



REN

P R O J E C T

Rural Europe Network
www.renproject.eu



GRAD  BUZET



FALKÖPING
KOMMUNEN



Jalasjärvi 



Europe
for Citizens



REN PROJECT

cofinanced with the **Programme Europe for Citizens**
of the **European Union**



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REN PROJECT BY NUMBERS



5

European countries
involved

8

Small and medium
Municipalities

5

Transnational
meetings

5

Local valorisation
seminars

410

Direct participants
in the project events

1.000

Stakeholders
involved

28

Farms and private
companies involved

47

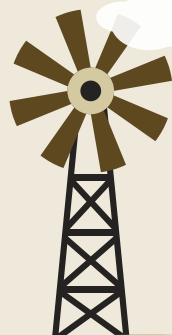
Transnational best
practices presented

12

Chosen
best practices

1.000.000

Citizens informed
about the project



PARTNERSHIP - WHO WE ARE

The project partnership is composed of 8 Municipalities from 5 European countries with many project local stakeholders, people, groups and associations interested in analyzing, deepening and participating in the themes of the REN project.



BORG VAL DI TARO

- » **Location:** Emilia Romagna - Italy
- » **Inhabitants:** 7300
- » **Website:** www.comune.borgo-val-di-taro.pr.it



Borgo Val di Taro is a small town located in the southern part of the province of Parma, close to Tuscany and Liguria. It is very easy to reach Borgo Val di Taro thanks to various infrastructures: many mountain passes, the A15 highway with an exit outside the town, and the railway which connects directly Parma and the town.

BUZET

- » **Location:** Istria - Croatia
- » **Inhabitants:** 6200
- » **Website:** www.buzet.hr



The City of **Buzet** is a local self-government body responsible for planning and implementing activities related to urban planning, services, children & social care, primary medical care, consumer protection.





CAMARIÑAS

- » **Location:** Galicia - Spain
- » **Inhabitants:** 5900
- » **Website:** www.turismocamarinas.net



Concello de
Camariñas
A Coruña

Camariñas is located in the northwest of Spain, in the heart of the Death Coast, between the waters of a river and the open sea. The municipality is located in the province of Galicia, most of its inhabitants speak both Galician and Spanish. A large section of the municipality is part of the "Site of Community Importance" of the Death Coast, and has also been included in the "Natura 2000 Net." It was designated as a "Special Protection Area" for both birds and natural values.



FALKÖPING

- » **Location:** Vastra Gotaland - Sweden
- » **Inhabitants:** 32200
- » **Website:** www.falkoping.se

FALKÖPING
KOMMUNEN

Falköping is a municipality in Västra Götaland County in western Sweden. Its seat is located in the city of Falköping. The present municipality consists of more than 50 original local government units, joined in two structural reforms carried out in 1952 and during the period 1971-1974. In 1971 the former City of Falköping was made a unitary municipality and three years later amalgamated with the surrounding municipalities.

JALASJÄRVI

- » **Location:** South Ostrobothnia - Finland
- » **Inhabitants:** 8000
- » **Website:** www.jalasjarvi.fi



Jalasjärvi is a Finnish municipality. It is located in the province of Western Finland and is part of the Southern Ostrobothnia region.



OPRTALJ

- » **Location:** Istria - Croatia
- » **Inhabitants:** 1000
- » **Website:** www.oprtalj.hr



Oprtalj is a municipality located in the northern part of the County of Istria in Croatia. The large area of the municipality, although relatively sparsely populated, consists of 16 settlements.

The Municipality of Oprtalj is spatially located on half of the revitalised railway line Parenzana (now used as a cycling trail) and is the most beautiful part of the Parenzana road with three viaducts, one tunnel and two bridges.





PELLEGRINO PARMENSE

- » **Location:** Emilia Romagna - Italy
- » **Inhabitants:** 1200
- » **Website:** www.comune.pellegrino-parmense.pr.it



Pellegrino Parmense is a town in the Province of Parma, situated about 45 km from Parma. Protected by green and gently sloping hills, at the bottom of the valley crossed by the Stirone River, the town of Pellegrino, once very much populated, is currently a small town.



VILA DE CRUCES

- » **Location:** Galicia - Spain
- » **Inhabitants:** 6300
- » **Website:** www.viladecruces.es



Vila de Cruces is a municipality located on the northern border of Pontevedra province, to which it belongs, in the centre-west of Galicia. It is one of the six municipalities of the natural region of Deza. It can be defined as a river peninsula, since it is surrounded by several rivers: River Ulla, River Deza and River Arnego. It has an area of 155 km², formed by 28 parishes with 6300 inhabitants.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The theme of rural development is closely related and relevant to EU policies from the Europe 2020 strategy to the policies of Rural and Regional Development of the European Union (see the Commission's document "**The CAP towards 2020**"). The network provided an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of what the European Union is doing through its programs and initiatives, thereby enhancing the sense of belonging of the representatives of the target groups involved and encouraging citizens to get closer to the opportunities offered by the EU and increase their civic participation as the Programme Europe for Citizens wants to valorize and to support.

The project REN stems from some needs, common to all partners identified in the project planning phase. Indeed, partnering countries are characterized by two distinctive features: an ageing population and the abandonment of the areas by young people who move elsewhere looking for new work opportunities. Youth unemployment, an innovative political agenda and sharing of expertise on how to improve the competitiveness of the territories represent the main challenges that the project partners want to deal with at the transnational level in order to analyze and share innovative and strategic practices.

The overall objective of the project is to increase the attractiveness of the municipalities involved to make the best of their potential in the rural sector.

The **specific objectives** are:

- » increase knowledge on the practices of strengthening competitiveness, in order to better promote local tourism and

- rural resources through new local and international networks;
- » increase the knowledge and skills of young farmers on the value added of small local productions;
- » increase the opportunities and stimulate young people to be active and involved in the rural sector (and in rural tourism) creating opportunities for participation in the European Union;
- » increase public awareness of the role and importance of the EU in relation to the theme;
- » improve and enrich the knowledge and strategies of local decision makers, expanding their vision through an exchange of practices and experiences at the international level.



PROJECT ACTIVITIES



The project REN foresaw events with different plans and involvement of direct participants, around 500 during the whole project length, and local stakeholders. The interconnection between transnational and local events represents an important added value of the REN project. First of all European partners identified, discussed and exchanged their project experiences and best practices in two transnational meetings. The first one dedicated to formal and informal education and

training for young farmers to increase competitiveness in the countryside-city context and the second one, about alternative opportunities for farmers in sustainable tourism, social, and environmental frameworks. The second step could be identified in the exchange of specific best practices among local stakeholders thanks to local valorization seminars held in the 5 European countries of the partnership.

After these meetings, **12 best practices** have been identified as the most important ones which could be transferred from one country to the other with due changes. The project results and outcomes have been presented in a final meeting.



PROJECT EVENTS

COORDINATION MEETING IN BORGIO VAL DI TARO

28/30 October 2014



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.

LOCAL EVENTS IN PELLEGRINO PARMENSE

26/28 June 2015



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.

FIRST TRANSNATIONAL MEETING IN CAMARIÑAS

3/6 March 2015



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.

LOCAL EVENTS IN JALASJÄRVI

11/13 August 2015



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.

SECOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETING IN BUZET

14/17 April 2015



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.



LOCAL EVENTS IN VILA DE CRUCES

7/9 September 2015



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.

LOCAL EVENTS IN PORTOLE

25/27 September 2015



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.

LOCAL EVENTS IN FALKÖPING

30 September 2015 / 01/02 October 2015



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.

EVALUATION SEMINAR IN JALASJÄRVI

9/12 December 2015



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.

FINAL CONFERENCE IN BORGO VAL DI TARO

18/21 April 2016



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Programme, presentations, pictures and
press of the event.



BEST PRACTICES

During the implementation phase, **12 best practices** have been considered of major importance to respond to project activities. It is possible to divide them into two main categories linked to the themes of the project transnational events: formal and informal education and training for young farmers and alternative opportunities for farmers.

These two main issues could represent the solutions to the needs identified by partners at the beginning of the project; on the one hand, an ageing population and, on the other hand, the abandonment of the areas by young people.





CONSORTIUM OF ORGANIC MEAT VALTARO VALCENO

BORGIO VAL DI TARO

BACKGROUND

The project was started some ten years ago in the Taro Valley, a hilly and mountainous agricultural area, increasingly threatened by the continued exodus of young people, by the abandoning of farm land and farm activities.

The difficulties of the farmers to compete with conditions and prices of farmers from the lower flat land areas made lots of them abandon their activity which was mainly based on milk

production for Parmigiano cheese.

In this difficult context, a handful of farmers wanted to explore a different, new way of farming: convert their cattle breeding from milk to meat production, convert to organic farming and try to sell the final product (meat) directly to the consumer.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

A major objective of the project was to promote and reach a new approach both to farming and to interaction between farmers:

- » **solidarity:** learn and realize that working together in a difficult environment will at the end be of profit to everyone;
- » **share experiences**, equipments, tools and machinery, promote and sell together a quality product;
- » prefer quality to quantity: adopt **organic farming** techniques;
- » get a maximum profit from what you produce by undertaking and organizing yourself the process of **transformation till the final product** (meat);
- » shorten the chain of commercial trade intermediaries: **approach the final customer directly.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Today, the 10 farms that are associated in the Consortium of Organic Meat, all raise cattle for meat production.

They have adopted extensive and organic ways of breeding their cattle where the animals stay outside most of the year on large mountain pastures, feeding themselves with what nature offers. During the winter months the animals are kept





in more restricted areas and fed with hay.

Instead of selling the young calves to commercial traders and barns for fattening as they would have done in the past, today the associated farmers prepare the animals themselves for butchering and participate in the process of sectioning and packaging and selling of the meat.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

The project involves 10 organic meat farmers from the Valtaro area. The farms range from small realities with only few hectares of land and few animals (less than 10) to large properties with hundreds of hectares of land and 60-80 cattle, covering an overall surface of about 1500 hectares of land and some 300 cattle. The project further involves the local slaughter house of Borgo Val di Taro, a small structure run directly by its users,

organized in a cooperative.

In terms of customers of the Consortium, the project today has reached some 200 private households and some 30 family groupings located mainly in the major nearby towns of Parma, Crema and Milano.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

The project has permitted several farmers to remain on the territory and to develop their activity with a new approach to farming: organic farming, control of the transformation chain, direct contact with the final customer, local market, better qualification of their produce.

It has also created awareness in the valley both among the population and the public services and politicians: awareness that local and organic farming is important, that it needs to be sustained and promoted.

FROM PGI PORCINO MUSHROOM TO RENEWABLE ENERGIES

BORGO VAL DI TARO

BACKGROUND

A “Comunalia” is a common: the common assets are indivisible, unsellable and have to be safeguarded for the future generations. Forests are the most important part of the Comunalia's assets (8.000 hectares).

During the postwar period, the common woods were depauperated because of the war exploitation; in 1964 Consorzio Comunaliae Parmensi created reservations for mushroom hunting, particular areas delimited by signs where you can enter in after purchasing a ticket (from 10 up to 20

euro a day per person).

The Comunalia is not an investment trust, it is a common; so it has to invest this money in the territory.

Two of the most important investments have been for the bureaucratic process to attain the Protected Geographical Indication acknowledgement (in the nineties) and for the creation of renewable energy systems.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

Improvement of the forests, improvement of the production of



wood and mushrooms, production of firewood and woodchips, energy saving, working well territorial marketing, mycological tourism, lots of investments in the territory.

In other words, thanks to the sustainable management of the common pool resources we have an income support for local companies, so we help to keep jobs and, at least, we help people to keep on living in our rural areas.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

The total amount earned from ticket sales is very high; Comunalie invest this money back in the territory: construction and maintenance of forestry roads, creation of new paths, regulation of the water flow, protection of peat bog, protection of grazing lands to preserve biodiversity, development of relaxing areas, building of fountains, prevention and repair of landslides, building and maintenance of aqueducts, forestry management to facilitate the good surface microclimate conditions for the mushrooms, purchase and building of renewable energy systems, investment in promotion of the PGI Mushroom of Borgotaro.

Comunalie give economic contributions to private wood owners to cut old trees: the resulting wood is reduce to chips and it provides heating to Borgotaro's hospital ("wood-energy chain").

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

- » **Comunalie**, which have the property of the forests; they earn from the selling of the tickets for hunting mushroom and they make investments;
- » **Consorzio Comunalie Parmensi**, which has got the technical management of the common goods; it has got the



coordination of the project of development;

- » **Consortium of PGI Mushroom of Borgotaro**, which promote and protect the product, and the valley at least.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

The Mushroom economy is the most important one in the Taro valley: thanks to promotional activities aimed at myco-tourists, about 100.000 mushroom hunters arrive in our reservations every year and this is a very important income for the accommodation facilities and for alla the other satellite activities (bakeries, gas stations...).

Then the local pickers have a better income support from the selling of PGI mushrooms.



TRUFFLE HUNTING BUZET

BACKGROUND

There are just few of them who have not heard for high-quality mushrooms called truffles, and especially their aphrodisiac properties. This “miracle of nature” has been consumed by the ancient Romans as well as the Austro-Hungarian nobility. Nowadays truffles are usually associated with Istria. The dense, moist and kilometers long Motovun forest and Mirna river valley are considered as the richest habitat for truffles.

Collecting truffles is traditional activity for Istrians. In Europe grows 36 kinds of truffles of which thirteen are black and eleven white. The biggest white truffle, Guinness Book of Records one, was found in Istria, and weighted 1.3 kilograms.

While considering medical purposes, there is no doubt that in general the mushrooms contain medicinal substances and their consumption may encourage the lowering of cholesterol and blood sugar. Truffles are also known for its antibiotic and anti-cancer properties. History of truffles began in 1929 when the first truffle experts recognized the value of white truffles (*Tuber magnatum Pico*) in Buzet.

When the inhabitants of Buzet realized that with truffles they can make some money, they began to “hunt” this high-quality mushrooms and it continues till today.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

The best time for white truffle hunting is from September to January and for the black one throughout the whole year in order to promote, taste and sell truffles as a unique gastronomic

product in this area.

One of the most important objectives to be achieved by this activity is certainly the extension of the tourist season. For the purpose of promoting the Istrian cuisine, typical truffle dishes as pasta, gnocchi, fritatta and various combinations of meat are presented to tourists and guests from all over the world.

There are also exhibitions and fairs promoting truffles which are an excellent opportunity to get know all the secrets of magic, aromatic tuber with aphrodisiac properties.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Truffle hunting is organized for small groups of guests who want to explore and get to know the most suitable Istrian region where truffles grow.

Accompanied by a professional truffle hunters and specially trained dogs, guests go deep into the forests of Istria and spend about three hours in search of the Istrian white truffle, depending on the season. Guests can keep all the truffles that they found during a hunt, take them home and use them to prepare delicious gourmet specialties.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

The project “Truffle hunting” includes local population, family businesses, which are for many years engaged in finding, processing and selling truffles and its products, but also includes domestic and foreign tourists who want to try this unusual venture.

Thus, becoming one of the most recognizable symbols of the region, “truffle” enhances tourist arrivals with high purchasing power who are not only interested in the natural beauty, but

also in various activities such as tasting specific Istrian cuisine.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

The impact on the economy of Buzet is expressed through the sale of truffles, an increased number of local and foreign guests participating in events who are the main reason for extended tourist season till winter months. This leads to the establishment of new companies in the “truffle sector” and more job opportunities, thereby contributing to economic growth. Promotion of the project “Truffle hunting” contributes to the historic heritage, authentic culture and tradition.





GRANXA FAMILIAR CAMARIÑAS

BACKGROUND

Currently the rural Galician is marked by degradation of many families that have always been dedicated to agricultural activity, resulting as a consequence the abandonment of it.

So with this project seek to change this situation by enhancement that family farming, firmly committed to the sustainability of smallholder farming systems of Galicia and the production of quality feature of family farms in Galicia. The key element to carry out this objective will be new technologies.

This represents its approach to rural areas and especially in social groups “disconnected” Information Society, in this case farmers who will be displaying a new way to introduce products to market beyond the usual trade channels.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

Family farm is a project intended for the marketing of agricultural products which have their origin in family farms in rural Galicia, using it as a tool for fundamental Internet.

A large part of these families do not have their integrated production in the market but this moves by informal channels or rely on intermediaries to output these products. This means for farmers an income tiny compared with the quality of the product offered and some high prices after the market.

Consequently, the low rents that the farmer receives a disincentive to production, resulting in an ongoing process of abandonment of rural areas.

Given this, it is intended that the new technologies entail the





opening of a new channel that can overcome these limitations to the products of small family farms.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

The primary means to achieve this will be a website (www.granxafamiliar.com) that will allow putting directly in contact with farmer's clients of the urban environment allowing acquire quality products obtained naturally and returning a fair price to the farmer.

The marketing of products originating from family farms primarily intended to create streams of income toward the urban rural households to improve the situation deteriorated very families of rural Galician and foster the establishment of

population in rural areas.

At the same time this will involve the preservation of tissue and sociocultural forms of understanding the environment linked to the rural family's Galician, aspects that are actually at risk of disappearance continue the process of depopulation.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

Family farm is operating initially in the territory of Galicia in northwestern Spain, because it came after several investigations that put the potential value of family farms in Galicia.

However we understand with the ability to transcend the framework Galician considering that it is designed as a system of information management for the marketing of agricultural products without intermediaries. So we are talking about a formula applicable in other territories.

We are 25 rural families from Galicia and the University of Santiago de Compostela.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

The project is designed family farms under the University of Santiago de Compostela; however one of its main strengths is to have an open character and continuous innovation. For this reason, even though his career has started eight years ago with the commissioning of a web page pilot, the project is ongoing construction due to the incorporation of new producers in it. That's due to the growth of it was necessary to create in 2008 an association non-profit that would centralize the management of the project. This is the Association for the Development of Family Farming, which includes all producers and is maintained thanks to an annual quota.



THE PROMOTION OF THE TOURISM CAMARIÑAS

BACKGROUND

Camariñas has important tourist attractions, but a real municipal tourist plan had never been developed. Camariñas is located in Galicia, in the northwestern part of Spain. Fishing and gathering shellfish are the mainstays of its economy. Camariñas is in the heart of “Costa da Morte” (Coast of Death) and it is one of the most extensive pristine areas in the Spanish coast.

Additionally, Vilán Lighthouse, a magnificent building set in a spectacular cape, was the first electric lighthouse in Spain. It also symbolizes the large number of shipwrecks that happened along this dangerous coastline.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

Camariñas Municipality drew up a plan in order to promote tourism based on its four more outstanding attractions: Vilán Lighthouse, bobbin lace, the natural scenery and Manfred Gnärdiner, better known as the “German of Camelle”, one of the most important European representatives of the art movement known as Art in Nature or Land Art. However, Camariñas hopes to promote a sustainable tourism rather than other kind of tourism. The plan wanted to ensure that visitors will enjoy Camariñas, not only because of its outstanding tourist attractions, but also for being a unique experience.



DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

The Entrepreneurs Association transformed the empty rooms of Faro Vilano and turned into an open space where different activities are offered. The exhibition room is always booked with art exhibitions, book presentations, painting and fishing contests, panels, symposiums and company events. The Council's plan for developing tourism includes a tourist slogan - Camariñas The Whole Sea -, an online platform, 50 signals with NFC proximity cards, the Shipwrecks Route-Augmented Reality App, hiking trails and a touch-screen information point at the Lighthouse. Furthermore, a tourism network has been set up.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

The plan for developing tourism has been led by Camariñas

Municipality. The council has developed the technological tools, the Shipwrecks Route-Augmented Reality, and the touch screen information point at the lighthouse. However, every stakeholder has had an important role in the plan. The Entrepreneurs Association has been in charge of the actions implemented in the lighthouse and is a member of the tourism network, as well as the Lace Makers Association and the Fishing Guild.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

During the last four years, most of the objectives of the plan for the development of tourism in Camariñas have been achieved. Thus, Vilán Lighthouse has become a very important tourist attraction with an increase of more than 69%.

Additionally, technological tools have been implemented and tourism network has grown.





MALTA - JOHANNA FARMER'S MARKET FALKÖPING

BACKGROUND

Falköping is the only borough council in Sweden with a membership in the international movement CittaSlow.

Malta-Johanna Farmer's Market was inaugurated in 2008, the initiative was taken by the borough council. There was an abundance of small-scale food producers but no arena for marketing and/or appropriate sales location.

The borough council funded market stands and provided a rural coach as coordinator.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

The main reason behind the project was declining high street sales, with closed shops and consumers preferring shopping in neighbouring cities. Hence, the farmer's market was an initiative to attract local consumers to shop locally as well as supporting local small-scale food production.

Organising some 20-25 small-scale producers is a time consuming effort. As stated above, the borough council funded a rural enterprise coach as the coordinator, who was also responsible for guaranteeing the quality of the products at display at the market.

The rural coordinator works approximately 2 days a week.

LAG Leader was at one point supporting the development of the market in order to attract more producers and more customers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

The farmer's market is open for three hours every Saturday,

during the summer. The rural enterprise coach is still responsible for coordinating the producers but is also developing the concept. Every Saturday a local or nationally acclaimed chef is participating in the market, cooking local or international dishes with local produce only. The farmer's market is marketed on social media with photos and moving imagery.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

Some 20-25 local small-scale producers are currently involved in the project. A rural enterprise coach is coordinating the farmer's market strategically as well as practically. Local and national acclaimed chefs prepare dishes with local produce.



IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

The farmer's market has provided a much needed meeting place for dialogue in the city center and boosted sales on the high street. A spin-off to the farmer's market is the opening of a privately owned market hall with local produce only, open all year around. The farmer's market concept has revived the city center and this has, in turn, made Falköping attractive to international renowned brands such as H&M, partly due to the fact that we now have a more attractive and vibrant city center.



RELATIONAL-ORIENTED RURAL BUSINESS COACHING

FALKÖPING

BACKGROUND

Falköping is a borough council with 32000 inhabitants in western Sweden, approximately 150 kilometres north of Gothenburg, Sweden's second largest city.

Half of the population lives in the rural areas, outside Falköping city center. Falköping has more than a thousand different farm businesses and many rural small-scale businesses, i.e secondary production such as one of the biggest cheese production sites in the country. Falköping Mejeri, is a successful local dairy company, is a co-operative owned by 200 local farmers. Falköping is the only borough council in Sweden with a membership in the international movement CittaSlow.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

The rural enterprise coach is employed by the borough council. The goal is to develop local business in rural areas, with a specific focus on supporting small-scale and sustainable businesses.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

The rural enterprise coach is working with a relational focus. I.e entrepreneurs need to be seen, encouraged and supported in the development of ideas.

In practice, this means developing confidence and self-esteem, establishing business plans, attracting public funding, contact media for marketing purposes and supporting the small-scale



entrepreneurs in building resilient networks, locally, regionally, nationally and even internationally.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

The target is support entrepreneurial best practices that may serve as a good examples for potential entrepreneurs.

In the past years we have seen an increasing interest in small-scale cheese and beer production, and tourist businesses such as restaurants and bed & breakfast.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

The relational-oriented focus has created a resilient network of local small-scale business in many different sectors.

The success of the concept is grounded in long-term relational coaching over several years.





FAMILY HOME TOISKA

JALASJÄRVI

BACKGROUND

Family home Toiska is situated in Koskenkorva, 6 km from the centre of Ilmajoki. Toiska's owners are psychiatric nurses, who have lots of experiences and skills in this area.

Toiska has been working since 1992 at Tiina's and Keijo's farmhouse. At Toiska there is room for six girls ages above 14 years. The adolescents in challenging life situations are placed at Toiska through child protection meanings.

At Toiska's yard you can see three houses, outbuildings, recreational facilities, a horse stable and the Pegasos Hall.

Yards are adorned with gardens.

The comfort and beauty of these facilities and environment belong to everyday life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

Toiska stable is a part of Family Home Toiska's farm environment, which is built on 20 years of child welfare experience, skills, and horses. Toiska team provides community-based and functional child protection services, which can be utilized in a community setting, and support for foster care, psychiatric nursing, domestic work. For the young living in Family Home Toiska the service is part of their rehabilitation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Animal-assisted rehabilitation are preventive and remedial activities, where you can find socio-educational characteristics; community, experientialism, and functionality. Professionals

plan and control activities. Main goal for rehabilitation services is to learn and strengthen the social and emotional skills.

Animals, safe environment and the activities can make the positive learning experiences possible, and give space for the processing of emotions.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

The professionals in the stable are from social, educational and equine areas. Employees are part of the Toiska's multi-professional community, including socio-pedagogical equestrian activities, social services, youth work, psychiatry

and psychotherapy professionals.

The entire professional community takes responsibility of the process of the Participants. Toiska's long experience of cooperation with families takes place in the stables.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

Becoming and being a member of a community is important. Our community is based on the fact that becoming a member isn't difficult. At the same time, our community has an active role in the surrounding real world. It is easy for family members and other close people to come to visit. Therefore you can meet people outside the community at our actively working farm.



JUSTEERI AND YOUTH WORKSHOP IN FINLAND

JALASJÄRVI

BACKGROUND

The number of inhabitants in Jalasjärvi is decreasing and it is difficult for the young people to find work.

There are many young people who has not finished their studies in vocational school or high school. Some of young people have problems with health, for example mental problems and disabilities and abuse of alcohol.

Youth workshop activities are arranged in 264 municipalities.

In 2011, 12982 young people under the age of 29 participated in workshop activities. After the workshop period, 72% of the youth workshop participants found a place in education, work or other activities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

Youth workshop activities are primarily aimed at boosting



young people's life management skills and social independence, providing early support, promoting collective growth at one's own pace and encouraging learning by doing.

In workshops, young people have the opportunity to participate in work under guidance and support, attend a tailored education path or find employment on the open labour market.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

The workshop period can vary between 1 month and in some cases over a year with three steps:

- » rehabilitative work experience;
- » work try-out;
- » study a profession or find a place to work or apprenticeship training at youth workshop.

After the workshop period, only 5% of the participants is unemployed; for the rest: 50% continues to study, 25% find a job and the remaining 20% is under rehabilitation.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

Most of young people who participate has not finished their studies in vocational school or high school.

They may also have health issues like mental problems or disabilities of some kind. In Jalasjarvi, there are two instructors: building conservator and social worker.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

- » Young people get opportunity to work and get social contacts and help for their health problems.
- » Young people find their places in the society.
- » Landscape get better after restoration of old buildings.
- » Material recycling.





OLIVE OIL AND WINE PRODUCTION AS A TOOL FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

OPRTALJ

BACKGROUND

In the municipality of Oprtalj since ancient times agriculture has been an important economic sector and the main occupation of the inhabitants. The geographical position, favorable relief and fertile land influenced the development of agricultural production, of which the most common culture were olive trees and vines. This trend continues until the end of the 20th century when the intensive process of deagrarisation and depopulation affected the agricultural production which despite the favorable natural conditions started to wane. A lot of the agricultural land is being abandoned and begins the process of succession and

at the same time unemployment starts to grow among the inhabitants that remained in the Municipality.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

In order to revitalize the abandoned but valuable agricultural land and help local unemployed population, the Municipality has developed a project with this main objectives:

- » restoration of abandoned agricultural land;
- » work for the local population;
- » the continuation of traditional cultivation of olive trees and vines;
- » increment of tourist offer.



DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

The first step in the project was the sale of agricultural land at lower prices to the interested inhabitants as well as co-financing the purchase of seedlings.

In order to achieve better results in the production it is necessary to continually educate the farmers.

Therefore, the Municipality organizes courses and workshops to inform and familiar farmers with new trends and practices in agriculture, and participates in the financing of the exam that farmers must take. Also, the Municipality organizes fairs where the farmers have the opportunity to promote and sell their olive oil and wine and thus make a profit.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

The founder and initiator of the project is the Municipality of Oprtalj which started to cooperate with a number of interested farmers. As the years passed, the project began to involve young unemployed inhabitants.

For some of them this was the first contact with the cultivation and production of olive trees and vines.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

This project stimulated the cultivation of olive trees and vines and the production of olive oil and wine.

Gradually, the cultivation and production increases according to the needs of the owners, some of the producers sell the products to foreign markets and thus promote the area of Oprtalj. This project achieved all the set objectives, but also encouraged all the other farmers and those who would like to work in agriculture.





BREAD FROM ANCIENT GRAINS

PELLEGRINO PARMENSE

BACKGROUND

Elio and Gianni Lusignani, bakers for three generations, prepare their bread of excellent quality from a project to restore the ancient grains grown from the end of 1800 until the 50s in the mountain area around Pellegrino Parmense.

This project began in 1999 with the aim of reproducing old varieties of wheat that have disappeared, including the “Gentilrosso”. There are evidences that the composition of the grain of wheat, which determines food quality, is highly variable in different territorial conditions and a growing system of wheat “low-input”, environmentally friendly, must guarantee over time the quality and safety of the product.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

This project was designed both for purposes related to the production and for purposes related to environmental sustainability and the recovery of ancient traditions.

Behind the project, the primary idea is that quality food production depend on specific natural environment care and on natural resources exploitation in accordance with the ancient knowledge, which should be preserved and passed down the generations.

For this reason, farmers and bakers looked for native wheat types involving few local farmers in the old grains production. “Lusignani” bread was recognized by the Slow Food International Association philosophy: good, clean and fair.



DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

About ten years ago the project called “Chain of ancient grains of Val Stirone” involved ten local farmers who began to provide flour from ancient grains to “Lusignani bakery.”

The grains to be put into production were selected with the help of the University of Parma. Nowadays about eight farms are engaged in this process, all small or family companies, which produce quite small quantities, depending also on the lower yield from ancient grains compared to the yield from the quality of grains selected by modern agriculture.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

- » A local bakery.
- » Local farmers as ancient grain producers.
- » Primary and secondary local schools for education trainings on the environment respect, bread making ancient traditions and the taste of the food.
- » University for researches of ancient grains varieties.

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

In 2009 Lusignani have built a modern bakery according to the principles of a eco sustainability with the aim of creating tours and activities for schools and to pass on a production method that respects local traditions.

The new manufacturing environment is very interesting, as it has been thought as a function of training.



GALO CELTA VILA DE CRUCES

BACKGROUND

Celtic Galo is a company located inside Galicia in a small rural municipality where the majority of its population is engaged in agriculture. In Galicia, the breeding of roosters is an old tradition and in order to promote new activities and develop economy, the municipality of Vila de Cruces celebrates a festival in honor of this animal which received the recognition of “food” of regional interest becoming part of the network of European gastronomic heritage.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

The reintroduction of the breeding of this type of wild rooster

represented an important element to fight against the abandonment of local farms, increasing women’s employment rate basis creating new business opportunities.

This activity represents an important tool to slow down the depopulation of rural areas and to preserve the traditions and local culture.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Galo Celta has the mission to be an excellent company in breeding and transforming rooster meat with a special focus on international markets. The products are certified as organic farming and 100% Galician breeding.

TARGET AND STAKEHOLDERS

Who is involved in the project and what are their tasks?

The main objective is to revitalize rural areas and make available resources for young people so they can take initiative developing new agriculture experiences as a driver for local economy.

Main stakeholders of this project are people who believe and are committed to the valorization of traditional products with a focus on innovation and adapting it to modern times .

IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

This experience represented an important example for other local producers and farmers to become rural “defensors” and to create an opportunity of wage supplement increasing employment local rate.



RESULTS, OUTPUTS AND FOLLOW-UP



The final event held in Borgo Val di Taro gave to the partners and stakeholders the opportunity to share the project outcomes, above all the transfer of two best practices from one country to the other, and secondly to proceed with the project follow-up.

PROJECT RESULTS

» **Rural Entrepreneurship Counseling** - The experience of adapting the Swedish model for developing farmers' skills in Pellegrino Parmense.

Partners involved: Municipality of Falkoping and Municipality of Pellegrino Parmense.

Starting from the Swedish model of rural entrepreneurship counseling organized by the Municipality of Falkoping based on the support of the creation of start-ups and on a sustainable approach which considers the economic and social situations of rural entrepreneurs, the local project group in Pellegrino adopted this programme with some adaptations to the Italian reality.

The experience in the Municipality of Pellegrino foresee the organization of different groups counselling addressing





crucial issues for Italian farmers:

- » analyzing and proposing sustainable solutions to the local dairy crisis;
 - » supporting the diversification of rural productions;
 - » informing about possible funding resources (EU, national and regional opportunities);
 - » talking with local successful rural entrepreneurs with rural roundtables.
- » **Exchange of students from Finland to a Croatian farm.**

Partners involved: Municipality of Jalasjarvi and Municipality of Portole.

Three students from a Finnish association which works with young people (project stakeholders) participated in an intern period in a farm in Croatia, whose owner participated as stakeholders in the REN project.

They worked in a garlic farm helping the owner in his daily activities. This two weeks experience represented an important education element for the youngest and

they described the exchange with the following words: challenging, uncertain, tiring, fun, dynamic and worth doing.

FOLLOW – UP

Participants in the final event had a long session as work group activity to verify the possibility to plan new projects and exchanges starting from the outputs of the REN project. Two project proposals were presented.

- » The first one for the training of young people and the organization on a European basis of exchanges among young farmers or students in different European farms. In order to make the matching young people-farm owner, social media and a dedicated application will be created. The project will be proposed with Erasmus+ Programme.
- » The second proposal were more dedicated to the valorization and marketing of local heritage using common and shared tools as social media and the REN website. Activities, exchanges and study visits are foreseen to know in depth different European practices.

CONCLUSIVE WORDS

NETWORKING STARTS WITH PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

During the implementation of the REN project, partners' representatives were asked to inform their local and regional government about the activities. The presentation held at the Regional Council of the South Ostrobothnia (Finland) highlights the reasons why a public authority should be involved and engaged in Europe for Citizens projects. This is the English translation prepared by Ms Taru Patteri.

WHY PROJECTS LIKE REN ARE IMPORTANT?

REN project started 2014 in Italy and it has 8 partners towns

from 5 different countries – Italy, Spain, Croatia, Sweden and Finland. Two years period, same problems, same challenges, in every town there are a lot of professional people who could find solutions to solve problems and create something new.

So, what shall we do? Especially in Finland, people always ask, what substantial this kind of project can do.

Well, usually Finns are very practical and they don't want to waste their time doing something that is "worth of nothing".

Everyone realize that no project can change the world during two years and ten meetings. Change might take five years, ten years – perhaps a whole generation. **The substantial things in project like REN are connection between people.**





Sometimes this simple thing is the most difficult thing for people to understand.

This brings us to question, why we – common people – have to travel to the distant places to meet strange people.

Why can't project managers do the job, that they are hired for? Well, if only project managers travel to the meetings they certainly will create a network. But when **common people farmers, young people, teachers, officials come together – then the miracles begin to happen.**

As project worker, of course I can make presentation for example farming in our area, show statistics and pictures – but I am not a farmer. **If we need to know what are challenges in farming we have to make the farmers speak.**

Every time, when professional people meet, soon they are like members of same tribe.

Differences in country of residence, language, culture are not important because the profession connects them. They can

speak about their threats and opportunities, strengths and weaknesses and find new ways to see the problems and find new ways to deal with those same issues with which people in same profession are struggling around Europe.

The importance of project like REN is enable people to meet each other in the first place (and to create a European community increasing the sense of ownership to the EU). Otherwise how likely would it be that young farmer from a little Croatian town could ever meet farmers from a little Finnish village and together be able to create new innovations?

Projects like REN will not offer ready-made solutions to problems. It is helping people to help themselves.

Project gives opportunity to make connections. Projects comes and goes. But those personal connections and new networks might live for a lifetime and seeds of the new ideas are the start point of future changes.



Visit our website

» www.renproject.eu «



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