



European Network for
Rural Development



Thematic Group (TG) on Smart Villages

Collection of projects presented by TG members

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The projects presented in this collection have been kindly provided voluntarily to the ENRD Contact Point (CP) by the Members of the [Thematic Group](#) (TG) on Smart Villages.

The aim of this document is to present the brief description provided by the TG Members about the initiatives they know or have been involved in. Contact details about the reference person for the project are provided in case further information or clarification about the projects is needed. Please, note that the information provided in this document has not been validated by the ENRD CP.

For more project examples and initiative, please visit the [Smart Villages Portal](#).

INTEGRATED APPROACHES (NATIONAL AND LOCAL)

RURAL DEVELOPMENT MEASURE 7 - BASIC SERVICES (AT)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Rural depopulation is a growing problem in Austria and some regions are increasingly feeling its negative effects. Concrete measures are needed to counteract this social development and ensure that rural areas remain attractive to future generations. The creation, development and expansion of services of general interest, the supply of infrastructure and the promotion of climate-friendly mobility solutions, as well as the development of broadband infrastructure and low-level road networks are intended to contribute to a long-term improvement in the quality of life in rural areas.

In the Austrian RDP, 764 million EUR are allocated to Measure 7 that aims to support basic services and village renewal in rural areas. To implement its sub-measures, the Ministry for Agriculture is cooperating with other Ministries, notably the Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Economics.

Regarding the concept of Smart Villages, the following sub-measures could be of particular interest:

- **Plans for village renewal (M7.1):** The project provides support for preparing and updating plans and requirements in relation to basic services. It also provides support for the tool 'CommunalAudit', an instrument which gives municipalities the opportunity to compare their finances, management and infrastructure. CommunalAudit consists of a basic module to survey the status quo and to benchmark efforts with those of other municipalities. Its optional module also helps municipalities tailor new strategies.
- **Investment in broadband infrastructure (M7.3):** This funding will help bridge the digital divide between urban and rural areas.
- **Investment in social services (M7.4):** Through the expansion of social services such as child care, healthcare and health promotion, public health facilities can be made accessible to more people living in rural areas¹.

¹ [Note: This new measure in the Austrian RDP has taken time to launch given the number of new players involved both in its administration and among potential applicants. So far, few projects deal with these priority areas of support.]

² <https://www.bmlfuw.gv.at/english/agriculture/Master-Plan-for-Rural-Areas0.html>

Other relevant strategies: Breitband Austria 2020 (Austrian Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology):

➤ **Implementation of climate and energy projects at local level (M7.2.):** The so-called '[climate and energy model regions](#)' initiative demonstrates the feasibility and impact of using renewable energy to the general public. A climate and energy model region encompasses at most 60 000 inhabitants and consists of several municipalities. The RDP supports projects within climate and energy model regions, helping to fund small infrastructure that produces renewable energy or saves energy.

➤ **Climate-friendly mobility solutions (M7.4.):** The focus is on the promotion of investment in climate-friendly mobility solutions in rural areas to promote cycling, environmentally-friendly mobility management and the conversion of transport systems and fleets to alternative drives and fuels, with a particular emphasis on electric mobility.

➤ **Implementation of plans for village renewal and community development (M7.6):** These include measures to revitalise town centres and create or develop leisure, cultural or educational facilities.

(2) Integrated strategies: In 2017, the Austrian Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management set out a Master Plan for rural areas based on a participative process. It includes focus areas and measures to make rural areas fit for the future. These touch on the concept of Smart Villages on the following focus areas and measures: Digitisation / Modern Technologies, health care, supplying elderly people, expansion of e-health and telemedicine².

(3) Project Examples:

Social innovation (Leader/CLLD)³:

- **"Nachbarschaftshilfe PLUS - neighbourly help PLUS":** In municipalities of Burgenland, as part of a community cooperation project called "Nachbarschaftshilfe PLUS", social services (travel and delivery services, visiting services, walking services, temporary childcare, an information desk on social issues) are offered. They are coordinated by part-time office workers and run by

<https://www.bmvit.gv.at/telekommunikation/breitband/foerderung/> (German only)

[Note: The Master Plan is not yet fully implemented. The specifics of its implementation may depend on the priorities of the next Austrian government.]

³ (Project details only available in German)

volunteers. For clients, these services are essentially free. <https://www.zukunftstraumland.at/projekte/1957>

- **“Engagiert sein – Being Engaged”**: Civic engagement is fundamental to village communities. Being there for each other is the “glue” that holds these societies together. Voluntary civic engagement (or volunteering) can be used to mobilise social solidarity. For this, “volunteer coordinators” are needed to induct and coach other volunteers. As part of the “Being Engaged” project, five communities have set a clear example of civic engagement and used coordinators to mobilise

their commitment. Over three years, volunteer coordinators will be introduced, trained and mobilised in villages welcoming volunteers. These individuals will follow a seminar programme to prepare them for their task. <https://www.zukunftstraumland.at/projekte/1794>

FUNDING: EAFRD

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SOCIAL ENTERPRISE STRATEGY (UK)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Scotland’s 10-year social enterprise strategy was developed in partnership with representatives from the sector. The strategy plays an important role in ensuring support for community-led initiatives in rural Scotland. Social enterprises are ‘businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are reinvested for that purpose in the business or the community,’ rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders or owners.

Social enterprises are different from traditional voluntary organisations in that they aim to deliver their social purpose mainly through trade. There are a range of social enterprises, including community care providers, co-operatives, credit unions, development trusts, housing associations and social firms. Social enterprises are particularly important in rural Scotland, with 34% of Scotland’s social enterprise activity being conducted by only 18% of the nation’s population. Social enterprises play an important role in the fabric of Scotland’s rural communities, running activities ranging from managing land and buildings to delivering vital services, such as child care, local shops and fuel filling stations.

This variety of social enterprises plays an important role in sustaining rural communities. There are around 3 000 social enterprises in Scotland at different stages of development, from small start-ups to well-established businesses with multi-million-pound turnovers. The combined turnover of social enterprises has been estimated at around £1 billion a year, accounting for a

significant contribution to the Scottish economy. Within the rural context, the social impact and contribution to sustaining vital services is particularly important.

The Scottish Government worked with representation from the sector to develop the strategy, which is the start of a process to create an environment where social enterprise can flourish. This strategy highlights the important contribution social enterprises can make to life in Scotland. It includes contributions to economic growth and business development, delivering services focused on the needs of people, regenerating and empowering people in deprived communities, and playing a major role in supported employment. An action plan has been developed to deliver support to social enterprises in Scotland to continue to build the social and economic benefits from this method of community-led action.

MAIN RESULTS

Development of strategy and action plan to provide support to social enterprises across the country, including business support, start-up support, raising the profile of social enterprises among the wider public, social finance, collaboration and reaching markets.

FUNDING: National funding

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SMART NETWORKING FOR RURAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (UK)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Social enterprises play an important role in the rural economy and social fabric of rural communities. Social enterprise leaders often work in challenging circumstances with reduced public sector finance and increasing needs for services and support. The benefits of networking, peer support and collaboration are recognised by most, however the challenges of rural geography can be a barrier for engagement.

The smart networking pilot aims to explore how digital technology can support greater interconnection between social enterprises, building resilience and capacity through collaboration, peer learning and network support. We aim to develop a digital support framework that can facilitate this networking, peer support and collaboration, which will increase rural access to support, learning opportunities and engagement. The project remains in early stages of

development and we are seeking partners to bring learning from across Europe to inform its pilot work.

MAIN RESULTS

Anticipated outcomes at development stage:

- Increased networking and collaboration across social enterprises in the rural context and engagement with national partners
- Increased knowledge, understanding and capacity, through peer engagement, learning and access to support
- Increased resilience ensuring sustainability across a range of services being delivered by social enterprises in rural communities

FUNDING: EU funding and national funding

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SELF-GOVERNANCE IN THE VILLAGE OF KONINGSLUST (NL)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The Community Network of Koningslust was established in 1993. The Network supports the process of developing liveability and quality of life in villages. Over the course of four distinguishable periods, Koningslust developed into a strong self-governing village. At the start in 1993, the agricultural economy in Koningslust declined. This downturn coincided with other historical challenges including social individualisation, an aging population, low confidence in the government, and decreasing confidence in the community's own capabilities.

Challenging times raised challenging questions. How can we cope with the future? Is there still a feeling of community? How do we engage inhabitants in improving their quality of life? The Community Network came to realise that liveability is a responsibility of inhabitants themselves. Through the appeal of the Network, inhabitants set out a plan for 10 years, with the Community Network as its process manager.

First, infrastructural projects were conceived, with a 10-year lead time, as a pre-condition for social progress.

The City Council and a welfare organisation supported these initiatives. In 2001, inhabitants were surveyed on the liveability of their village. The results provided the basis for a new vision for the village that included 22 practical projects. The village notably set out to reconstruct its centre, build a new multifunctional community hall, modernise its elementary school, and boost community care for the elderly. Local government oversaw some of these projects. Others, like building the community hall, were performed by village inhabitants themselves.

The year 2007 saw the start of a new phase in the development of the village. Most of the 22 original projects were either finished or nearing completion. The subsequent goal was to improve social cohesion in the village. A dialogue with 120 inhabitants resulted in the emergence of 15 new projects. These initiatives included better use of the community hall, improving communication with inhabitants, the role and position of youths including the role of the elementary school, the vitality of village clubs, traffic-safety and public transportation, social behaviour and values, outdoor sport accommodation. Again, the lead time for these

projects was 10 years and, after 7 years, most of the plans were underway or completed. In 2013, a new round of planning began. After physical and social goals, this time the projects addressed issues in mental wellbeing.

MAIN RESULTS

The process has led to a strong increase in public confidence and in greater involvement of inhabitants in village life. Active inhabitants have collaborated with authorities and influenced local policy. Their involvement has notably led to a more conscious attitude towards life and broader thinking across village borders. It has made inhabitants more tolerant, analytical, socially liberated, and has also boosted local skills and capabilities. These active inhabitants also maintain a strong social network that includes detached and vulnerable members of the community.

The village put forward key points of self-governance, notably agreeing that everyone involved is a member of the community and is needed to keep the village

liveable. Inhabitants must visit their neighbours to keep them involved. They should take notice of others and of their point of view. They should step back and make room for others to grow, give others credit for their achievements, and celebrate success together. The village agreed that success leads to trust, and that patronising is counter-productive. In brief, only the village inhabitants can define the future of the village. The city council just facilitates the actions of inhabitants. That requires a rebalancing of the local government:

- From a government that solves problems to a government that supports inhabitants to solve problems
- From an assertive and prominent government to a restrained and cooperative one

FUNDING: National funding

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EU RESEARCH



SOCIAL INNOVATION IN MARGINALISED RURAL AREAS (SIMRA)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas (SIMRA) seeks to advance social innovation and innovative governance in agriculture, forestry and rural development. It takes a particular interest in marginalised rural areas across Europe, with a focus on the Mediterranean region. A database of good practices, case studies and innovation actions can be found online. <http://www.simra-h2020.eu/>

MAIN RESULTS

- Database of good practices of social innovation
- Case studies start in October 2017
- Innovation actions

FUNDING: Horizon 2020

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SOCIAL INNOVATIONS IN STRUCTURALLY WEAK RURAL REGIONS (RURINNO)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

RurInno acknowledges social enterprises as promising but often neglected drivers of social innovations in structurally weak rural regions. Social enterprises strive to tackle social problems and to stabilise and improve living conditions in these regions. Reports show that, in spite of their key role and past achievements, social entrepreneurs still lack specialised training and education, a supporting infrastructure and recognition. Against this backdrop, RurInno aims to:

- Strengthen the skills and the innovative capacity of social entrepreneurs operating in rural regions,
- Improve the knowledge of how social innovations are implemented in rural regions and
- Raise awareness of social entrepreneurship in rural regions in order to foster enabling environments for their activities.

<http://rural-innovations.net/>

MAIN RESULTS

The partners are pursuing three objectives together:

- Promote knowledge transfer between research and practice
- Improve empirical knowledge of conditions for social innovations in rural areas
- Increase the visibility of work conducted by social enterprises in politics and society

FUNDING: EU, Horizon 2020, MSCA, RISE.

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CREATING ECONOMIC SPACE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION (CRESSI)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The CRESSI (Creating Economic Space for Social Innovation) project explores the economic underpinnings of social innovation with a focus on how policy and practice can enhance the lives of the most marginalised and disempowered members of society. Overall, the project takes an institutionalist view of key issues, exploring the drivers and structures that lead to marginalisation and disempowerment. This research also aims to set out how interventions drawing on social innovation can address major economic, social and power imbalances and inequalities.

MAIN RESULTS

Key themes addressed by this project include:

- How markets relate to the poor, the marginalised and the vulnerable

- What are the drivers of, and barriers to, social innovation in various institutional settings within markets and beyond them
- What is the role of public policy instruments in developing finance structures and wider ecosystems to support the development and growth of social innovation
- How the impact of social innovation can be captured and measured at the organisational and national level

FUNDING: FP7

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MULTISERVICE HUBS



CROWDSOURCING IN A SMART VILLAGE, ARCTIC CIRCLE (SE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

How much can a village do with its own resources? Vuollerim by the Arctic Circle is a living example of crowdsourcing and social village capital. The idea is built on strengthening the local economy and local development. All local community-based businesses reinvest 100% of their profits into further growth of their company and into the local economy. Teamwork is the key.

The phenomenon of crowdsourcing, the power of creating things together, has been around for a long time in Vuollerim, a small village in the heart of Swedish Lapland. Vuollerim has about 800 inhabitants, 60 companies and 40 non-profit organisations. Traditionally the district has embraced entrepreneurship and private initiative. Vuollerim has taken advantage of the kind of local resources and capabilities that exist in every community, and has put them to good use. This tradition carries on with exciting new projects emerging all the time.

This 3-minute film on crowdsourcing in Vuollerim showcases examples. It was notably presented at SOCAP

Europe in Amsterdam in 2011 to the panel on "How you turn your city into a place for innovation".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBbaq8rdCPY>

MAIN RESULTS

The main point that Vuollerim intends to share with the world is that every neighbourhood, village, company or municipality can follow its lead with their own resources.

Examples of projects supported include Economic Associations, VIVA - Visioner In Vuollerim Area, Hotel, Lapland Vuollerim Welcomes You, Artisan Food House, The Village Team, Arctic Circle Products, Vuollerim's Charter School, New Thinking - a Youth Project, Dare to be yourself - a Musical, The World's Northernmost Go-Kart Track, Guinness World Record in Ice Lanterns.

FUNDING: Private resources and village capital and lot of voluntary work

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LISDOONAN RECREATION & DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (IE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The Lisdoonan Group are a community based, bottom-up association that works on making its local small village more sustainable. The objectives of the Lisdoonan group include building:

- A housing development of 14 units for older people to live in a safe supportive environment equipped with communal areas and laundry facilities
- A village shop / cafe
- A community childcare facility to support young working parents
- A pub / community centre which provides cultural and social facilities

The Lisdoonan area suffered economic decline and a decrease in population. The group sought assistance through LEADER animation from their local LAG. It

conducted a needs analysis and set out a development plan. Interventions received funding from different sources over a period of 5 to 7 years. The group started its activities by purchasing land and sourcing funding for a community centre.

MAIN RESULTS

The Lisdoonan Group have delivered projects that address rural decline and help make their village more sustainable:

- Community centre and local pub
- Community shop and cafe
- Social housing complex for older people (14 units + communal areas and laundry facilities)
- Childcare facility for young working parents

All the above now make Lisdoonan a more attractive place to live. New facilities attract more young couples

to live in the village. It also improves the quality of life of older people, helping them to live independently in their homes and to remain within their community. The results are fostering a strong sense of local community.

The village shop project is a social enterprise that receives financial support from local government. The shop employs seven people with disabilities through a supported employment approach. Many of these workers had never been formally employed before. The village shop has brought them into the labour market.

Ireland has a well-developed model of Community Employment where people who are unemployed or under-employed are offered employment opportunities in community organisations. The Lisdoonan group

makes full use of this opportunity. It helps provide basic services in the village, such as caretaking in buildings.

Through the CLLD animation approach of the LAG, the group has been able to tap into a number of support schemes which have enabled them to make many of their projects attainable and sustainable.

FUNDING: EU and national funding

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COMMUNITY SHOP - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The project arose from the 'Counter Revolution' conference. The conference focused on the theme promoting 'community shops' and was run by five Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the southeast of Ireland. Community shops emerged as a response to the continuing closure of old shops in rural parts of Ireland. The aim of the project is to fill the social gap left by their loss. Rural shops offer more than retail services. They often provide the social point around which communities gather and identify.

Counter Revolution was funded by both LEADER and national funds. Approximately 200 community activists and agency representatives took part in the conference. Following its success, the Local Action Group (LAG) partners set out to develop and sustain community-led shops, and resolved that cooperation and sharing experiences and resources in a network was the best option. As no single LAG had the 12 community shops that are thought to be necessary to sustain group costs, conference delegates founded a regional entity to build greater critical mass.

The success of the project hinges on the development of more community retail centres in the five LAG regions. Growth was initially delayed due to the hiatus between LEADER programmes, but has since moved forward, with some regions notably investigating options for a LEADER cooperation project. Their application is due for submission in early 2018.

MAIN RESULTS

- The conference promoted the concept of the community shop and its potential critical socio-economic role in rural communities
- The network will provide a framework to sustainably support the development of individual shops and the burden sharing of costs and responsibilities

FUNDING: EU and national funding

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VILLAGE SHOP: A MEETING POINT OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SERVICES (FI)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

In Finland the village shop is a rural shop, with a sales floor smaller than 400 square metres. The vital village shop helps to retain important services in sparsely populated areas. It adds vitality and attraction to a community. The village shop can function as a channel to a wide service network.

The main objective of the project was to reform the operations model of the village shop so that local inhabitants and other customers (e.g. summer dwellers) can benefit from versatile 'service packages' of private and public services.

A total of 12 village shops from separate villages and municipalities were targeted. Together, they represented four different Finnish supermarket chains. In many village, shops already offered supplementary services like postal services, cafes, lottery tickets, petrol stations and car repairs, or pharmacies and medical practices. However, none had branched out into offering public services (except for one recycling point). The project implemented innovations through cooperation between private and public institutions.

The shops in the project started providing services such as the delivery of purchases, catering services and customer delivery of municipal food. They provided internet access points to municipal and public e-services, electronic information boards on municipal and commercial news, pharmacy and medical practices, collection points for e-pharmacies, postal and parcel services, and amusement machines. To guide these developments, it was first asked to shopkeepers, village associations and the municipality what the village shop means, what private and/or public services are desired, and what benefits can be harnessed by concentrating services under the same roof, or by breaking

administrative silos. Depending on results, negotiations continued with the relevant service providers.

Some services introduced by the project remained in operation even after the project ended. The most popular included electric information boards at 5 village shops, postal services, travel and parcel services, internet access points, and medicine cabinets.

MAIN RESULTS

The project shed light on how to assess local needs for services and translate these needs into economically feasible solutions. The experience can be broken down into eight steps:

1. Identifying locals who are willing to develop their own local services
2. Choosing pilot municipalities which have the ability and will to see the project through
3. Estimating needs for services by the municipality and locals
4. Presenting services offered by local supplies
5. Concluding the agreement with the municipality
6. Accepting applications for project funding from local suppliers who do not reach market-based agreements to carry out their services with the municipality
7. Reaching an agreement between municipalities and local suppliers
8. Implementing the project

FUNDING: EAFRD

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CLOSE SERVICE CENTER (CSC) INNOVATION CAMP (FI)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The main objective is to create a new generation of rural services, create new entrepreneurship ventures for these services and find multi-actor models to achieve profitable businesses through Close Service Centre (CSC). These centres should manage to deliver both market-based and public services to rural communities and businesses.

For this, the project will invite different kinds of business actors for a two-day camp. During the camp, participants would prepare a business model and agree on its piloting. The objective would be for new players to spot possibilities for turning a profit in areas which have proven unprofitable for service providers in the past. CSCs would act as local multiservice centres. The model would not rely on public money but would grow on sound business logic.

The role of digitisation and logistics in this endeavour is crucial. The CSC building would be owned and operated by a real estate investor and possibly financed by a local crowdfunding campaign - like a kind of rural mall. CSC would be tailored to local needs.

Different kinds of service providers will be invited to help plan the innovation camp, including private schools, leaders of business services, day care providers, social-healthcare companies, local food e-market companies, logistics developers, crowd-funders, real estate experts, event organisers, a virtual gym operator, a digital hub expert, hotel chains, stores and pharmacies, remote office experts, restaurants and cafes, and biogas distributors.

MAIN RESULTS

The main result is to develop a new model for providing rural services. In Finland, this project is notably linked to social-healthcare reforms. These reforms offer market actors opportunities to provide services which are currently delivered by state or municipal services.

FUNDING: EAFRD

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MULTIFUNCTIONAL MARKET PLACES (EE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The aim of the project is to renovate a building in Tõrva's market complex. It is planned to have a farm shop and a cafe-kitchen. The renovated building will take into account the local milieu and history to better express its regional identity.

The cafe-kitchen offers catering services and uses local food products to make its meals. In addition, offers food, and holds workshops and thematic events 1-2 times per month. After the building's renovation, facilities will include an integrated market complex with an indoor and outdoor market open all year round.

Mulgi market tries to be flexible and cooperative with local community activities and to offer added value during bigger community events - for example organising an evening terrace cafe, follow-up events after bigger community events, or offering breakfast.

The project helps to involve young people that are interested in entrepreneurship, encourages amateur activities in the kitchen, and allows cooperation with

social care servants on carrying out learning activities about cooking and food. It is also involving student companies to make market related activities more popular among young people.

MAIN RESULTS

The result of establishing a farm market is having a point of sale for selling products made by local small producers, farmers and handicraft makers. In addition, it acts as an intermediate between producers and locals for selling and buying local food using a short supply chain. The aim of the project is to continuously develop community services and to create well-working cooperation ties between different organisations. It also allows people to use well-equipped rooms for different activities.

FUNDING: EAFRD

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PROMOTING COWORKING (COWOCAT RURAL) (ES)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Coworking is a new way of working that allows independent professionals, entrepreneurs and SMEs from different sectors to share the same physical and virtual work space. In the city of Barcelona, co-working spaces are increasingly popular and the network COWOCAT was put in place to connect them.

The project promoters thought that rural coworking spaces could stimulate economic activity and help maintain the population in rural areas in Spain where abandonment is a real threat. Therefore, the project aims to generate employment in rural areas by offering new opportunities to professionals and entrepreneurs that can be attracted by the better quality of life and reduced living costs in rural areas

This new way of working offers an opportunity for professionals to work in a collaborative space without moving away from a rural environment. It could also attract more people to live in rural areas.

The most interesting finding of the project was that it is more important to have motivated professionals than an available space. As coworkers often rely on ICT in their work, the availability of internet and broadband access in rural areas is also vital to spreading the coworking philosophy.

MAIN RESULTS

- 14 coworking spaces have been created from 2014 to 2016
- More than 130 professionals are linked to these coworking spaces
- Small success stories included examples of families staying in a rural area for a holiday while a parent had to connect to their work via a co-working space

FUNDING: EAFRD

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DIGITAL AND ICT



KILKENNY BROADBAND ACTION GROUP (IE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Kilkenny Broadband Action Group (KBAG) was formed in 2013 in response to the consistent poor quality of broadband infrastructure in the county - a problem shared across rural Ireland. KBAG includes members from bodies with an interest in rural and local development, including Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, Kilkenny local authority, as well as community and business representatives. It has organised visits to broadband initiatives elsewhere in the EU, including in the UK and Finland.

During its research, KBAG concluded that rural areas needed to pursue a future-proofed 'fibre to the premises' system if it was to remain attractive to businesses, residents and visitors, and keep them from moving to cities and large towns. The group is now seeking to partner with a commercial broadband operator and a community group. Together they will install a local fibre loop that will be owned by the community and connected to fibre-enabled cabinets owned by the provider. This new infrastructure will provide the necessary back-haul facility for rural areas to connect to the internet at competitively high speeds.

The proposal addresses the twin barriers to rural fibre deployment:

- 1) Reducing the cost to the commercial provider of installing the necessary fibre in the community
- 2) Ensuring the freedom to the community to own and control its purchase of broadband services

KBAG hopes to reach an agreement in 2018 and start developing a pilot later that year or in early 2019. It is interested in partnering with other LAGs in both Ireland and elsewhere in the EU.

MAIN RESULTS

- Investigation and decision on the optimum broadband solution for rural communities.
- Development of knowledge of the technological issues driving and influencing broadband deployment.

FUNDING: EU and national funding

CONTACT: Declan Rice (Kilkenny LEADER Partnership)
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DIGITAL CONFERENCE - TIREE TECH WAVE (UK)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Tiree Tech Wave (TTW) is a twice-yearly event that brings visitors to the Isle of Tiree for a long weekend of technology discussions and hands-on building. The event attracts participants, including artists, technology experts, designers, and philosophers. Together, they bring cutting edge technology to a remote rural area.

MAIN RESULTS

TTW has contributed to practical island projects, including digital signage, communications for youth work, a mobile app for local heritage, and reinventing applications for disused telephone boxes. The event has led to numerous academic collaborations, projects and

publications. These have helped fulfil its broader aim of informing the wider technology community about the needs of rural areas.

Some of these outcomes are listed on <http://tireetechwave.org/outcomes/>

FUNDING: Some funding from Nesta (UK innovation funding), some from island funds, but largely self-funding through non-local participant fees (islanders attend free)

CONTACT: Alan Dix (Tiree Tech Wave)
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SMART DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF VILLAGES IN THE ALPINE SPACE (EU)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Alpine space rural communities are at risk of a brain drain. The regions are deprived of highly needed jobs, decent provision of services, and they lack the kind of business climate that favours entrepreneurship and societal innovation. Digitalisation now offers opportunities to overcome the handicaps of remote locations. It could help Alpine villages access new markets, create a more positive image of their region, increase the attractiveness of their territory, nurture innovative learning ecosystems, and ultimately create new jobs and business opportunities.

However, the digital divide between rural and urban areas has spread in recent years. Whereas Smart City initiatives have emerged in many urban centres and agglomerations in Europe, rural Alpine areas have been left behind. A Smart Village approach for mountain areas could unlock the potential of local actors to make their region a more attractive place to live and work.

The project aims to improve the framework conditions for innovation and the quality of life in villages and small

cities of the Alpine Space through integrated solutions facilitated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). These might include user-driven applied innovation, technically assisted planning, participatory approaches, openly accessible and shareable knowledge, higher efficiency, smarter use of energy, and better everyday smart solutions on different levels through analysis of the Smart Village ecosystem.

The project follows a Smart Village approach as described in the EC Action for Smart Villages launched in April 2017.

MAIN RESULTS

- The project is starting its implementation

FUNDING: EU and national funding

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INCUBATING TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN DIEUZE (FR)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Dieuze is a small town of 3500 inhabitants in Moselle, France. It has suffered many company closures and restructuring plans, as well as the relocation of a local paratrooper regiment in 2011. Local entrepreneurs are needed to regenerate the community and its employment prospects. The 'Saulnois Innovation' initiative was launched to host and support project leaders, provide incubators of technological innovations, and introduce measures to favour local innovation.

Initially, three channels of economic development were supported. These channels are based on technological innovation platforms and "public-private" partnerships. Current innovation projects include:

- Digital services, such as the « Smart City-Rural » territory, and the Lorraine-based Fab Lab "Living Lab", and local tech firms OPEN EDGE and Alchemies, which produce 3D-printers.

- Renewable energy, notably BioMethane « SAS Seille Environment »
- Agro-industrial production, notably through the work of Percids, Asialor, Lucas Perches, and the AFPA research unit at Lorraine University

MAIN RESULTS

The 'Saulnois Innovation' cluster is an integral part of an ambitious knowledge-sharing network. It therefore requires high speed Internet connections on its territory.

FUNDING: National funding (Private/public partnership)

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VILLAGE TOWN OF THE FUTURE (FR)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The Interreg Europe project ERUDITE has organised a series of multi-stakeholder workshops to co-identify, co-design and roll out new digital services in village and market towns. To do so it relies on open innovation processes enhanced by the Social Return on Investment methodology.

During these workshops, SMEs, business support, government agencies, providers of public services, local authorities and consumers in each village identify, prioritize and design new digital services, following the expansion of the High-Speed Broadband network to the area.

Nièvre Numérique supported by the County Council wishes to show how the co-creation of new digital services can prove the viability of new sustainable economic models for public investors and telecommunication operators. The project also seeks to understand their impact by evaluating social and economic returns on investment over the short and long term.

As with all actions undertaken in the context of an Interreg Europe project, the aim is to improve the delivery of the partners' selected Policy Instrument. The project also aims to identify key lessons for the future, and to refine the methodology in view of a broader roll out across rural areas in Nièvre, and throughout the region of Burgundy-Franche-Comté at large.

During a consultation session, as part of an initial pilot project in the market town of Lormes, local stakeholders identified six key services and project areas to address:

1. A Smart Work Town that built on the town's existing digital training and business hub
2. An e-medical centre

3. A multi-functional public media, video and cinema centre
4. A media library and study space
5. A distribution and collection hub for local consumers, farmers and food processors
6. An e-tourism hub. Overall, Senior Health and Well-Being has been the single most prioritized service area

MAIN RESULTS

To date the initiative has enabled the County and individual villages to co-develop a methodology and an action plan to deliver individual e-services and service packages that meet real needs and aspirations within the target territories. The methodology should optimise social, economic and environmental return on investment for all contributing stakeholders.

For example, relating to Senior Health and Well-Being, the pilot process identified a range of services currently provided within the physical structure of residential and day centres. It is examining how improved coordination and distance-delivered services can be provided in a way to enable the maximum long-term 'independence' of seniors and their continued active contribution to the social, economic and cultural life of their community. To use an analogy from cooking, this is a 'deconstructed' recipe looking at how the constituent parts of a complex service can be re-designed and put back together to better serve the needs of the target group and the wider community.

FUNDING: EU funding

CONTACT: Clive Peckham (Nièvre Numérique)

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PROJECTING AND ESTABLISHING AN OPTICAL FIBRE CABLE DISTRIBUTION NETWORK (EE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

More and more of people's daily work and communication (work, important tasks and entertainment) depends on the internet. The technology and networks cannot handle the delivery of

the growing amount of data, and they need modernisation.

This pilot-project is carried out in one of the islands of Estonia – in Hiiumaa, and the aim is to connect private households to broadband internet through optical fibre highway-cables.

MAIN RESULTS

35 households and more than 100 internet users are connected to fast internet thanks to the local municipality, government, local people and LEADER support. The local inhabitants and entrepreneurs can enjoy improved conditions to manage and develop daily life and work. Near Orjaku harbour-Nasva-Kaigutsi route there are 5 active businesses and about 20 active families who need reliable daily access to the internet. As fast internet will offer the opportunity to work from

home, the project will help bring in new permanent residents and create new jobs. It will notably allow “summer residents” to stay and live on the Island all year round.

FUNDING: EAFRD

CONTACT: Meeri Maastik- (NRN)
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DIGITALISING A MUSEUM COLLECTION (EE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The aim of the project is to digitalise a museum collection (exhibits and archives) through a professional photographer. Thereby the digitalised and multilingual exhibits will be available on internet for a wider audience.

The project is planned as a two-year project and the database created can be updated daily with new data if needed. Mahtra farm museum started its activities in 1984 when a thematic exhibition about Mahtra war was opened in the local school. The Mahtra war was a peasant insurgency that took place in the state of Mahtra. Estonian authors have covered this topic in their writings, awarding it an important place in Estonian cultural history.

The farm museum was officially opened in 1970. In addition to its exhibit on the Mahtra war, the museum offers a comprehensive overview of the life of 19th Estonian peasants.

MAIN RESULTS

Thanks to the digitisation process, everybody can now see, read and learn more about museum exhibits. This offers added value to the whole region.

FUNDING: EAFRD

CONTACT: Meeri Maastik- (NRN)
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ENCOURAGING THE USE OF DIGITAL DEVICES (FI)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The goal of the project is to help more people use smart devices and digital services, supporting their participation in modern society. The project aims to help and encourage people to use digital services and tablets, smartphones and computers, and in that way, avoid digital alienation. The project operates across the municipalities of Liminka, Lumijoki and Siikajoki and city of Raahel.

In 2018 the project will organize events in which people can get acquainted with digital services and smart devices, or they can bring their own smart device and ask help if they have difficulties with using it. Also, local banks, insurance companies, libraries and national services like Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of

Finland) and Tax Administration were asked to introduce their services in the events.

The project will start with a helping action in which volunteers help people use digital services, computers and smart devices.

MAIN RESULTS

The project started in September 2017 and focused on recruiting volunteers and training them.

FUNDING: EU and national funding

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ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT



BRAEMAR COMMUNITY HYDRO (UK)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Braemar community owned and managed a hydroelectric plant that produced clean, renewable energy. Braemar Community Limited, a charitable company established for the benefit of the community, undertook the preparatory work to bring the hydroelectric project to fruition. This included technical and financial feasibility studies, evaluation work, obtaining planning consent and licences to extract water, securing an electric grid connection, obtaining Feed in Tariff Preliminary Accreditation, agreeing on terms with land owner, and drafting lease agreement.

This work cost over £100 000 and was funded by a Community & Renewables Energy Scheme (CARES) Loan. An element of the costs (circa £10 000) was funded by Braemar Community Limited itself. A Community Benefit Society - Braemar Community Hydro Limited was set up to raise funding for the construction of the plant and then for its operation and maintenance. This was done through a community share offer.

The full total cost of £800 000 was raised through two share offers with 200 members of the local and wider community investing a minimum of £100 each. The build cost was approximately £500 000, grid connection was a further £100 000, repayable loans to CARES and BCL for the preparatory works was approximately £125 000, with the remainder spent on legal and contingency costs. The plant was built over the winter of 2015/16,

and during the worst storm in living memory. It began generating electricity in the summer of 2016.

Income from the hydroelectric plant stems from energy sold to electricity suppliers and from Feed-in-Tariff schemes offered by the UK government to promote renewable energy technologies.

The surplus from the scheme after rent and running costs is divided between a payment back to members of the community benefit society and a community benefit fund. Money from the fund is then distributed to further projects and initiatives within the local community by Braemar Community Limited.

MAIN RESULTS

The plant generates approximately 330 MWh of energy per annum, displacing the equivalent of 200 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year whilst providing enough electricity to power approximately 100 homes. The plant was delivered to design and within budget. It runs a profit, which is directed to a community benefit fund for distribution within the local community.

FUNDING: CARES, National Park and private shareholders

CONTACT: Simon Blackett (Braemar Community Hydro)
simon.blackett@btconnect.com



THE VISION FOR THE NORE RIVER (IE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The River Nore is one of the major rivers of the Kilkenny region. The Nore Vision is an initiative by Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (KLP) to bring together the wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the use, conservation and development of the entire catchment (main river, tributaries and drainage area) to a shared vision for the Nore.

The Vision will facilitate the sustainable development of the river system, while protecting and adding value to its natural environment and to other local attractions that make it desirable for development in the first place.

These objectives will be long-term and 'generational' in their time-frame.

All the statutory agencies with responsibility for elements of the river system have agreed to cooperate on the development of the Nore Vision. They include authorities on water quality, biodiversity, invasive species, fish stocks, heritage, flooding, and development planning regulation. Community-based groups such as city, town and village communities living on the river system, environmental NGOs, recreational user groups (anglers, walkers, canoeists...), farmer representative bodies, businesses and elected public representatives

are also part of the consultation and commitment process.

As the River Nore catchment is a natural system that stretches across administrative boundaries, the project's coverage has been widened to include neighbouring local action group regions. KLP is leading the project in cooperation with its neighbour.

MAIN RESULTS

1. Greater awareness of the influence and potential that river catchments have on the quality of life of a region
2. Shared understanding among all stakeholders, and particularly among statutory agencies, so that they

can benefit from cooperating and sharing resources

3. Greater acceptance and enthusiasm from the community, land-owners and the NGO sector on possibilities for the river, and a greater understanding of the rationale for regulations such as the EU's Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive

FUNDING: EAFRD

CONTACT: Declan Rice (Kilkenny LEADER Partnership)
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ENERGY, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (ENFOCC) (ES)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

An inter-territorial cooperation project in Catalonia (11 Local Actions Groups) promoted the use of endogenous renewable energy and management plans contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The project was developed along three-axis covering energy management, forest management and biomass and climate change. Activities included the promotion of the benefits of using energy plans in public buildings and the review of service-provision contracts, the development of a software tool (ENEGEST) that notably allows small enterprises to monitor and optimise energy use, the organisation of courses on biomass boilers and the conduction of studies and pilot projects on herd grazing as a forest management tool, and the calculation of the carbon footprint of agri-food products.

In 2018, the project developed an innovative model that calculates the costs of an energy transition at local/regional level by using a simple survey. The model provides data about the investment needed, the economic savings and economic costs at present as well as future and accumulated costs, and the energy needs for a municipality or a region to become energy self-sufficient. Also, the project started to study the spread of electric vehicles in rural municipalities by studying options for installing charging points in rural areas.

The use of ICT tools provided by the project (ENEGEST and Local Energy Transitions) contributed to improving energy efficiency.

MAIN RESULTS

In the 47 towns that have worked on energy management plans, a total of 250 000 EUR of savings has been reported. This budget will be reinvested in measures that will allow each town save even more energy. Also 100 SMEs have used the tool ENEGEST to reduce their energy expenses, and more than 5 774 tons of CO₂ have been saved by installing biomass boilers.

A new economy is emerging in the territories participating in the project. Not all town halls had access to advice to reduce municipal electricity consumption. This stimulated the creation of new businesses that now supply the service to the benefit of all inhabitants.

All the municipalities of Catalonia (947) have been studied under the model Local Energy Transition and 2 municipalities have been studied for the implementation of electric vehicles.

FUNDING: EAFRD

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MOBILITY



INTEGRATED TRANSPORT FACILITATOR (IE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

This initiative aims to contract a suitably qualified party to consult with transport operators, notably for fixed corridor buses, flexible 'demand response transport' systems, taxis, trains, social service providers, community interest groups and regulators. Building on these consultations, the initiative will then develop a 'comprehensive mobility plan' (CMP) for residents, businesses and visitors to the County Kilkenny region.

The CMP (to be completed in the 2nd quarter 2018) will act as the basis of an application to the Irish National Transport Authority to fund an integrated transport pilot in the region that can provide a model for elsewhere in Ireland.

MAIN RESULTS

The initiative demonstrated that integration between public transport modes is a significant part of the solution to mobility in rural Ireland. The development of the CMP will be strategically important in terms of informing and driving public policy. The provision of a transport model tailored to the needs of the Kilkenny region but offering a development template for other regions.

FUNDING: 10% community transport company contribution and 15% Kilkenny Local Authority contribution.

CONTACT: Declan Rice (Kilkenny LEADER Partnership)
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FLEXIBLE WORKING CULTURE - RETHINKING OF WORK, PLACE, TIME AND LIFE (FI)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Rethinking of work, space and time is a workspace solution that aims to reduce the need to commute. The initiative promotes more efficient time management, allows for better concentration on work, and facilitates working and living arrangements. It brings the workplace to people, closer to home, for periodic or for permanent use. In general, flexible workspace solutions can be located in an office complex, commercial building, underutilised property, or in a residential area with good transport connections. A well-equipped, intelligent working environment can be combined with other facilities to boost well-being at work and to support recreational activities.

The FLEX workspace combined working and well-being and helped revitalise rural regions. In the country village model, the office space is packaged with accommodation and well-being at work and recreational activities offered by local service providers.

The flexible working week should be spent on everyone's own terms. Silence and peacefulness also outside of work can be important to many people.

Workers often requested contact with locals and local entrepreneurs. Of the services offered, boat trips around the archipelago proved particularly popular. Most workers were looking for an ambiance that was different to what they were used to at home. For many, the archipelago offered a new experience.

Flexible working aims to cut down on interruptions in the regular working day. In the Flex experiment, work was carried out from archipelago offices for one week. When there were fewer interruptions, workers managed to concentrate better on tasks that required creativity and innovation.

Work tasks involved creating new products and ideas. Workers benefited from gains in well-being at work and higher productivity.

MAIN RESULTS

The purpose of the project was to tempt more recreational residents, workers, employees, employers, entrepreneurs and companies to visit Finish islands during their off-season to telework from there and, in so

doing, to boost their innovation and invite them to interact with the local community.

Another purpose was to find out how flexible work arrangements increase the use of local services, how they encourage the development of new service concepts, how they encourage workers to move to rural municipalities permanently, to promote corporate growth, and to counteract imbalances in employment.

The project found suitable locations near villages to conduct its "Flexperiments". In these areas, accommodation and working places as well as access to food and other services was also available outside the holiday season. Twelve of these locations were used.

FLEXPERIMENTERS:

- 54 interested companies/organisations, mostly micro-size enterprises and SMEs
- 52 flexperimenters from 25 companies / organisations visited in archipelago

- Lines of business: bakery, media, social and health, wellbeing, medical, graphic design, land use planning, fitness, coaching, translating, publishing, lighting, advertising, research, architecture
- Mainly from Southern Finland + Mariehamn (Ål), Laulasmaa (Est)
- Information came from the Federation of Finnish Enterprises (infoletter, web), newspapers, media, social media, personal networks
- Final report available from Sami Tantarimäki (UTU Brahea)

FUNDING: Central Baltic Interreg IVA 2007-2013, Archipelago and Islands sub-programme

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A MOBILE ANIMAL CLINIC (EE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

There was a need to find new solutions because the previous rental agreement of pet veterinary clinic had ended. A client-survey was conducted, which showed the need to be closer to clients and to offer the service in different villages.

The mobile clinic makes it possible to visit clients at any time in any location. The new service is unique and brings a new veterinary ambulance service to the area. Clients of the new service include both veterinary clinics in the Järva county, and owners of farm animals. There are 1 200 pets registered in the area. Before this project, no similar service was on offer in Estonia. Now veterinary services are available in rural areas and located close to potential clients.

The project's output is a ready-to-use mobile veterinary service offered in northern parts of Järva county. The

mobile pet clinic was purchased at the entrepreneur's own costs. It is a closed van with clinical equipment (closets, shelves, chairs, table, pneumatic table) necessary to provide veterinary services. The project helped purchase these accessories.

MAIN RESULTS

The main result is the improved quality of products and services offered on location. These new treatment opportunities could create jobs for other veterinarians. In addition, the project offers the possibility for veterinary students to undergo practical training in the mobile clinic.

FUNDING: EAFRD

CONTACT: Meeri Maastik- (NRN)
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THE MOBILE CINEMA (EE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The project helped to purchase modern mobile cinema equipment, notably a cinema projector, a mobile screen, speakers, pop-up tents for cinema visitors, and chairs. Thanks to the purchased equipment it is now possible to show movies in new places.

The furniture and tents can also be used for other events. The project purchased a simple professional photo camera to make documentaries and a video chronicle. The equipment is making it possible to offer film-making services and to organise film-making workshops, where young people plan and create movies. The aim of the project is to bring together

people around this mobile cinema and to organise leisure time activities.

MAIN RESULTS

The project helps to involve and stimulate young people's own initiatives in film-making, and to film a local video chronicle and documentaries. The project also helped to present this service in other areas. It reduced the need for local people to drive to bigger towns to go to the cinema.

FUNDING: EAFRD

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HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE



BRAEMAR CARE INITIATIVE (UK)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The Braemar Care Initiative (BCI) was developed in response to community concerns regarding the lack of care provision in Braemar (UK), and was highlighted in the Community Action Plan. The BCI aims to meet the care and support needs of the elderly and vulnerable members in the community in a timely and appropriate way, keeping people in their homes and within their community for longer. The Braemar Care Initiative (BCI) has 5 main deliverables:

1. To identify and understand the health and social care needs of the Braemar area community
2. To forge effective partnerships which facilitate the aims of the BCI and in particular top-quality health and social care, and support for the local community
3. To develop and maintain effective communications which fully involve the local community, partners and key stakeholders in the initiative
4. To use local knowledge to assist in the development, coordination and maintenance of a multi-agency, multidisciplinary structure, and an organisation which provides high quality care and support and creates employment, training and development opportunities for local people, particularly through the Self-Directed Support Scheme
5. To work closely with agencies and individuals involved in providing direct care services to ensure the delivery of innovative and sustainable health and social care to the local community. This care should be safe, flexible, consistent and affordable, and in line with the highest standards of practice

In due course, the Care initiative will employ an individual who will ensure those needing care have at least one carer assigned to them at appropriate times

for their needs. Recognising that people also need support that does not require a caregiver, this individual will also facilitate a bank of volunteers where appropriate, with the aim of keeping people independent for longer and preventing hospital or care home admission where possible. The BCI works closely with the local GP Surgery and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership to deliver its aims.

MAIN RESULTS

The Braemar Care Initiative is in the early stages of formation but has already responded to a request for a terminally ill patient to receive care at home, allowing her to continue living outside of hospital. Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership was unable to fulfil this request and BCI provided carers to ensure this happened. There were considerable cost savings in having the care provided by the local community compared to individuals travelling from further away or compared to hospital or hospice-based care. The local support also provided psychological benefits to the family knowing that help and support was coming from people close by.

The model used by BCI means that additional care, delivered in the way and at times that suit the patient, offer better value for money. The support BCI provides adds a new dimension to this care provision, and further develops community cohesion and awareness of others.

FUNDING: Currently BCI is funded by a feasibility grant and local donations. Carers are employed by the individual requiring care through Self Directed Support (Option One) with BCI acting as a broker to enable them to access local carers.

CONTACT: Simon Blackett (Braemar Community Ltd)
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SAFETY AT HOME (KAT 2) (FI)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Project Safety at Home 2 (KAT 2) was funded by the Southeast Finland ELY from the EAFRD. For the elderly to live a safer, healthier and more active life at home, security management services need new and better working methods.

This change challenges the current care system. It requires a new operational model based on rapid recognition of emergencies, and a tighter network of organisations providing safety at home. Successfully restructured services require new thinking.

The Safety at Home (KAT 2) project is based on these objectives. Its participants include public organisations, non-profits, private companies, and citizens. The project notably drove the South Carelian Rescue Department and Eksote to pioneer more efficient ways for the many actors working on safety at home to cooperate.

The aim of the Safety at Home 2 (KAT 2) project was to build up a network of actors and create a model to

efficiently share risk-information and enhance the safety of elderly people living at home. Within this context, Housing Safety Cards, which were introduced in 2016, will now be electronic and integrated for the operational actions of a network of actors in the villages Rautjärvi and Parikkala of South Carelia.

MAIN RESULTS

Safety at Home has set up a thriving network of actors involved in home security for the elderly. Participants in the network share tasks. Their responsibilities are clearly defined, and communication among partners flows effortlessly. Security technology is recognised as an integral part of the development of a safe home environment.

FUNDING: EAFRD

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CIVIL SAFETY (FI)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Tackling the challenges of sparsely populated areas means dealing with social inclusion, availability of services and livelihoods. In Lapland, where villages are remote, these challenges are particularly acute due to long distances and a scarcity of resources.

The awarded civil safety approach is an operative model to tackle these challenges in sparsely populated areas. The core of the model lies in wide cooperation among municipalities, the third sector, municipal associations, educational organisations, companies, parishes and the local population. The purpose of the model is to develop social inclusion, availability of well-being services and employment opportunities in rural areas. The focus is on pre-emptive actions. The success and failure of the theme is clearly visible from economic indicators.
www.arcticsafety.fi.

MAIN RESULTS

The project has:

- assembled a wide partnership network at regional, national and EU level (Region of Lapland, 20 municipalities included, Region of Northern Ostrobothnia, 14 municipalities included)
- made progress in tackling poverty and challenging childhood living conditions by raising interest among the wider public
- tackled both challenges of economics and social inclusion by addressing communities within their work place

FUNDING: DG JHA, Fight Against Crime Programme (project: Combat measures against human trafficking in the tourism industry - COMBAT)

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INVOLVING SENIORS IN LOCAL NURSERIES - *ILOINEN KONKKARONKKA (FI)*

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Iloinen Konkkaronkka (*Happy Bunch in English*) is a project funded by The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) in October 2016 to create connections among the residents of Rämsoö, a countryside village in the town of Vesilahti, Finland.

Once a week, local seniors come together to play with the local nursery's children and to also spend quality time with each other. The programme is developed and guided by a professional counsellor. Every participant, including the nursery, has a tablet PC to keep in touch with each other from their homes through Skype and to bring new dimensions to the lives of senior citizens.

MAIN RESULTS

Based on the feedback of participants, the nursery and the community, the project has been a great success.

The community is now more close-knit and weekly get-togethers have been proven to reduce loneliness in an otherwise remote area. The media has covered the innovative idea of combining seniors, children and digital innovation through various channels. The idea of providing spare-grannies and granddads to the children of a small town and vice-versa has shown to be an effective way to create connections between generations and to integrate newly immigrated families. Most of the set goals have already been reached and the rest will be achieved in the far future.

FUNDING: EAFRD

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BRINGING LOCAL SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES TO ELDERLY PEOPLE (FI)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

Kylät Sydämellä is developing new models to bring local services and activities to elderly people in villages in sparsely populated areas near Iisalmi, Kiuruvesi, Sonkajärvi and Vieremä. The two-year project, which started in December 2016, is bringing together service providers and entrepreneurs for the benefit of local populations.

Fortnightly, 'service days' provide day-care with access to hairdressers, massages, pedicures, cafes and library services at the village house. The care part features training and group work activities such as photography, karaoke and quizzes. It offers exercises for memory, and balance, as well as basic health and nutrition advice.

The project involves more than 100 organisations, including local vocational schools and the Red Cross, and improves cooperation among villages and towns. Local radio stations are also involved.

MAIN RESULTS

The project organises recreational activities for elderly people. The activities run for four hours every two weeks. They provide an opportunity to bond with other participants. They are open to all people living in the project area and tend to attract 15-20 participants at each session. Participation costs 10 EUR per session to cover the lunch. Ongoing profits demonstrate the business sense of the model.

Together with the local radio station, the project has also trained 'village reporters', of which there are now 21 producing content for village radio programmes. Their objective is to raise awareness of events taking place in the villages. The content of the radio programme includes interviews of interesting people or local companies, reports from events, poems or descriptions of nature. The local radio station covers a wide area and has become well-known. Additionally, the local newspaper publishes topics one day before the show. All programmes can be accessed through SoundCloud <https://soundcloud.com/radio-sandels/sets/kylaradio>

‘Service days’ have been organised with entrepreneurs, village societies, organisations like the Red Cross, and providers of public services. Residents can plan what kind of services their village needs, and chose when to provide them.

Past events have brought in hairdressers, massage therapists, pedicurists, advisors, and Red Cross representatives to measure blood pressure, blood sugar and offer guidance on health and nutrition. The fire

department has also provided training on what to do in case of a fire. A library also attended one service day, offering the opportunity to borrow new books.

FUNDING: EAFRD

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EDUCATION



INCREASING AWARENESS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AMONG RURAL YOUTH (SCOALA DE LA PISCU) (RO)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The Piscu School offers a fascinating glimpse into the riches of Romanian cultural heritage and values. The school owes its foundation to projects run by the Gaspar, Baltasar & Melchior Association, a cultural and educational non-profit organisation which has been operating since 2006 in a former pottery centre in Piscu village in Ilfov county.

The aim of the project is for younger generations to become more aware of their cultural heritage and more sensitive to its beauty and historical relevance. Activities include workshops, summer schools, conferences, cultural heritage books for all ages, a heritage-focused primary school, anthropological research, and an online cultural platform.

MAIN RESULTS

- Exploring and developing the potential of Piscu village and raising awareness about cultural and local heritage
- Participation in street festivals in and around Bucharest
- Demonstrations of crafts
- An eco-pier, focused on environmental issues

FUNDING: National funding

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ENGAGING YOUTH IN INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN IN SMALL TOWNS - COMMONAGE SUMMER SCHOOL (IE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The aim of the Commonage Summer School was to engage young people from the environs of the small town of Callan in County Kilkenny, in Ireland. From 2013 to 2014, the school ran week-long 'Summer Schools' with national and international students of the same age. These schools provided training and social interaction, and encouraged students to develop a better group appreciation and understanding of the importance of design in the built environment of a small town.

Commonage included modules in building (local trades), awareness of design, micro-interventions, art processes and built environment. Over two weeks, 40 participants got actively and intensively involved in building four temporary structures in the town, which are being developed by four invited teams of architects and artists. The structures were built mostly from local materials and influenced by local culture. They include a cow shed, a bridge and a modern variant on a local vernacular-style iron gate.

The primary benefit of the training was to nurture understanding of the built environment of Callan, with a

particular focus on its derelict sites. The promoters have the goal of developing a permanent school of infrastructure design attached to, or having links with universities in both Ireland and abroad.

MAIN RESULTS

- The development of a greater appreciation of local vernacular design and its possibilities in modern buildings in the local context.
- The development of links to other countries and to people from a variety of backgrounds and skill sets (engineers, artists, architects, community development professionals, etc).
- The establishment of Callan as a place where discussion of design and construction is taken seriously and with the possibility that the town could develop the 'Commonage school' that is desired.

FUNDING: EAFRD

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CULTURE & TOURISM



KILKENNY COMMUNITY FESTIVAL NETWORK (IE)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The Kilkenny Community Festival Network was formed in 2010 from a grouping of six community-run (mostly volunteer) festivals and cultural event organisations active in rural County Kilkenny.

1. Inistioge Summer [Festival](#) (4th & 5th June)
2. Midsummer [Events](#) at Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre (June – September)
3. Abhainn Ri [Festival](#), Callan (23rd – 31st July)
4. Graiguenamanagh Town of Books [Festival](#) (16th – 18th September)
5. Savour Kilkenny Food [Festival](#) (October Bank Holiday weekend)
6. Irish Conker Championship [Festival](#), Freshford (October Bank Holiday)

The network was a response to the realisation that professionally resourced Kilkenny City-based festivals were overshadowing the efforts of smaller towns and villages to attract visitors. The group consequently agreed to cooperate on i) Cultural Development, ii) Promotion of Rural Tourism, iii) Community engagement, iv) Cross promotion/marketing of festivals, v) Sharing and collaboration of resources/expertise.

A key element of the Network's success was the existence of a part-time Trainer/ Coordinator position, part-funded through the LEADER programme. The Festival Network operated effectively as a body for approximately three years but ceased to function after 2012 when the funding ceased. However, good relationships between the rural festivals have continued, and festivals carry on cooperating and sharing equipment.

MAIN RESULTS

- The development of an interest in cooperation and resource sharing among individual rural festivals.
- Increased capacity through training in professional event management skills.
- More professional and sustainable events drawing visitors to rural towns and villages.
- Raising a collective awareness of the potential of smaller rural festivals as a driver for tourism - and of the challenges in sustaining that drive.

FUNDING: EU and national funding

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THE BRAEMAR CASTLE (UK)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The project is the restoration and upgrading of the A-listed Braemar Castle and the consolidation of this community business as a high-quality Visitor Attraction drawing extra revenue to the local area. The Castle was taken over by Braemar Community Limited in 2007, after a period of closure, on a 50-year lease from Invercauld Estate. It was re-opened as a Visitor Attraction in 2008, staffed by community volunteers.

Built in 1628 by the 2nd Earl of Mar as his Highland Hunting Lodge, the historical significance of Braemar Castle comes from both its purpose and use, which have changed over time. Since the community take-over, over

£500 000 has been raised and the roof and chimneys repaired, now making the building watertight. A crowdfunding appeal has just raised £22 000 to kick-start the next stage of the project as part of a 10-year masterplan to upgrade the Castle and visitor services.

The continuing development of the Castle is regarded as an integral part of the Visitor Strategy for the community, alongside other on-going projects. In development are a Highland Games Centre, the restoration of Comper's Victorian masterpiece, St Margaret's Church, as a creative hub, the extension of the Deeside way to Braemar, and the redevelopment and upgrading of the Fife Arms Hotel.

MAIN RESULTS

In year 1, 4 500 people visited this iconic landmark, and each year our visitor numbers have grown steadily. In 2017, the Castle was visited by 13 000 people with a further 34 000 people visiting the grounds. One full time post has been created, along with 3 full-time seasonal posts and a part-time seasonal post. Specialists have been employed to support conservation.

Volunteering opportunities have been generated across skills, including historical research, guiding, gardening, shop work, conservation, event creation and delivery, learning, marketing, social media, book-keeping, and ground-work. Training is given, and ten per cent of the population of the village are involved.

A high quality authentic experience has been created by the local volunteers offering visitors a distinctive experience, a real sense of place and insight into not just the Castle but also the local area. Reviews on TripAdvisor and Google testify to visitor satisfaction.

The Castle has promoted connections and partnerships in a remote area where it is easy to feel isolated. It has been able to connect to networks and other village groups. Joint ticketing is on-going with Balmoral Castle, Lochnagar Distillery, Grampian Transport Museum, Fraserburgh Lighthouse, Crathes Castle, Aberdeen Science Centre and the Macduff Marine Aquarium.

Talks are in progress to create a destination offer for the cruise-ship market from the new Aberdeen South Harbour. The success of the Castle has given the community a belief in what can be achieved.

FUNDING: LEADER, Scottish Government, private

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THE KITCHEN INCUBATOR IN ZAKRZÓW (PL)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

A kitchen incubator is a facility with equipment designed for small processors of agricultural products, caterers or farmers, who can prepare and process their products in a well-equipped area designed for the purpose in accordance with health and safety rules.

One of the best kitchen incubators in Poland is run in Zakrzów by the Social Company "Smaki Gościńca".

MAIN RESULTS

Over 200 people have used the kitchen to date, with 8 businesses and farmers using it regularly. About 100 products have been developed. Its long-term influence has been to promote sustainable agriculture in the region, and higher incomes for farmers.

FUNDING: EAFRD + Swiss-Polish Cooperation Fund, regional and local sources

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MUSEUM OF COOKBOOKS (PL)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The aim of the Museum of Cookbooks is to increase the sales of high quality local food products from LAG Dolina Raby. Social innovation actions include:

- 1) Setting up the social organisation “Dolina Raby” to sell local food products through a 'Sale Club'
- 2) Setting up the Museum of Cookbooks to promote culinary heritage; organising culinary workshops serviced by a social cooperative
- 3) Creating food clusters

MAIN RESULTS

About 20 local food producers involved, and workshops attracting more than 100 participants have been organized.

FUNDING: EAFRD + Swiss-Polish Cooperation Fund, regional and local sources

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WIKIPEDRA: COLLABORATIVE ICT TO PROTECT RURAL DRY-STONE HERITAGE (ES)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The Leader cooperation project “Collaborate4landscape” aims to highlight the value and upgrade rural heritage linked to dry-stone architecture, as an identity element of rural landscapes in Catalonia and other Mediterranean areas, by involving civil society.

Several activities have been started as the recuperation and formalisation of the profession of ‘dry-stone’ artisan, but one of the most successful actions is the platform ‘Wikipedra’ (*Wikistone in English*), that has been linked to a mobile app. The tool allows any citizen interested on the topic of dry-stone architecture to contribute to its localisation and conservation by using a mobile app. Once the element has been tagged and described, it can be visualised and found on a map of Catalonia and 85 municipalities in France.

This tool and collaborative methodology helped improve understanding about the conservation of rural heritage as an indirect service to rural communities.

MAIN RESULTS

- 16 000 elements catalogued in Catalan and French
- Around 1 000 users since the launch of the app
- App downloaded 715 times

FUNDING: EAFRD

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