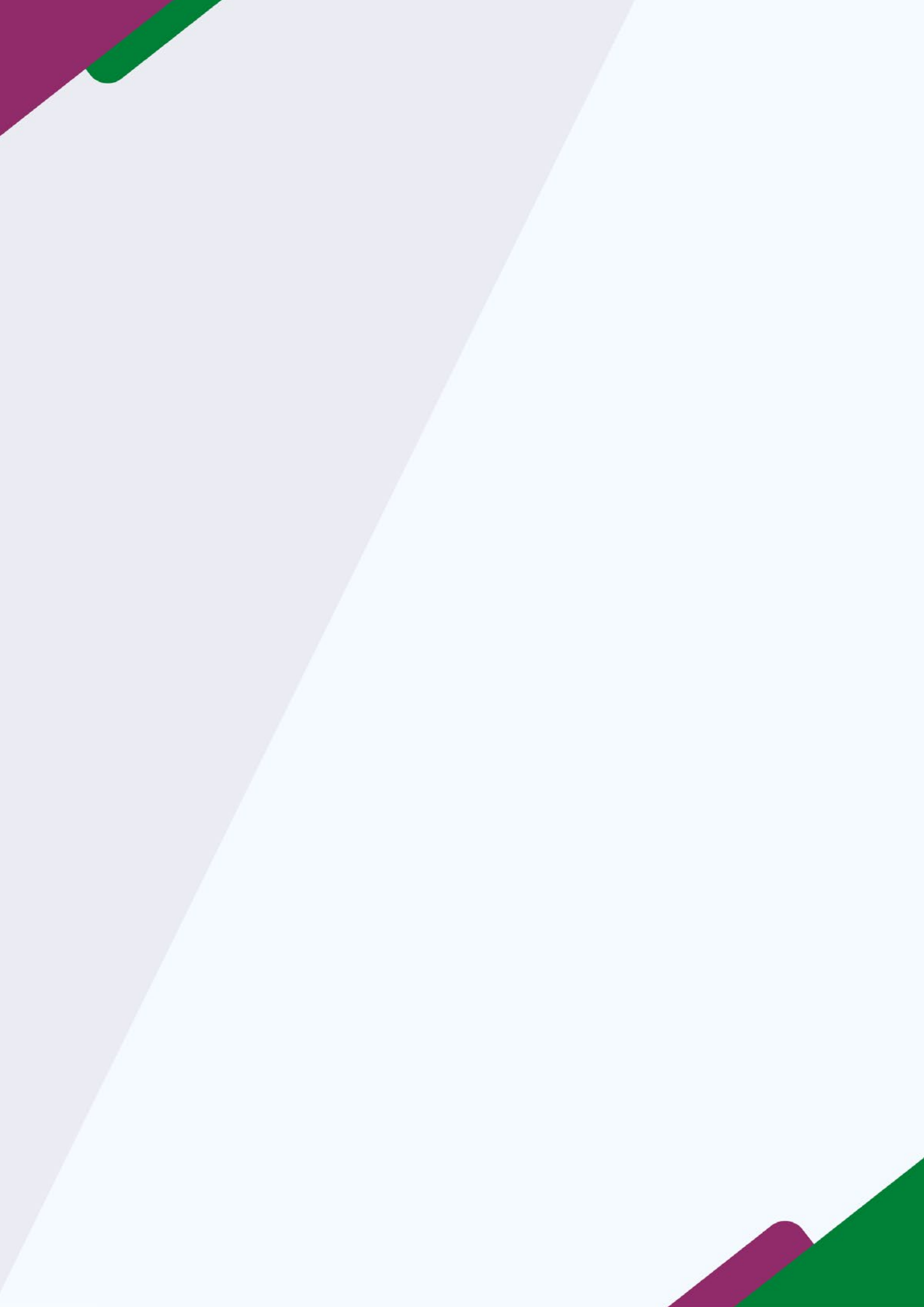




RURAL YOUTH EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2021





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FOREWORD

Linzi Stewart

Rural Youth Europe Chair

Dear members and friends of Rural Youth Europe, on behalf of the board of Rural Youth Europe I submit the Annual Report for the year 2021 for your attention. This report outlines key activities and achievements of Rural Youth Europe during this period.

After the difficult year that was 2020, 2021 brought renewed hope of a return to the physical activities. Rural Youth Europe planned to hold physical events that were postponed from 2020; a Training Course in Budapest in Spring, the European Rally in Slovenia in August and the Autumn Seminar in November in Ireland. The theme for the year was 'Growing Rural Resilience' which, with hindsight, was very apt for 2021.

Our board, staff and host organisations prepared for physical events, with a hybrid format as Plan B and wholly virtual events as Plan C. We watched with anticipation to see how the situation regarding international travel would develop across Europe and eventually reached the difficult decision to cancel the Training Course in Budapest. As summer approached, we reached out

to Member Organisations and it became apparent that travel within countries was still restricted and many remained wary of travel and testing. In addition, vaccine requirements and restrictions varied across Europe and this combination of factors meant that unfortunately a physical European Rally was not possible in Slovenia in August.

Despite this, the local prep team were able to come together and remained motivated to deliver a virtual event, with our first ever virtual European Rally being held in August 2021. The event was a massive success and the perfect example of how rural youth can adapt and overcome challenges, exemplifying the topic for the week of 'Rural Competences' and how rural living often provides a unique skillset which enables young people to be resilient and resourceful.

It was also not possible to bring people together in a physical capacity for the Autumn Seminar so the decision was made to postpone the event to 2022 with the hope that all restrictions will be lifted and the event can be held in person in all its glory.

The General Assembly was also held virtually on Friday 6th August 2021. We said goodbye to Birgit Kuslap, board member for Group 4 Eastern Europe, and welcomed Patricija Prindule from Latvia 4H to the board. Birgit, thank you for your continued commitment to Rural Youth Europe despite the challenges that 2021 brought; you've been an incredible ambassador for rural young people and we can't wait to see you in at the future events. Thanks also to Patricija who joined the board virtually and embraced all aspects of the role. You have been an incredible asset to the board in 2021 and we know you will continue to be in the years to come.

We held a virtual Extra General Assembly online in on 4th November 2021 with an agenda focused on financial matters as

the audits were not ready on time for the General Assembly due to staff changes and delays caused as a result of the pandemic.

In addition to not being able to hold physical events, it was also not possible for the board to meet in person. However technology made it easy to stay in contact, and we had monthly board meetings via Zoom. When the vaccine rollout was almost complete and restrictions consequently eased across Europe, the board were able to meet in person in Dublin, Ireland in November. This was the first time this board had been able to come together in person, and the first physical board meeting since February 2020. The meeting was very productive and we were reminded of the value of meeting together physically.

The year 2021 also saw the introduction of three projects at Rural Youth Europe: COCOREADO, The 25percent project and Together Thursdays. In January 2021 John Gillon joined the staff team as Project Manager for the COCOREADO project and Caroline Clement de Colombieres joined the team as Project Manager for the 25percent project and Together Thursdays. Caroline moved onto pastures new in Spring 2021 and Dan Grist took on the role of Communications Officer to deliver on objectives set out in the 25percent Project and Together Thursdays. Dan also produced the second series of the Rural Youth Europe podcast "Rural Voices."

Spring 2021 also saw our Secretary General Eelin begin maternity leave. Congratulations again to Eelin and her husband on the birth of their baby in June 2021. Nia Lloyd took on the role of Interim Secretary General and Jenni Heinonen remained as Development Manager until moving onto pastures new at the end of the year.

Without a doubt 2021 was a difficult year for the staff team and board alike. Yet, despite

the challenges, we worked together as best we could in the circumstances and continued to progress Rural Youth Europe, speaking up on issues that matter to rural youth across Europe, building a network of motivated and passionate young people who are committed to making a difference and building a better future. We reviewed and updated our strategy, taking time to review the organisation and plan for the future.

I strongly believe that Rural Youth Europe and its mission; "Breaking Boundaries – Building Bridges," has a place in today's society. There is so much opportunity and, as we approach the 65th anniversary of the organisation in 2022, I look forward to seeing how Rural Youth Europe will adapt and evolve to remain relevant and continue to bring young people with an interest and passion for rural areas together to make a difference, not only in the future, but today.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the members, for your active participation throughout the year. It hasn't been easy yet your continued support and contribution helps shape the future leaders of rural youth across Europe. We believe that rural youth does, and will always, play an active role in our society in many different ways and we are

As my mandate will end in 2022 I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the great support during my period as Chairman. It has been an incredibly difficult term in many ways yet the encouragement, guidance and friendship of many within the network has been unwavering and I will be forever indebted to the kindness of many. I will forever support Rural Youth Europe and I look forward to seeing what the future holds.

Linzi Stewart



MEMBERS

GROUP 1

UK & IRELAND



National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) **13,773 members**

YFC Centre, 10th Street, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2LG, UK (England)
www.nfyfc.org.uk



Macra na Feirme

Irish Farmcentre Bluebell, 12 Dublin (Ireland)
www.macra.ie



Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) **1,810 members**

475 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 3BD, UK (Northern Ireland)
www.yfcu.org



Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs (SAYFC) **2,541 members**

Ingliston Young Farmers' Centre, EH28 8NE, Edinburgh, UK (Scotland)
www.sayfc.org



Wales YFC / CFfl Cymru **2,173 members**

YFC Centre, Llanellwedd Builth Wells, LD2 3NJ, Powys, UK (Wales)
www.yfc.wales

GROUP 2

CENTRAL EUROPE



Landjugend Österreich (ÖLJ)

90,382 members

Schauflergasse 6, 1014, Vienna, Austria
www.landjugend.at



Bund der Deutschen Landjugend e.V. (BDL)

100,000 members

Claire-Waldoff-Str. 7, 10117, Berlin, Germany
www.landjugend.de



Agricultural and Rural Youth Association (AGRYA)

Váci út 134/c, VI/28, 1138, Budapest, Hungary
www.agrya.hu



Plattelandsjongeren NL

11,000 members

Bemuurde weerd oz 12, 3514 AN Utrecht, Netherlands
www.plattelandsjongeren.nl.pjnl



Südtiroler Bauernjugend (SBJ)

10,391 members

K.M. Gamper Strasse 5, 39100 Bozen, Italy
www.sbb.it



Slovenian Rural Youth (ZSPM)

3,000 members

Celovska 43, 1000, Ljubljana, Slovenia
www.zspm.si



Schweizerische Landjugendvereinigung (SLJV)

2,819 members

c/o AGRIDEA, Eschikon 28, 8315 Lindau, Switzerland
www.landjugend.ch

GROUP 3

NORTHERN EUROPE



Danmarks Landboungdom and Danish 4H

5,352 members

Agro Food Park 15, Skejby, 8200, Aarhus N, Denmark
www.4h.dk



Suomen 4H-liitto

43,000 members

Karjalankatu 2A, 00520 Helsinki, Finland
www.4h.fi



Finlands Svenska 4H

3,700 members

Elisabetsgatan 21 B 12, FIN-00170, Helsinki, Finland
www.fs4h.fi



4H Norge

10,554 members

Postboks 113, N-2026 Skjetten, Norway
www.4h.no



Norges Bygdeungdomslag

5,003 members

Schweigaardsgate 34B, oppgang 2, 3. etasje, Grønland, Oslo, Norway
www.nbu.no



Sveriges 4H

9,242 members

Box 2012, 64102 Katrineholm, Sweden
www.4h.se

GROUP 4

EASTERN EUROPE



Eesti 4H

915 members

Allika 2a, 80036, Pärnu, Estonia
www.eesti4h.ee



Umbrella

140 members

Leri Lagurashvili 4, fl 46, Tbilisi, Georgia
www.facebook.com/umbrellageo



Latvijas Mazpulki - Latvian 4H

1,500 members

Ezermalas 28, LV-1014, Riga, Latvia
www.mazpulki.lv



Latvian Young Farmer's Club (JZK)

198 members

Krišjāņa Barona iela 40, Jelgava, Latvia
www.jzk.lv

RURAL YOUTH EUROPE

BOARD MEMBERS

The Board of Rural Youth Europe implements the decisions and policies agreed by the General Assembly, monitors the financial situation, is responsible for employment related matters and supervising staff, and prepares and evaluates the international activities of the organisation.

The board also makes decisions on a strategic level and at the same time monitors and develops the organisation's strategic direction.



Linzi Stewart
Rural Youth Europe Chairman



Niall Evans
Rural Youth Europe Vice Chairman



Siobhan Gallagher
Special Interest Board Member



Elen Williams
Group 1 Representative



Martin Siemen
Group 2 Representative for Central Europe



Iiristiina Heinonen
Group 3 Representative



Patricija Prindule
Group 4 Representative for Eastern Europe

BOARD MEETINGS 2021

As a result of the Covid19 pandemic, it was not possible for the board to meet in person as they usually would. However technology made it easy to stay in contact, and we had monthly board meetings via Zoom. Due to time zones, work and other local commitments, and to avoid 'Zoom fatigue', we often split board meetings over two dates, usually a few days apart.

When the vaccine rollout was almost complete and restrictions consequently eased across Europe, the board were able to meet in person in Dublin, Ireland in November. This was the first time this board had been able to come together in person, and the first physical board meeting since February 2020. The meeting was very productive and we were reminded of the value of meeting together physically.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

26 January 2021
5 March 2021
27 March 2021
20 April 2021
19 May 2021
3 June 2021
17 June 2021
23 June 2021

21 July 2021
28 July 2021
20 September 2021
16 October 2021

PHYSICAL MEETING

26 - 28 November 2021, Dublin Ireland



STRATEGY

RURAL YOUTH EUROPE STRATEGIC APPROACH 2021-2023 YOUTH FOR A SUSTAINABLE RURAL FUTURE

WHAT

In 2021-2023 RYEurope:

- Works as a platform for dialogue on issues that rural youth, organisations and communities face in today's world
- Provides training for rural youth for them to be able to claim their rights and strive for inclusion
- Advocates for rural youth to have equal opportunities

HOW

The tools we use are:

1. Non-formal education and intercultural exchange for rural youth and rural youth organisations
2. Support for learning through communications and materials
3. Policy work

RESPONDING TO CHANGES

Democratic way of life is declining and opinions are becoming more polarised.

How we work on this:

- We strengthen youth participation
- We build good dialogue and offer platforms for it

In the world of opportunities not everyone has equal opportunities

How we work on this:

- We support the building of Inclusive rural communities through education
- We advocate for equal opportunities for rural youth
- We highlight inequalities that exist, and inspire advocacy of these rights in rural areas

Rural communities are becoming more international due to globalisation and immigration

How we work on this:

- We strengthen the European network of active rural youth and rural youth organisations - We build understanding and celebrate traditions and cultures through intercultural exchange, which forms an integral part of our activities
- We see diversity as a strength for rural communities and for the European rural network

The world is changing at a faster pace and rural communities are facing new challenges

How we work on this:

- We empower rural youth to use their capacities, build resilience and support rural communities' adaptability
- We provide online tools and training alongside our physical events

VISION

Young people in rural communities feel part of a larger European community where human rights and equality are respected regardless of opinion, gender, sexual orientation, background and beliefs. Rural youth have equal social rights compared with their urban peers and their wellbeing is supported. Rural youth are empowered, educated and supported to be active members of the society on local and European level. The European community has a positive image of rural areas and rural lives. Rural Youth Europe is known among European institutions as an educational organisation and its learning outcomes are widely recognised.

MISSION

Rural Youth Europe works to enhance the lives of rural young people through providing intercultural learning opportunities which encourage advocacy and respect for others, and:

- Bring together and develop a network of European rural youth in order to enable the sharing and promotion of best practice in an interactive, inclusive and collaborative community. We encourage a safe and supportive environment where young leaders can be empowered to reach their full potential.
- Provide the tools, skills and knowledge for rural youth to develop and be motivated to work towards a sustainable and resilient rural Europe.
- Provide a voice for rural youth to be heard by European institutions and decision makers on key topics. Act as a bridge between decision makers and rural youth in both directions through disseminating information and opportunities back to rural youth.

VALUES

1. **INTERCULTURAL**
2. **EDUCATIONAL**
3. **EQUALITY**
4. **INCLUSIVE**
5. **EMPOWERING**

ACTIVITIES REPORT

Martin Siemen

The central part of RYEurope's work programme are the educational activities. Even when digital youth work becomes increasingly important, physical meetings are still essential, especially for rural youth who often are more isolated than other young people.

In addition to the development of knowledge and skills, the meetings change attitudes when rural youth connect their daily issues to the European perspective, and start acting with this in mind.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to host any physical activities in 2021. But with a lot of efforts from the Slovenian Prep Team we were able to host the first ever hybrid European Rally with teams gathering all over Europe.

RYEurope is run for rural youth and by rural youth. The learning process is important for everyone involved; participants, team members, board members and staff.

RYEurope has an annual work programme with interlinked activities and follow-up. The 2021 theme was "Growing Rural Resilience" and the aim of the work plan was to raise the importance of rural communities for global sustainable development and point out strengths that help reducing the trend of deruralisation. The activities were meant to focus on social rights of rural youth and help building up rural social resilience to make communities and individuals less vulnerable.



Rural Youth Europe is run for rural youth and by rural youth. The learning process is important for everyone involved; participants, team members, board members and staff.

OBJECTIVES

1. That rural youth organisations' volunteers and staff build understanding of the role of non-formal education in youth competence building in a rural context and develop skills and attitudes to support youth competence building through non-formal education.
2. To develop awareness of work-related rights of rural youth and of the competences that are needed for work and entrepreneurship in sustainable rural communities
3. To build competences and develop tools to work towards LGBTI+ positive and inclusive rural youth organisations
4. To disseminate the outcomes and the related expertise in the network of rural youth organisations



HYBRID EUROPEAN RALLY: RURAL UP!

THE FUTURE OF RURAL WORK AND COMPETENCES - LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA AND HYBRID ALL OVER EUROPE

01/08/21 - 07/08/21

Our first event for 2021 and the only big event to be held in 2021. In Spring 2021 we had to decide together with ZSPM and after consultation of all of our member organisations to hold the European rally not in a full physical capacity. ZSPM prepared an amazing hybrid event instead. The 40 participants came together 7 evenings in a row for at least 3 hours to exchange and learn about rural work and competences in relation to youth rights and a sustainable world. In different formats the participants explored the topic got to know each other and also exchanged interculturally.

The objectives of the event were to allow those taking part:

1. Develop awareness over their social rights in the context of rural work
2. Gain understanding of equality and inclusion in connection with rural work
3. Gain knowledge of competences that will be essential for sustainable employment in rural areas in the future
4. Recognise the multi-functionality of rural areas and how it shapes the future of work and entrepreneurship in sustainable rural communities
5. Understand the value of non-formal education and gain knowledge about making competences acquired through non-formal education visible

It was good to see such a strong turnout of participants at the event even when there were some early pandemic uncertainties.

POLICY REPORT

Siobhan Gallagher

Whilst Covid-19 restrictions continued throughout 2021 and prevented many physical events, our Policy & Advocacy work continued in an online setting. With 2021 marking 5 years since the introduction of the Special Interest Board member, significant milestones were reached during this year such as:

Implementation of the Policy Work Sub Committee

11 members from across our network joined with one co-option approved: Lukas Stede, representative of the Advisory Council of Youth.

- **Group 1** was represented by John Keane of Macra na Feirme, Richard Beattie of Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster, Ally Brunton of Scottish Association of Young Farmers, Aled Thomas of Wales Fgederation of Young Farmers' Clubs & Edward Dungait of National Federation of Young Farmer's Clubs.
- **Group 2** was represented by Sebastian Dueckers of BDL, Petra Marko of ZSPM & Marina Bernhard of Schweizerische Llandjudendvereinigung.
- **Group 3** was represented by Emma Ilmonen of Suomen 4H & Annika Lepisto of Finlands Svenska 4H.
- **Group 4** was represented by Zanete Spale of Latvian 4H.

The group met in October 2021, following a call made to the Member Organisations after the 2021 General Assembly approved the implementation of the subcommittee.

Exchange group of the European Youth Forum

We were accepted into the exchange group of the European Youth Forum. Work began in 2019 to join this co-op of INGYO's which has an aim of promotion of intercultural exchange and learning mobility experiences as well as non-formal education. There are currently 10 INGYO's forming part of this group and include AEGEE, EE-YEU, EFIL, ESN, YEUE, SCI, TEJO, YEN & Alliance. This allows for a stronger voice at the European Youth Forum Council of Members as the exchange group support each Organisation.

Trio Presidency

Rural Youth Europe were selected to take part in the Trio Presidency (France, Czech Republic & Sweden) taking place from January 2022 through to June 2023. Youth Goal 3 Inclusive Societies & Youth Goal 10 Sustainable Green Europe are the themes for the 18 months. This is the second trio Presidency Rural Youth Europe have been involved in with July 2020 – December 2021 taking place across Germany, Portugal & Slovenia. The EU Youth Conferences took place online and were attended by Rural Youth Europe with the theme being Youth Goal 9 Space and participation for all. The EU Youth Dialogue takes place during the Trio Presidencies and supports the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy and ensures involvement of young people in the decision making processes.



With 2021 marking 5 years since the introduction of the Special Interest Board member, significant milestones were reached during 2021.

Advanced Training

Siobhán Gallagher Special Interest Board member undertook Advanced Training for facilitators on Online Policy Dialogue in the Youth Field which was ran by the North South Centre of the Council of Europe.

Other Policy & Advocacy work which took place in 2021 included the participation in the Youth Networking Events, Advisory Council Seminars, Together.eu meetings as well as facilitating workshops at the Rural European Parliament and addressing MEP's, Commissioners and Decision Makers at the Congress on the Council of Europe.

Finally, further information on our Policy & Advocacy work will be covered in a report from Special Interest Board Member Siobhán Gallagher during the General Assembly.

MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Daniel Grist

Rural Youth Europe aims to share information about our own activities, as well as the work of our member and partner organisations. We communicate this information via our website, social media channels, e-newsletter and podcast. Due to varying degrees of lockdown across Europe throughout 2021, consistent communication with our member organisations and grass-root members has been vital in order to maintain relationships whilst physical events were not possible.

Social media has become an increasingly important tool for communication. The platform that has our largest reach continues to be Facebook, with the reach of our Instagram growing. We also consistently post on our Twitter and LinkedIn in order to maintain our professional network and further extend the visibility of our work. We also continue to use the 'Friends of Rural Youth' Facebook Page in order to directly communicate with past and future participants.

RURAL VOICES PODCAST

Our community of listeners to our podcast 'Rural Voices' continues to grow. In 2021 we published the podcast's second series, with eight episodes covering a range of topics and consistently reaching approximately 500 listeners per episode. The podcast is available to listen to on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and on our website.

Episode 1: The impact of Brexit.

Featuring Alex Lyttle (YFCU – Northern Ireland) and Jemima Brown (NFYFC – England)

Episode 2: The long-term vision for rural areas.

Featuring Michael Schwab (BDL – Germany) and Isabelle Hall Wilkens (Swedish 4H)

Episode 3: Skills for life.

Featuring Kristine Skudrite (Latvian 4H) and Satu Järveläinen (Finnish 4H).

Episode 4: Rural up – our Online Rally.

Featuring Anja Fortuna (ZSPM – Slovenia) and Mhairi Dalgeish (SAYFC – Scotland)

Bonus Episode: The COCOREADO Project

Drop in session Q&A with ProjectsManager John Gillon and RYEurope Chair Linzi Stewart.

Episode 5: LGBTI Inclusion Part 1

Featuring MEP Kim Van Sparrentak and Johan Gunnarsson (Swedish 4H)

Episode 6: LGBTI Inclusion – Part 2

Featuring Gethin Bickerton (Wales YFC) and MEP Maria Walsh (Macra na Feirme)

Campfire Stories – Live from Dublin!

Featuring the Rural Youth Europe Board!

BLOGS

Throughout 2021 we posted a variety of different blogs on our website. Blogs produced as part of our Together Thursdays project have included topics such as youth participation, non-formal education, EU democracy and public procurement. We also had articles written by board members including a blog about mental wellbeing from Niall Evans and a blog about Midsummer from Iristiina Heinonen.



Rural Youth Europe is supported by the
European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe.



Erasmus+