

# Added Value of Networking



## A National Road Show - Engaging young people in Denmark

### Danish National Rural Network



Source: Danish NRN



**ENRD** *Connecting Rural Europe*

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## Executive summary

Many rural towns and villages in Denmark witness outmigration of young people to urban areas. Many young people are unaware of the benefits and opportunities presented through European Union funding and do not think of themselves as potential future beneficiaries. The National Agency for Enterprise and Construction together with the Regions and the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, are responsible for the delivery of European Union funding, and so came together with the support of the Danish National Rural Network to deliver a Road Show to young people across Denmark.

The Road Show converted the inside of a large truck into a classroom, including a range of innovative educational materials and also provided classroom based learning opportunities, all complimented with an online learning resource. Students were encouraged to explore real life examples of funded projects including the introduction of a standardised fish packaging system and the development of a traditional fishing village into a renowned water sports location.

The Road Show visited students aged from 15 – 18 years at twenty-seven schools engaging with ninety-nine different teams, involving approximately 3,000 students. Ninety-nine classroom presentations took place, which were complimented with an additional seventy-six from beneficiaries.



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## Background

Many rural areas in Denmark are seeking to reverse the trend of outmigration of young people from rural towns and villages. Often these young people feel that there are few opportunities in rural areas to develop entrepreneurial ideas or secure satisfying employment.

As in most Members States, different Government departments in Denmark are responsible for delivering different streams of European Union funding. These departments sought to work together to encourage young people to recognise the beneficial impacts of the available funding and see these resources as an opportunity to innovate in rural areas.

With the support of the Danish National Rural Network the concept of an educational Road Show was developed, which would deliver learning opportunities into schools across the country. It was hoped that promoting all the different European Union Programmes in one would provide young people with a truly holistic understanding of their work in rural areas and how individuals can deliver supported projects which also benefit their local community.

This Case Study was compiled with the support of the Danish National Rural Network, from data provided and information available on the Internet.

## Networking Participants

The key partners in this project were the National Agency for Enterprise and Construction, Regions and the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, who have responsibility for the delivery of European Union funding. There were also over 3,000 students involved as well as teaching staff and members of the National Rural Network.

## Objectives

The main objective of this project was to effectively communicate the impact of European Union funding, raise awareness of the opportunities it presents and engage young people with some of the challenges of rural areas and the solutions that have been developed.

It was hoped that this would encourage young people to engage with rural areas in a solution-focused approach, and recognise that living in a rural community remains a viable option, particularly for budding entrepreneurs.

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## The process and main activities

The Road Show was developed as a communication project that provided innovative ways of engaging young people in understanding the benefits and opportunities created through a variety of European Union funding Programmes. The project brought together the National Agency for Enterprise and Construction, Regions who deliver the European Rural Development Fund and the European Social Fund, working in partnership with the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries who deliver the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Fisheries Fund.

The concept was based around converting the inside of a large truck into a classroom, fitting it out with a range of educational materials and providing classroom based learning opportunities, all of which were complimented with an online learning resource. The project was focused on students aged from 15 – 18 years, primarily those with an interest in social studies. The Road Show visits were offered to Higher Preparatory Examination Course students, and those in grammar schools, commercial schools and technical schools.

Planning for the project took place between September 2009 and April 2010 with a pilot Road Show then taking place. In August the educational materials were thoroughly tested by teachers and students, with the full Road Show being delivered between October 2010 and January 2011.

A complimentary Webpage was established at [www.blivklogpaaefonde.dk](http://www.blivklogpaaefonde.dk), which included a range of educational material for students and teachers. It also housed a role playing facility, which enabled young people to take on the persona of a journalist, lobbyist, politician, or project applicant to understand the process of funding from a range of different perspectives. There was also a series of practical information available such as Road Show timings, schedule etc. It was also possible to order a Road Show visit on the website and invitations were sent to all schools who worked with students aged 15 to 18.

When completed, the truck provided a range of information on the European Union and the funding programmes it has established, presented in a way that sparked dialogue with and between the young people involved who are also the future potential beneficiaries of the programmes. The information sought to demonstrate how businesses, communities and remote rural areas can benefit from European Union support. All materials were designed to focus on youth and rural development.

The Road Show entailed a three step concept including classroom presentations, presentations from beneficiaries and small stands in the truck highlighting eight different European Union funded projects



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through posters, laptops and videos. Once inside the truck the students were split into small discussion groups and were presented with eight posters all highlighting a different problem for discussion, with the students encouraged to explore the solution.

One poster, for example, focused on the work of the European Fisheries Fund and was entitled '*Find the Fish! Chip in Fish Boxes - Improving traceability and quality*'. This poster encouraged students to discuss how fishermen and the fisheries sector, consumers and authorities could benefit from the funding available. The example provided explored how fish used to be boxed after being caught and then landed in harbour, with each port requiring a different approach to boxing and different administration to be completed. With funding from the EU and the Danish Government a standardised box has now been introduced at ten Danish Ports. These boxes contain a chip which is scanned on the way in and out of harbour thus enabling information to be captured on when and where the fish are caught. There are now 200,000 electronic fish boxes in use because of this project. Students were prompted to discuss the benefits this has brought such as:

- less transport and therefore a reduction in CO2 emissions,
- less administration for fishermen as they can use the same boxes all the time,
- better documentation delivered to the authorities to monitor fishing activities and food safety,
- full product traceability for consumers.

Another example focused on '*Developing a local community using the LEADER approach*'. This explored the development of the old fishing village of Klitmoller on the northwest coast of Denmark. In recent years this traditional fishing village has transformed itself into 'Cold Hawaii' becoming a haven for surfers and windsurfers. European Union and Danish Ministry funding was provided to support the village to host the windsurfing World Cup in 2012 and develop this opportunity further, into an on-going, annual event. Students were again asked to discuss what villages such as Klitmoller could do when their main industry, such as fishery, disappeared and how communities of such villages can identify and build upon their strengths. Klitmoller had great natural assets, ideal conditions for surfing and by building on those strengths has become one of the few rural villages in Denmark which has experienced a significant increase in population levels over the last twenty years.

The Road Show received much positive media coverage, featuring on television and also being promoted through the Danish Ministry. Daily press releases were also sent out to local media in the area of the latest Road Show event including newspapers, T.V., radio and on the web.

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The project also ran a competition to award the best concepts developed by the students on 'How to Create Growth'. The winner was announced by the Minister of Economic and Business Affairs in January 2011.

By the end of the project the Road Show had visited twenty-seven schools between October and November 2010, covering 3,782km in the five week period which is the distance from Copenhagen to Barcelona and back! Whilst at those twenty-seven schools the Road Show engaged with ninety-nine different teams totaling approximately 3,000 students. A total of ninety-nine classroom presentations were delivered, which were further complimented by seventy-six presentations from beneficiaries from the local area or region in which the Road Show was active. All of these young people now understand more about the opportunities available in rural areas, European Union funding and European Union funded projects.

## **Resources**

The initial budget had to be increased due to the high levels of interest shown by the schools. The Ministry of Food contributed 41,000 Euros which was a third of the total budget. The planning phase involved six people from the Managing Authority, Network Unit and Commercial Units whilst the Road Show required four people to be on the road for a total of five weeks. The project involved at least twelve people in the Ministry of Food.

## **The 'added value' of networking**

One of the successes of this project was the willingness of two different Government Departments to work in partnership as this enabled the Road Show to include a range of different Programmes and their application in rural areas. This encouraged students to think more broadly about the opportunities and benefits these resources provided.

The direct involvement of the Danish National Rural Network in delivering the project also enabled the use of existing networks to identify current and previous fund beneficiaries. Their presentations provided students with real examples of the diverse ways in which the funds had been utilised and included a range of different sectors and sizes of grant contribution.

Within the project networking was initially supported by the sharing of mutual aims and objectives which brought partners together. This process then enabled networking to flourish as the project delivered effectively on those shared goals. The experience of the National Rural Network ensured that

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appropriate networking activity was delivered, supporting and facilitating the project and its partners as they progressed.

The partners involved were committed to achieving shared objectives so delivering effective networking focused on bringing the key partners together, communicating, identifying the common needs and delivering a programme that met those needs. It is hoped that the success of this networking activity will encourage further joint actions between these and other key Governmental departments.

## **Future challenges**

It is important to develop innovative approaches that successfully engage with young people, enabling them to understand the benefits, opportunities and challenges of working with European Union funding. This approach and others utilised across the European Union, which have proved effective, should be disseminated further to encourage and enable other areas and Member States to deliver activity targeted at this sometimes hard to reach group.

It can be challenging to assess the success of this type of activity as beyond the short term learning objectives the outcomes tend to be relatively long term. This type of activity is focused on long term capacity building and it is vital that understanding of its importance continues to be developed at a strategic level.

## **Further information**

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