awareness of the challenges facing young people in rural areas and on the importance of development of rural youth work

in order to provide necessary support to rural youth in their path to independence.

During the campaign 53 contents (visuals, infographics, videos, animations, mimes) were created. They all collected in this brochure. Combining different methods we try to bring this topic closer to the general public.

We hope that this brochure will be useful and that it will motivate you to join our initiative for development of rural youth work.

**#LetsGoRural!**



## About project

The project **"Under the Loupe: Rural Youth work!"** was realized by the National Association of Youth Workers - NAPOR in partnership with the Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade, Uduga "Prizma" and the Institute of Social Sciences "Ivo Pilar" from Croatia, as well as the Association Idrija 2020 from Slovenia with the financial support of the Tempus Foundation through the Erasmus plus program.



## 2. About rural areas

Rural? Hm... What is that?  
Good question!

Before we start with a presentation of the situation in rural areas we will try to explain what is considered as rural area. 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.

Having in mind that for this project the official data from Eurostat has been used it will be given below.

Eurostat classification - Based on the share of local population living in urban clusters and in urban centers, 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)

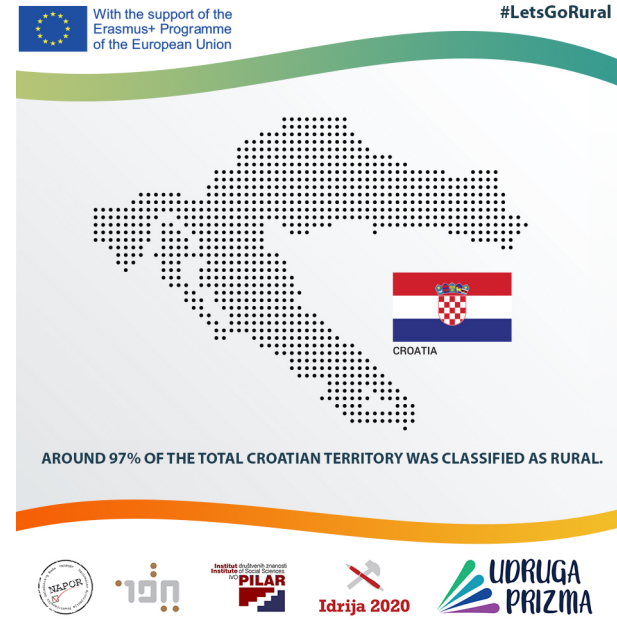
Now, after we clarify this, let's get familiar with the official data on rural areas in EU and partner countries (Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia):

**1. Rural areas in the EU represent 91 % of the territory.**

In Slovenia, rural areas occupy more than 90% of the territory.

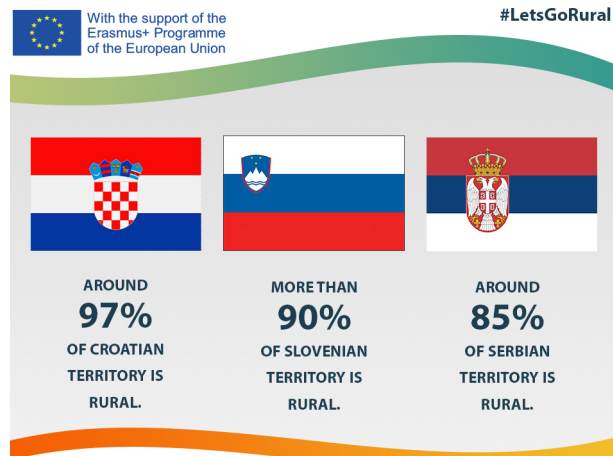
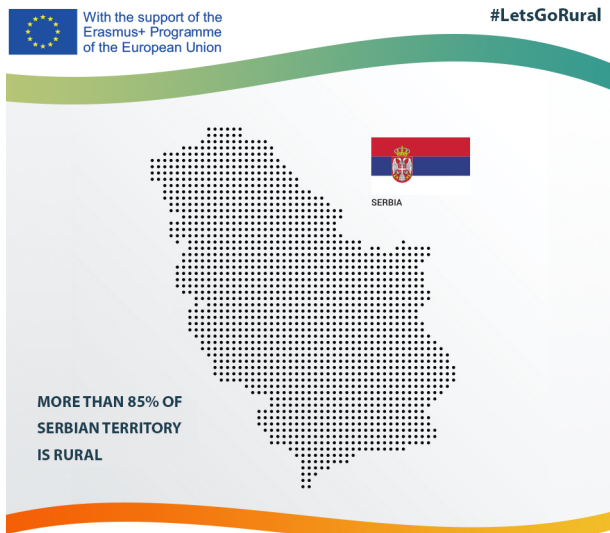


In Croatia, about 97% of the total territory is classified as rural.



In Serbia, about 85% of the territory is rural.

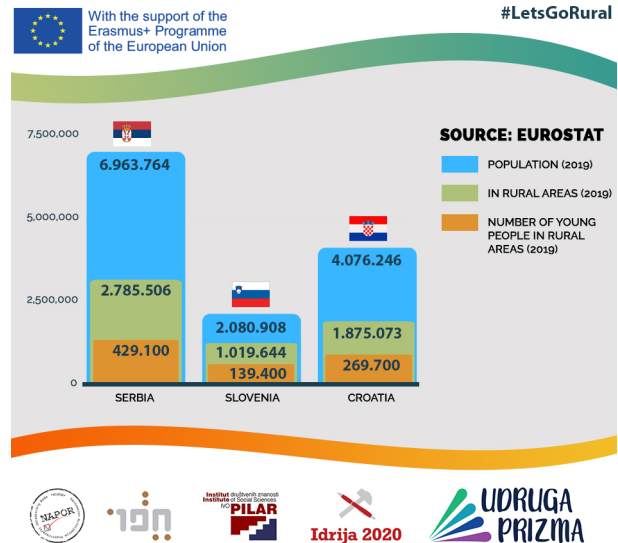
## COMPARATION



## 2. 29.1% of the EU population lives in rural areas.

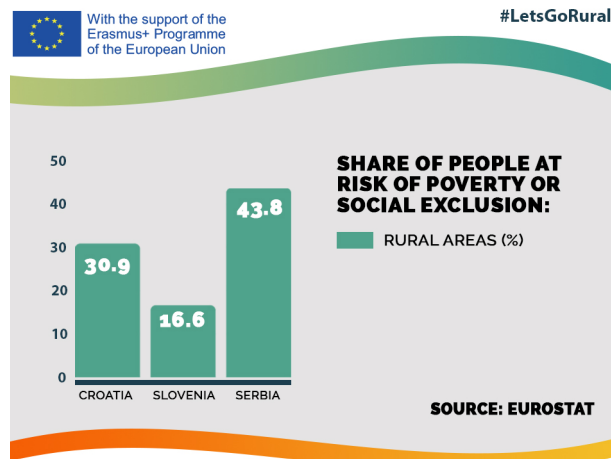
In Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia, the percentage ranges between 40% and 49%. Of that percentage, between 14% and 15% are young people.

*Note \*: According to Eurostat statistics, young people are considered between 15 and 29 years old.*



3. According to Eurostat data, 43.8% of the population from rural areas of the Republic of Serbia is at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

The situation is a bit better in Croatia, where the percentage is 30.9%, while in Slovenia the percentage is almost halved - 16.6%.

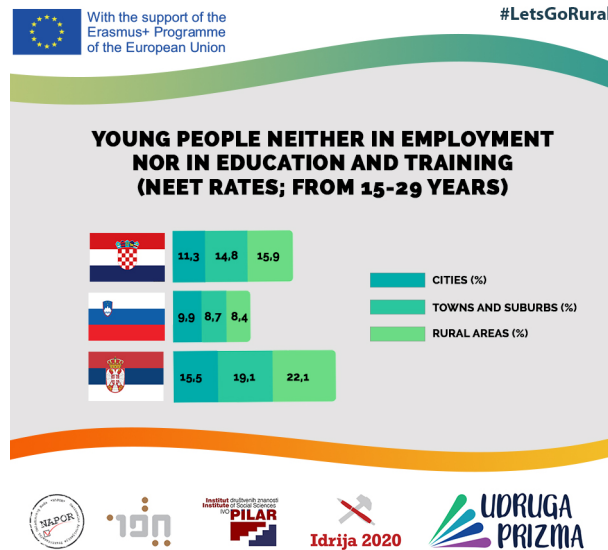


#### 4. When we talk about the risk of poverty, it is especially important to point out the category of NEET youth.

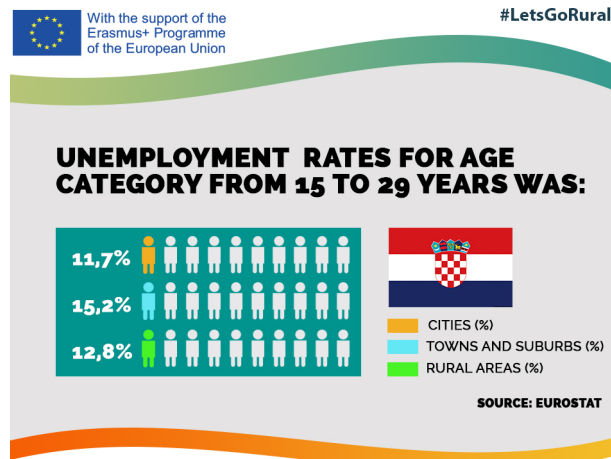
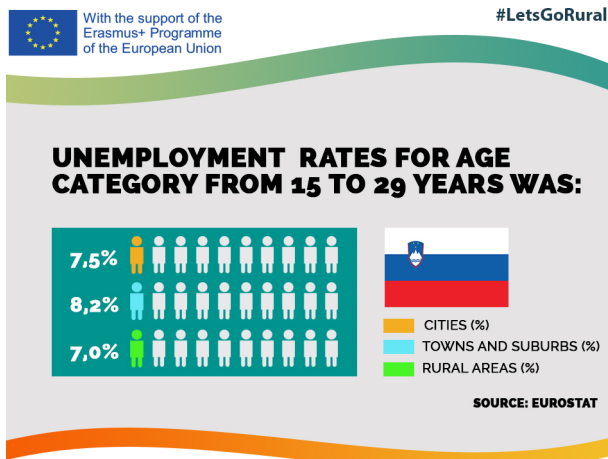
The percentage of young people in NEET status, i.e. young people who are not in the education system, employment, or in the training system in rural areas of Serbia is drastically higher than the percentages in Croatia and Slovenia.

Wondering why this information is important to us?

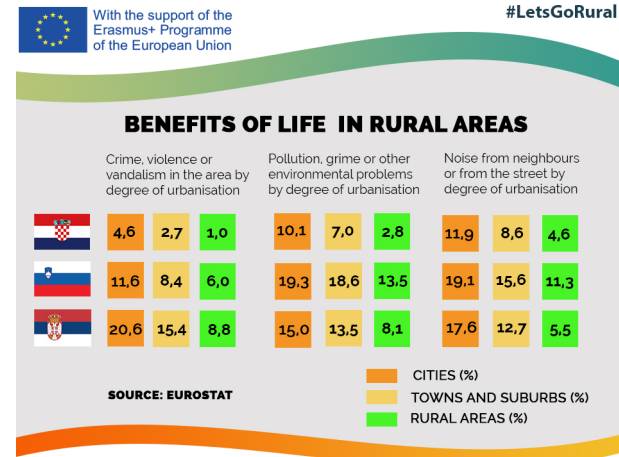
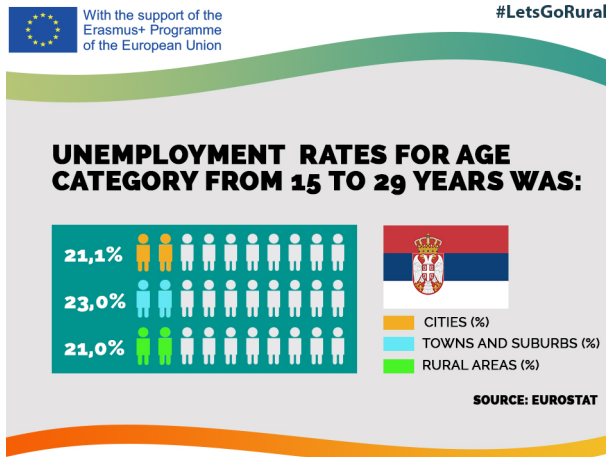
Because this is the percentage of young people who are completely invisible to the system, which means that it is very difficult to identify what challenges they face every day, and how we can support them in the process of independence.



5. When it comes to the youth unemployment rate in rural areas, it is the lowest in Slovenia, and the highest in Serbia.



6. However, despite the many challenges that young people are facing, living in a rural area also has its advantages, such as a healthier environment, a lower rate of violence and lower level of noise.





### 3. Institutional perspective about young people in rural areas




Numerous challenges that young people in rural areas face on a daily basis require a systematic approach in order to improve their quality of life. Through #LetsGoRural campaign an institutional framework has been provided and institutions responsible for youth in rural areas have been mapped out.

Are there institutions responsible for implementing youth policy in Serbia / Slovenia / Croatia?

What are these institutions?

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INSTITUTIONS IN CHARGE OF IMPLEMENTING YOUTH POLICY			
	EXISTS	PARTIALLY	DOESN'T EXIST
	✓		
	✓		
	✓		

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT, OFFICE FOR YOUTH
MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS
MINISTRY OF DEMOGRAPHY, FAMILY, YOUTH AND SOCIAL POLICY



Are there legislation that regulates youth policy in these countries?

What are the existing mechanisms for implementing youth policies at the local level?

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**LEGISLATION IS IN CHARGE OF REGULATING THE YOUTH POLICY**

	EXISTS	PARTIALLY	DOESN'T EXIST	
	✓			THE ACT ON PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE YOUTH SECTOR, THE RESOLUTION ON THE NATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAMME
	✓			NATIONAL LAW ON YOUTH, NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY
	✓			NATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAM

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**MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTING THE YOUTH POLICY ON THE LOCAL LEVEL**

	EXISTS	PARTIALLY	DOESN'T EXIST	
	✓			MUNICIPAL YOUTH STRATEGIES, YOUTH COUNCILS & YOUTH OFFICES
	✓			LOCAL ACTION PLANS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, YOUTH COUNCILS & YOUTH OFFICES
	✓			LOCAL YOUTH PROGRAM, YOUTH COUNCILS






Are there specific measures aimed at young people in rural areas?

Is youth work recognized?

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**SPECIFIC MEASURES FOCUSED ON YOUTH IN RURAL AREAS**

	EXISTS	PARTIALLY	DOESN'T EXIST	
		✓		ACTION PLAN FOR WORK WITH YOUNG FARMERS, PART OF LARGER EU STRATEGIES
			✗	MEASURES FOR YOUNG FARMERS
			✗	MEASURES FOR YOUNG FARMERS, IN THE DRAFT VERSION OF NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY - IT IS PLANNED AS ONE OF TEN KEY AREAS OF YOUTH POLICY, NOT YET ADOPTED

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**YOUTH WORK RECOGNITION**

	EXISTS	PARTIALLY	DOESN'T EXIST	
		✓		RECOGNISED IN ACT ON PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE YOUTH SECTOR, RECOGNISED AS VOCATION, NO FORMAL EDUCATION
		✓		RECOGNISED IN LAW ON YOUTH, RECOGNISED AS VOCATION, NO FORMAL EDUCATION
			✗	YOUTH WORK NOT RECOGNISED AS A PROFESSION



Now, let's hear how institutions see the challenges of young people in rural areas.

What are main challenges of youth in Rural areas from institutional perspective?

What are the measures that institutions are taking?

Does it exist cooperation between youth work organizations and institutions?




What are the similarities, and how different are Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia when we talk about:

- the challenges of young people in rural areas,

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## CHALLENGES

	Lack of opportunities. Unemployment and economic factor.
	Poorer infrastructure. Lack of available land.
	Lack of opportunities for young people in rural areas. Lack of adequate services such as education and health services, transport, cultural and sports facilities and opportunities for personal and professional development. Difficult access to information and difficult involvement in activities that are available mainly in urban areas. High youth unemployment rate.

MAPOR

חפז

Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

PILAR

Idrija 2020

UDRUGA PRIZMA

- activities carried out by the institutions and



## ACTIVITIES



Last year we supported 15 projects involving young people from rural areas, amounting to around 50,000,000 dinars. We are supporting projects for increasing employability.



Informing young people about existing measures. Monitoring of implementation and effects of measures of relevant institutions (ex. Ministry of Agriculture).




National Youth Programme 2020 – 2024 has been developed which for the first time included new strategic areas such as “Youth in Rural Areas” and “Youth Work”. Securing the financial resources, the Ministry encourages youth organisations to develop and implement youth projects.




- cooperation of more relevant actors in rural areas,




## COOPERATION



It is very important that there are youth spaces in rural areas. It is very important to strengthen youth work. We certainly have the most trust in youth workers.



Youth work in rural areas is extremely important.



It is important that the state and local and regional self-government cooperate with organisations of civil society.



*\* from the perspective of institutions responsible for youth issues in Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia.*

## 4. Perspective of young people from rural area

During the campaign three webinars were organized where 60 young people from rural areas (in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia) participated.





With them we checked official statistical data. Listen what they said about:

- Advantages and disadvantages of living in rural areas
- Youth participation
- Possibilities for finding a job in rural areas

## 5. Results of research studies in Serbia and Croatia

Within the project "Under the Loupe: Rural youth work!" two studies have been conducted: on the position and needs of young people in rural areas in Serbia and on the position and needs of youth workers and organizations in rural areas in Croatia. The key findings were presented through the campaign #LetsGoRural! :

## Research in Serbia

- Young people living in the countryside have almost no free time. The vast majority are involved in doing business on the farm.





- Measures and activities aimed at the quality of leisure time are almost non-existent in rural areas.



- Young people in rural areas say that even when they find some free time, they do not know how to use it:

*"Somehow people stopped hanging out. I don't know if it's because of the computer, the development of technology, but everyone retreated to their rooms. There are less and less of us in football, much less than there were before us. The same is in basketball. "*

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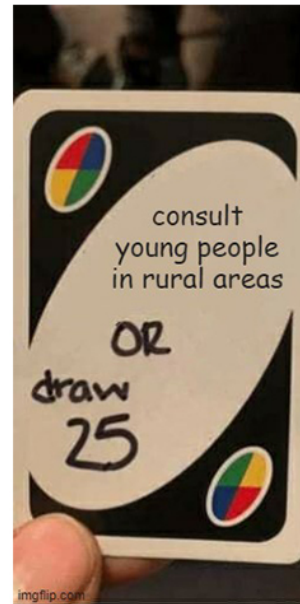
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- Decision-makers do not consult young people in rural areas, i.e. young people have no influence or decision-making power:

*"Nobody asks us for our opinion. Eventually when the elections are something they ask us, and that's once in every four years and that's it. "*





- Young people most often use the Internet for entertainment (social networks dominantly) and for school, and much less often for information on social and political topics:

Young people are using the internet more and more for informing about social and political topics

## Youth in rural areas



*"When I pick up the phone, I first see what's on Instagram, what's on Facebook, something on YouTube and then I only turn off the phone. If I'm interested in something, I'm looking for the information on Google."*

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- Only 13% of young people in rural areas have ever worked or volunteered in an organization, 14% signed a petition, and 7% participated in demonstrations.

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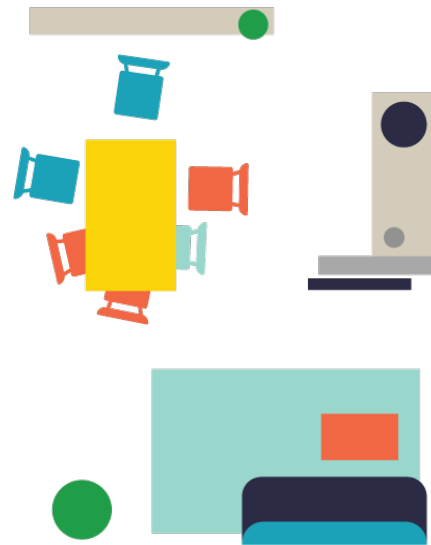
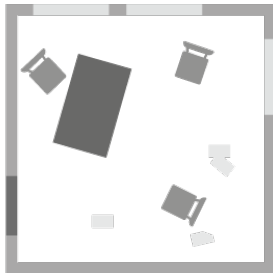
#LetsGoRural



## Research in Croatia

According to the representatives of youth organizations in rural areas in Croatia, the lack of physical space is the most common obstacle in organizing activities for young people. They say that there is a lot of free public space, but there is no will of the local self-government to activate / give space to youth organizations.

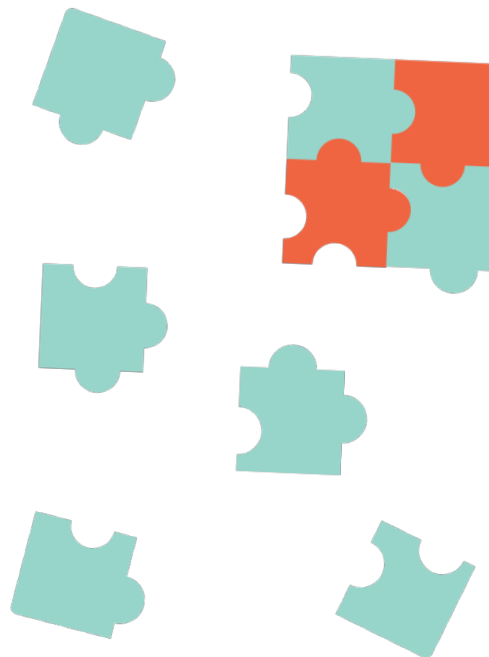
motion 1



Cooperation with local self-government is crucial for the development of youth work in rural areas. Organizations conducting youth work in Croatia have recognized that the most common problems in cooperation with local governments are:

- declarative support
- lack of progressivity
- lack of capacity
- apathy
- lack of knowledge about the concept of youth work, public policies for youth, youth representatives or space and continuous financial support for youth work programs.

## motion 2





Young people create a cultural offer and suggest content that is interesting to them when they are given space, but the lack of financial support for programs disables the continuity of implementation, resulting in a lack of cultural, social and entertainment content for young people.

Spaces for youth creativity are centers for the development of artistic and creative activities that encourage the productive use of leisure and free time. They are equipped with all kinds of resources for the development of activities related to music, plastics, audiovisual and performing arts, modern technologies, etc.

motion 3



How do representatives of civil society organizations carry out activities?

1. "With young people" - enable young people to define their own needs and create activities accordingly.
2. "For young people" - help young people to carry out activities.
3. "Through support to young people" - provide young people with logistical and organizational support in the implementation of activities.

It is great news that members of associations covered by the research in Croatia have undergone multiple training to work with young people, but due to lack of continuous financial support, some associations deal with young people indirectly

and include working with young people depending on the type of available and announced competitions.

What do you see youth work in your local community? Is there any?

#### motion 4



## 6. Good practice examples

As part of the project "Under the Loupe: Rural youth work!" The brochure on innovative and inspiring practices on youth work in EU and non-EU countries has been produced with the aim of empowering and motivating youth workers to take an innovative approach to working with young people in rural areas. As part of the #LetsGoRural campaign, a brochure was promoted as well as examples of good practice contained in it.

In the next pages you can see how we did it...

Have you ever wondered what is considered rural? We are, many times because we are curious by nature. And that's why we decided to put rural areas under the loupe, explore and learn more about them.



Further, we were Interested in policies and strategies for youth. Are you Interested in it?

If yes, we have something for you. We mapped good practices of working with rural youth and compiled them for you to get inspired.



But also... More than 14 opportunities to fund your idea!

Let's make together a step towards better rural youth work by understanding what is rural, by supporting development and implementation of youth policies, by being inspired and getting funded for great ideas!



## Hints from The Booklet:

### Is youth work important for community development?

Maša Eržen, the coordinator at Mladinski Center Idrija believes it is of paramount importance because it encourages youth to engage and participate. Listen what she said - [VIDEO 1](#)

"The local development driven by youth and fueled by passion, natural, and cultural heritage"- is the vision youth share around udruga Prizma. Check who's born in Gračac municipality in Croatia!

You'll be surprised - [VIDEO 2](#)

A great initiative of youth organization Okular from Čičevac (Serbia) 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. It is a great example of how youth organizations in rural areas can quickly respond to the needs of youth. - [VIDEO 3](#)

For more information check our [Booklet](#).

## 7. Stories of Youth Workers and benefitters about Youth work

Rural youth work? What is that?

Before you open questions about possibilities for development of rural youth work let's explain why we need youth work?


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 rural 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.

And how it looks from the perspective of youth workers from Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, check in the videos below:

- Why is it important to develop youth work in rural areas?
- How can we improve youth work programs in rural areas?

We talked about these topics with Anja Mager from the Slovenian Association of Rural Youth. **VIDEO**

- 
- Why are youth work programs in rural areas important?
  - What are the challenges that youth workers face?
  - What needs to be done to improve youth work in rural areas?

The questions were answered by Branimira Penić - a youth worker from Croatia and the founder of DrONE - an association for social development and non-formal education. **VIDEO**

- Why is it important to have youth work programs in rural areas?
- What is the biggest challenge for youth work in rural areas?
- What needs to be done to improve youth work in rural areas?

The questions were answered by Ivan Čolić from Pokret gorana Vojvodina.

**VIDEO**



## Young people

The benefits that young people have from the youth work program are numerous, but what are the main we can hear from them:

- How young people in Slovenia get involved in youth work programs, how youth work can contribute to the development of the local community and what is missing when we talk about youth work in rural areas from the perspective of Ana Hladnik. **VIDEO**

- Why young people participate in youth work programs, what they can get through them and what needs to be improved when it comes to youth work in rural areas, listen Juraj Jurkić from Croatia. **VIDEO**
- Why young people participate in youth work programs, what they can get through them and what needs to be improved when it comes to youth work in rural areas from the perspective of Aleksandar Šnur from Pokret gorana Vojvodina. **VIDEO**

## 8. Conclusion

Youth work is a planned educational program, created with the purpose of supporting young people in the process of independence, so that youth workers are helping young people in personal and social development, to become active members of society and participants in the decision-making process.

The idea of youth work is to create a safe environment and opportunities for active participation of young people on a voluntary basis in the process of acquiring skills, competencies and knowledge.

Youth work is:

- a) complementary to formal education;**
- b) conducted by youth workers;**
- c) conducts activities that use the methods of non-formal education and information.**

Forasmuch the many challenges that young people in rural areas face, it is evident that there is a huge need to develop systemic support to young people in order to have the same opportunities as

young people in urban areas.

Bearing in mind that there is no topic that cannot be addressed through youth work programs, the space for the development of youth work in rural areas is enormous.

However, community support and an understanding of why it is important to have youth work programs in rural areas are needed in the first place.

So, **#LetsGoRural** !

#LET'S GO RURAL

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Text and editing: Nedeljka Borojević

Design of the visuals: Nemanja Obradović

Design of the memes: Vladimir Budalić

Design of the animation: Nedeljka Borojević and Katarina Rančić

Design of the booklet: Katarina Rančić and Drejc Kokošar

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