



Policy Recommendations

Energy Transition and Energy Communities in Rural Areas and for Rural Youth



Introduction

The energy transition offers new opportunities for rural areas and young people, particularly through the development of energy communities; however, rural youth often face structural barriers to accessing information, resources, funding and decision-making spaces, limiting their ability to fully realise this potential and contribute to sustainable local development and community resilience.

This document presents **policy recommendations on energy transition and energy communities in relation to rural areas and rural youth**. They were developed through a **participatory and youth-led process**, gathering inputs from rural youth representatives as a **key outcome of the Policy Committee meeting** within the framework of the project [Powering Change: Empowering Rural Youth for Energy Communities](#).

The policy recommendations **primarily target the European Union level**, with a particular focus on improving **access to energy transition processes and energy communities for rural youth**. At the same time, the document includes **adaptable proposals for national and regional levels**, highlighting the opportunities arising from the link between **energy communities and rural development policies**.

By bringing together the perspectives and experiences of rural youth and youth organisations from across Europe, this document aims to support policymakers, institutions, and stakeholders in developing more inclusive, accessible, and territorially balanced energy policies. Throughout this document, energy communities are understood as key drivers of rural development, employment and local resilience. Ultimately, these recommendations seek to ensure that rural youth are recognised and supported as **active actors in the energy transition**, contributing to sustainable development and social cohesion.

1. Strengthening Knowledge, Awareness and Capacity-Building

Problem:

Limited awareness and understanding of energy production, renewable technologies, and energy communities, particularly among rural youth, creates barriers to engagement and participation.

Recommendations:

- Integrate **energy education** into school curricula (e.g., natural sciences) focusing on renewable energy, energy communities, and local energy models.
- Establish an **EU-supported online portal** offering:
 - Educational modules
 - Country-specific resources
 - Funding information for establishing energy communities
 - Communication materials for awareness campaigns
- Develop **promotional** material (guides, toolkits, templates, visual materials) for youth NGOs to use during open days and community events.
- Encourage **collaboration among European experts**, youth organisations, and national institutions to ensure high-quality and locally relevant educational content.
- Ensure **legislative frameworks** include reskilling and upskilling programmes enabling workers to transition into renewable energy roles.
- Promote the growth of energy communities as **local job creators** across technical, administrative, agricultural, and service roles in rural areas.

2. Improving Access to Funding and Financial Support

Problem:

Many rural youth and communities lack knowledge of available funding and struggle to access financial support for startup energy projects.

Recommendations:

- Create **grants** to support concept development for community energy projects, including feasibility studies and local engagement plans.
- Introduce **targeted funding programmes for youth NGOs** to run local awareness campaigns and build energy literacy.
- Provide **tax incentives**, such as reduced taxation for first-time investments in renewable energy by young people or youth-led organisations.
- Offer a flexible financial incentive to support participation in, and establishment of energy communities.



- Implement **annual energy payments or long-term financial rewards** for young community members committed to renewable energy participation.
- Expand **government-backed initial investment schemes** to support community-level renewable energy transitions.
- Link public funding for private companies to **requirements to assist energy communities** with technical and administrative expertise.

3. Enhancing Technical Support and Guidance

Problem:

Rural communities and youth lack access to technical, legal, and administrative expertise necessary to develop energy community projects.

Recommendations:

- Establish regional or local energy information points or support offices where rural residents, especially youth, can access technical, legal, and administrative expertise on energy community development.
- Organise hands-on learning activities - including excursions, seminars, exchanges and mentorship programmes - to build practical knowledge of renewable technologies, energy communities, and local governance models among rural youth.

4. Reducing Bureaucratic Barriers and Simplifying Procedures

Problem:

Complex procedures, administrative burdens, and unclear regulations slow down or discourage the development of energy communities, particularly for initiatives led by rural youth.

Recommendations:

- Simplify and streamline **permissions and approval processes** for small-scale renewable energy projects.
- Develop **unified planning regulations** across regions to reduce confusion and administrative costs.
- Ensure that user-friendly administrative guidelines are made available through existing EU and national information platforms.
- Promote peer-to-peer administrative support and local knowledge-sharing to assist youth-led initiatives.
- **Reduce regulatory burdens** specifically for youth-led or community-driven projects.

5. Fostering Intergenerational Dialogue and Community Engagement

Problem:

A lack of communication and shared vision between generations hinders collective progress on energy transition in rural areas.

Recommendations:

- Organise **intergenerational workshops** to build shared goals, strengthen trust, and facilitate knowledge exchange.
- Create **common spaces** (physical or digital) where youth and older community members can co-design energy projects.
- Use **national rural events and fairs** to inform broader audiences, including older and younger generations, about the opportunities and benefits of energy communities.

6. Promoting Technological Innovation and Energy Security for rural youth

Problem:

Unstable energy production and low economic margins in rural areas limit opportunities for young people to engage in, benefit from, and lead the energy transition, posing challenges for reliable and sustainable rural energy systems.

Recommendations:

- Support the development of **innovative technologies and community-based renewable-energy technologies that create employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for rural youth.**
- Prioritise **energy storage technologies** to stabilise supply and increase resilience.
- Encourage **energy diversification**, combining various renewable sources to reduce vulnerability.
- Promote technologies to **capture and reuse industrial byproducts** in local energy systems.
- Provide transition support, reskilling and fair redundancy packages for workers in carbon-based sectors, particularly those nearing retirement or transitioning to new roles, to support intergenerationally just transitions.



7. Addressing Land Use Conflicts and Sustainable Spatial Planning

Problem:

Competition for agricultural land and other land uses complicates renewable energy deployment in rural communities.

Recommendations:

- Prioritise **solar panels on existing buildings**, public facilities, stables, machine halls and other non-agricultural structures.
- Support **dual-use models** that combine renewable energy production with agricultural activities such as **agrivoltaics, wind power on farmed land, or biogas produced solely from agricultural waste**, in order to retain food production and minimise competition for land.
- Encourage **offshore wind projects** where suitable to reduce land pressure.
- Establish clear national and EU land-use standards that balance ecological protection, sustainable agricultural production, and renewable energy development, while managing market pressures and competing economic interests.
- Support local bioenergy solutions by enabling farmers and producers to supply energy communities with biomass and other sustainable feedstocks.

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www.ruralyoutheuropa.com
Rue des Deux Églises 14
1000 Bruxelles
Belgium
office@ruralyoutheuropa.com

