

## FINLAND

### Local development

#### Location

Nivala

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

#### Measure

M07 – Basic services & village renewal

#### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 165 000  
EAFRD 69 300  
National/Regional 95 700

#### Project duration

2020 – 2022

#### Project promoter

Keskipiste-LEADER ry

#### Contact

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#### Website

<https://keskipisteleader.fi/nouoret/>

## Youth strategy tackles rural depopulation challenges in western Finland.

### Summary

LEADER funds supported the development of a strategy and related actions focused on involving youth in rural development. Young people informed the strategy's preparations and identified demand for a series of capacity building events dedicated to youth participation in the revitalisation of their rural communities.



The project also helped young people in the LAG area to develop project ideas and promoted rural networking connecting young people to rural youth development initiatives and opportunities outside of Finland via involvement in European partnership actions.

### Results

- Production of a Youth strategy.
- Organisation of information sessions, other youth events and Erasmus+ project plans.
- 1 500 young people involved in project activities.
- Creation of a network of municipal youth workers and other youth workers.
- Plans for a Transnational Cooperation project (with two German and one Finnish LAGs) concerning youth inclusion, activation, entrepreneurship, and empowerment.

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Strategic approaches to supporting rural youth should involve young people during the full life cycle of the strategy and be demand-led based on up-to-date evidence.
- ❑ Dedicated support for young people can help explain how they can make use of rural development support services and funding.

## Context

The LAG Keskipiste operates in the southern part of northern Ostrobothnia, Finland, in an area with eight municipalities and approximately 42 000 inhabitants. Young people tend to migrate away from the area to study or find work in urban centres. This creates a demographic imbalance and more elderly population. Consequently, decision making and services tend to focus on the older members of the community. To help improve the demographic balance, and make rural areas more attractive to young people, the LAG's local development strategy put an emphasis on increasing young people's entrepreneurship, their well-being and social inclusion, as well as their access to youth engagement programmes at European level.

## Objective

The aim of the Rural Youth project was to help revitalise the LAG territory by improving youth services in rural areas including providing opportunities for young people to participate in community life and improve their wellbeing.

## Activities

Initial efforts focused on preparing a youth support strategy for the LAG area. It involved consulting the region's youth councils and other youth groups in addition to gathering data to ensure the strategy would be evidence-based and demand-led.

The strategy's preparation and implementation was managed by the LAG's youth working group and thematic teams.

Local educational institutions received support within the framework of the strategy to provide entrepreneurship education and training opportunities.

The strategy implemented a series of events to network young people and provide capacity building in youth rural development matters.

Young people were assisted to develop rural development project ideas and apply for aid from a Youth LEADER funding budget. The funding was from a separate budget and not part of this project.

## Results

- Production of the Youth strategy.
- Organisation of: 50 information sessions on project activities and international opportunities; eight youth impact events; one regional event; and three Erasmus+ project plans, including European Voluntary Service, Youth Exchanges, and Strategic Partnerships.
- 1 500 young people involved in project activities.
- Creation of a network of municipal youth workers and other youth workers.
- Plans for a Transnational Cooperation project (with two German and one Finnish LAGs) concerning youth inclusion, activation, entrepreneurship, and empowerment.

## Main lessons

- CAP funding can be used to involve young people in rural revitalisation actions.
- Strategic approaches to supporting rural youth should involve young people during the full life cycle of the strategy and be demand-led based on up-to-date evidence.
- Dedicated support for young people can help explain how they can make use of rural development support services and funding.



## Additional sources of information

Video clip on project activities filmed by participants. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1YmFVwKZ6o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1YmFVwKZ6o)