

INFO

03/2012



THE RURAL YOUTH EUROPE MAGAZINE



New faces in the office
Check page 3

Protecting environment
in Switzerland
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Where are they now?
Find out on pages 12-14





Rural Youth Europe

Rural Youth Europe (RYEurope) is a European non-governmental organisation for rural youth. Established in 1957, it is an umbrella for youth organisations working to promote and activate young people in countryside. It provides international training possibilities and works as an intermediary between national organisations and youth organisations and public institutions at the European level. Rural Youth Europe is a member-led organisation: democratically constituted, the organisation is led by young people for young people.

Rural Youth Europe aims to:

- Educate and train young people and create an awareness of rural and social issues.
- Actively encourage rural populations and industry.
- Support the development of new rural youth organisations.
- Network with other European NGOs.
- Lobby and highlight the problems and needs of rural youth to focus the attention of international and national bodies, as well as the general public.

Rural Youth Europe unites 26 member organisations across 21 European countries. The membership base is over 500,000 young people who either live in rural areas or have an interest in rural life.

If your organisation is interested to join Rural Youth Europe or you would like more information about our events, please contact office@ruralityoutheurope.com or check our website www.ruralityoutheurope.com



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info – rural youth europe

is published by Rural Youth Europe. Views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of Rural Youth Europe. Text may include informal translations of statements and documents. Reproduction of articles is authorised provided the source is quoted and copies of the article are sent to Rural Youth Europe. This newsletter is published with the support of the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe and the European Union (Youth in Action-programme). Responsible editors express their gratitude for all received articles and encourage every member organisation to contribute and to enrich our newsletter.

RESPONSIBLE EDITORS: Mikko Väitälä, Emma Jorpes

ADDRESS: Karjalankatu 2A, 00520 Helsinki, Finland

PHONE: + 358 45 234 5629

E-MAIL: office@ruralityoutheurope.com

WEBSITE: www.ruralityoutheurope.com

PHOTO-CREDITS: www.PHOTOS.com, www.fotolia.de, rural youth europe

CONCEPT & LAYOUT: madergrafisch (www.madergrafisch.at)



“Where there is love there is life”

Mahatma Gandhi

This is a quote that can be applied to many different situations in life. What I'm thinking of is the amount of love of life in the different Rural Youth Europe events. From my experience the events are full of love, inspiration and life. I think the commitment of the prep team, the contribution made by the participants and everybody's eagerness to learn new things are some of the key factors to a successful event. Luckily, this obviously successful mix has been experienced many times, also during this year.

The year 2012 is coming to an end (where did it go...?) and it's time to sum up what has been accomplished during the last year. Rural Youth Europe has arranged four different events, directly reaching around 200 young Europeans. The most recent event was the autumn seminar in Switzerland in November (report on pages 4–5). During the year networks have been expanded, friendships have been established and a few projects have been completed.

2012 has also been the year of change. We said good bye to our secretary general Amanda Hajnal and office assistant Laura Vapola, and after a tough application process, hello to the new secretary general Pia Nurmio-Perälä. I also would like to mention our office assistant secretary Milla Holmberg. You can read more about Pia and Milla in this INFO magazine.

As we are going towards Christmas and a new year I would like to thank you all for good co-operation and active participation.

On behalf of the board I wish you all the best for 2013!

EMMA JORPES
Board member



Fresh winds at the office!

It is a time of change for Rural Youth Europe. We would like to start with thanking Amanda Hajnal for giving her heart and full effort during her years as the Secretary General! Now, after a few months lacking her replacement, the RYEurope office team is again complete. As we, Pia Nurmio-Perälä and Milla Holmberg, are new at the office here follows a presentation in a few words.

I, Pia, have started on 19 November at the post of Secretary General for RYEurope. It is for sure a challenge and I have much to learn, but it feels like I am at the right place. Living and helping out at my family's farm with forest, fields, apple trees and horses makes me understand what a rural reality means. Also the other parts of the name, Youth and Europe, are familiar as it is precisely youth work in Europe I have done the last 12 years, first as an active participant, later as project manager, trainer and mentor. I am now looking forward to tight cooperation with the member organisations and many special moments with you at the RYEurope events!

I, Milla, have started as a new office assistant of RYEurope at the beginning of October and little by little I am getting to know the organisation and my tasks. I think I make a little exception to many people in this field in a sense that I don't have long experience in 4H and I have not even grown up in rural environment. But in some sense it may be an asset, I am hoping to bring some new ideas to the office as well. I have strong experience in youth work and social work in general; for the past years I have worked as Development planner and later as Development Manager for Kalliola Youth Association in Helsinki. Before that I worked at the Finnish Children and Youth Association and Family Federation of Finland. I am currently on maternity leave with my second child and I was looking for some part-time job in my field when I came across this position. This suits my life situation very well and I am happy to start working with you all!

We also have with us in the team Office Assistant Mikko Väitalo, who already has been of the field of the RYEurope webpage and communication for some time. This trio will work hard to live up to the standards Amanda put and we also aim for many new ideas so RYEurope continues being an ever evolving organisation.

PIA NURMIO-PERÄLÄ
Secretary General

MILLA HOLMBERG
Office assistant

“Protect the environment – for your future”

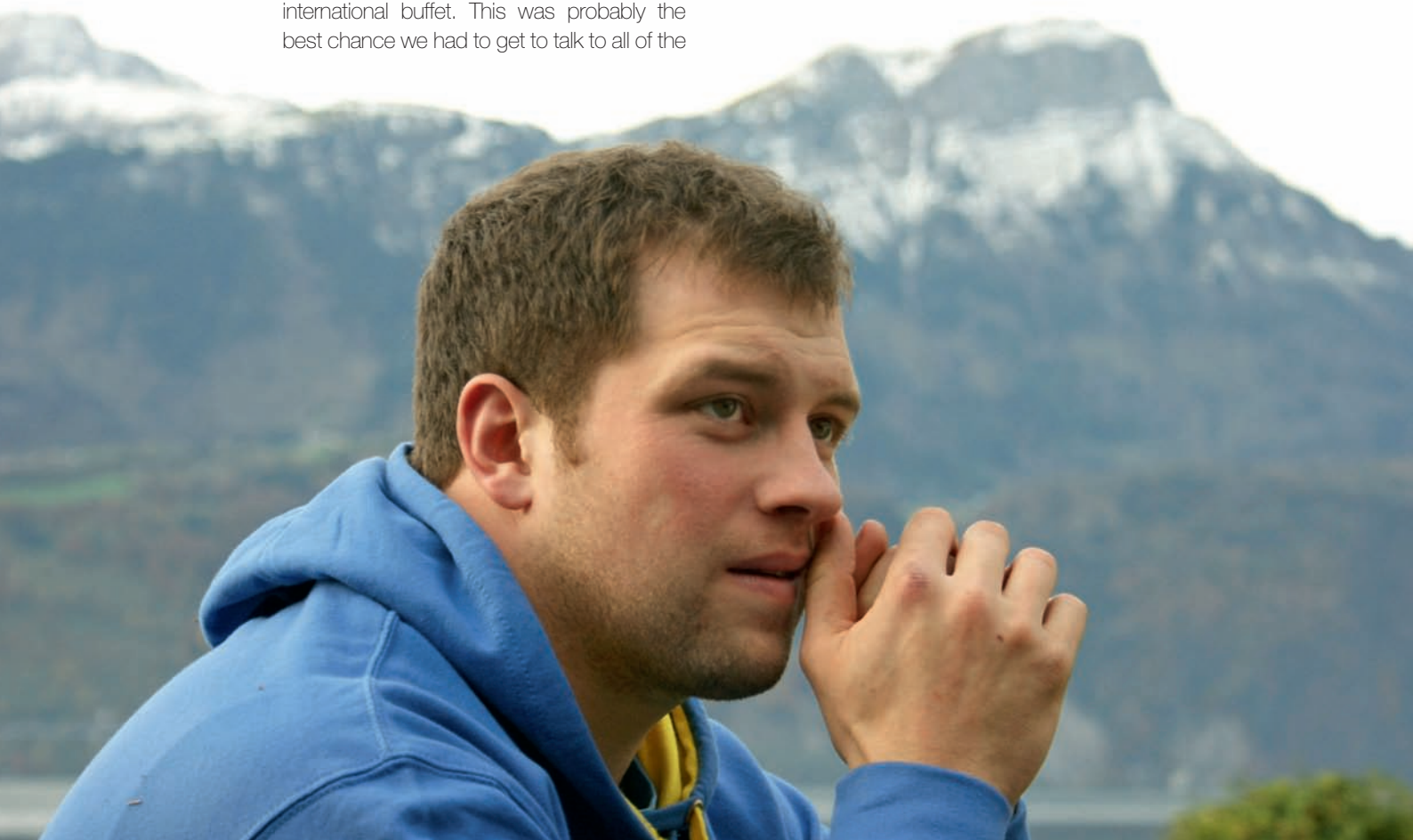
The theme of the Autumn Seminar 2012 was “Protect the environment – for your future”. It brought approximately 40 young people from all over Europe to Gersau, Switzerland to explore environmental issues in different countries.

Our first full day of activities commenced bright and early with an energizer exercise to make sure there were no weary bodies about. We then started into the days intense set of programmes, first up was a presentation about all our individual countries and organisations.

After lunch we had two short sessions, one which was basically based on our fears and expectations for the week and the other which were team building exercises. Games finished, we started to organise tables for the international buffet. This was probably the best chance we had to get to talk to all of the

participants from different countries as they introduced their displays. It was a real highlight to the week as always.

On Monday we started our day with a presentation about sustainability in the environment. A qualified forestry engineer gave us a talk about Switzerland's environmental history and explained how they have been increasing their forest percentage for 200 years in order to benefit their mountainous countryside which was very prone to rockslides due to de-forestation.



Following this we divided into groups and took a separate topic on dangers and opportunities for woodland in our various countries. We then presented our findings and opinions as a group to the other teams. In the afternoon we went hiking in a mountainous wood to see some of the efforts that the Swiss have made to both ensure sustainability in wooded areas and promote them as a tourism resource.

In the afternoon we continued with the theme of recycling and split into working groups to develop a business plan on different recyclable materials which were then presented along with a TV and leaflet advertising campaign to a panel of judges. A project about recycling batteries won the judges commendation.



The first exercise on Tuesday was a presentation by prep team member Russell on different types of renewable energies and the reasons that we needed to increase our dependence on these and decrease it on fossil fuels. A number of countries have already made huge strides towards this, Iceland, Denmark and Germany being three examples.

In the evening we were joined by more members of Swiss Rural Youth for a games evening. Between board games and other games one of which involved winking at another man or woman, this was an absolutely great evening with the members of Landjugend.

We were all up a lot earlier Wednesday morning as we had an excursion to the local city of Lucerne. This city is named after the river it is situated beside which also runs the whole way to our hostel. First up was the Foxtrail challenge which was a kind treasure hunt around the city. We split into groups and each one took a separate trail. This was a great way to get to see the city and our trail brought us around several of the oldest parts of this region.

First session of the final day was a lecture about energy efficient construction from an expert in the area, Mr Zimmerman who has worked at creating energy efficient houses in the past. This was extremely informative and showed to us how after an initial heavy investment homes can be very cheap to run when built in this manner.

After a quick tour of small hydro power plant in the middle of the city we had to visit a local pub and the city's open air market before getting a boat back to the hostel. In the evening we had a documentary movie night, watching a short film on the topic of fossil fuels in farming. This generated into a great debate. Later on in the night it moved on to topics such as politics, farm inheritance, the EU's future prospects and even rodent control!

Following this we also visited an actual energy efficient building where we saw some of the ideas and theories shown earlier actually put into action. The final afternoon brought another workshop and presentation this time on how to make existing buildings more energy efficient.

We began Thursday with an excursion to Texaid, a clothes recycling company run by charities. They operate a clothes collection service throughout Switzerland and account for 75% of Switzerland's total clothes recycling. There was a high level of mechanisation and automation and almost all of the plant is run by machinery, although they do have a workforce of 300 throughout Europe.

In conclusion I think the week was extremely well organised and the learning and social experiences during it were exceptional. The workshops and excursions were really interesting and of great use and I will definitely bring many of these ideas back to Ireland.

I'd like to encourage anyone to avail of these RYE events in any way that they can!

PADDY DELANEY
Macra na Feirme

Rural Games in Slovenia

July is in ZSPM (Slovenian rural youth association) always marked as a month of Young farmers' games. In late spring ten regions are obligated to choose the best groups of six, which are going to present them on national level. This year 24 Slovenian and 4 international teams participated. This year's games were 26th National and 5th International young farmers' games.



Groups are formed from girls and boys, so one group has to have at least two girls. Main roles have a comcrake and a girl with a rake. Mowing the grass is the first game and it usually takes weeks of preparations. Some boys take this game very seriously and there is a big competition especially between the best clubs in one region. The area to be mowed is 5 x 10 m. Judges are assessing who cuts the grass perfectly, as clean and as fast as possible.

The second game is raking the grass, which was cut before by a boy of the same group. That means if the boys cut the grass badly, girls will not be able to rake the grass as clean as possible. Judges are also here very strict, they determine who has done her task fastest and also made the nicest bunch on the grass in the beginning of cut area. Those two games are traditional and are always the most popular. It's a great honour to be announced as the best of the year.

Other games are different every year. This year we had baking the "Potica cake" which is a traditional Slovenian rolled cake including nuts. The game was about circling around a stick and two meters away there were two girls with two spoons and two eggs. He got spoons and on those spoons a girl put two eggs. He (quite fizzy) had to run around the obstacle and as soon as possible cross the finish line. The game was a little slimy, but still very funny.

The fourth game, sawing, was based on two girls who were holding timber while a boy sawed. The game was too dangerous and two of competitors get injured, so we repealed the game.

The last game was a surprise named watering hops. The whole event was placed in little town Braslovce, which is very famous for producing hops and it presents the main agricultural branch in this area. A girl sit in a wheelbarrow and a boy drives it through obstacles with covered eyes. The leader is the girl in front. Once they came to the finish line, other competitors of the group throw water from a distance around two meters. The girl had to catch as much water as possible in a bucket. Then he had to drive back to put the water in the bigger bucket placed on start for around four times.

The day concludes with announcement of results and dancing almost till the sunrise.

Young farmers' games are the biggest stick point of rural youth in Slovenia. They present the biggest and one of the most important projects in ZSPM over the year and they are always organised by different rural youth club. We are glad to follow the tradition and we will do our best to keep it. See you in July in Slovenia!

MOJCA KRAMBERGER
Slovenian Rural Youth
Association



Coaching Wheel of Life

The Hungarian Young Farmers organisation (AGRYA) organised a study visit to Bulgaria on 17-19 May 2012. The aim of the study visit was to enhance communication among the members of the association and to improve their communication skills.

As participants had specific and commonly spread difficulties it was very helpful to them to improve their communication skills. Thus they could more easily search and find information how they could solve their problems. Also knowing how to communicate better with people could help them not only to build better relationships but also to present their own achievements in a proper way.

First session – welcome words and introduction

The team building began with presenting the trainer and the two associations whose members joined in the afternoon – AGRYA and Rural Youth Europe. It was very satisfactory that the participants wanted to use different ways to tell about their work so that everyone could be distinguished and noticed.

Afterwards participants presented themselves, where they come from and what kind of farms they work. Each participant presented his work

using his own style and all the presentations were quite different. As we aimed to improve the presentation and communication skills the trainer encouraged the participants to ask questions to receive additional information. These questions gave different points of view to the presenters and helped them to present themselves shortly and comprehensively. A creative atmosphere was created and a lot of positive feedback was given so everyone received something to use later back in their farms.

The main goals were announced and participants agreed that they need to reach these goals as they are essential part of their presentation and could help them not only in theory but also in practice. While we were talking about expectations of the team building more of the participants raised a lot of questions that they wanted to include in a discussion panel. They expected to find solutions to the problems that appeared in their work and to discuss them with their colleagues. They hoped to get advice how to overcome their problems in farm work.





Second session – coaching

The trainer made a short introduction of the concept of coaching. The main differences between classic training and classic consultancy are that a coach searches solutions for the existing problems together with a coachee and doesn't give him any advices but feedback.

After the coaching concept was explained all the participants received so called coaching wheel of life which they had to fill in. It aimed to evaluate and measure the main spheres of people's life – personal development, carrier, money, health, friends, family, love and romance and fun and relaxation. This was followed by a discussion about lowest gradings because these were the spheres we wanted to pay more attention.

The whole group discussed what could be the potential for solving the common problems young farmers meet in their everyday work. Participants shared their biggest problems and suggested solutions. As each member of the team had different points of view because of their different life experience the process of reaching more detailed solution was very interesting.

After that participants had to work individually. They had to define in a short way their plans and aims for developing their farms. Their task was not only to describe the essence but also to build

a chain of actions in order to fulfill them. It seemed very difficult when each of them had to search for solutions alone so in practice all of them saw how important it is to communicate.

In the final part the members of the National Association of Young Farmers in Bulgaria shared their opinion about the topics discussed. Participants were pleased for the fact that they had another opportunity to meet each other, to make new friends and to bring back their homes fresh ideas, new information and a big dose of optimism. They were happy to talk with young people from other youth organization abroad and to enrich their knowledge about their work and lives.

Farm visiting on the next day allowed everybody to learn a lot of interesting things about red California worms and what the main challenges in a poultry farm are. It was really nice to be in a place where people are eager to learn, ask a lot of questions and are ready to discuss different topics. They all really appreciated the positive sides of learning in a natural way during countryside walks and with a little sadness said goodbye to their new foreign friends and their colleagues in Bulgaria.

SVETLANA MANOVA
Agrarian Youth Union of Bulgaria

International Day of Rural Women

The first International Day of Rural Women was observed on 15 October 2008. This new international day, established by the UN General Assembly through UN resolution 62/136 on 18 December 2007, recognizes “the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty.”

Rural women play a critical role in the rural economies of both developed and developing countries. In most parts of the developing world, they participate in crop production and livestock care, provide food, water and fuel for their families, and engage in off-farm activities to diversify their families' livelihoods. In addition, they carry out vital functions in caring for children, older persons and the sick.

According to statistics, rural women make up over one quarter of the world's population. They play a cruci-



al role in the development and sustainability of local industries, but the rights of these important women are often left unprotected. For this reason, it is important to organize local events to observe the International Day of Rural Women on October 15.

This year, in Armenia, members of Rural Armenian Youth NGO decided to visit a rural woman, Srбуhi Gevorgyan, in Zovuni village in Kotayk region to honor this day. The NGO members spent several hours with Ms. Gevorgyan and offered her their

helping hands with household chores, such as feeding the livestock, cleaning the garden, and gathering the last of the year's harvest (apple, peach).

At the end of the day, the young people had a lively discussion with a group of the Zovuni community's women about their views, concerns, the local youth's activities, and the women's general interests. Ms. Gevorgyan expressed her gratitude to the NGO members, as she offered them homemade jam and tea.

"Today, the youth had the opportunity to get a firsthand look at the life of a local rural woman, and they had the opportunity to discover the complex problems of rural women," commented Ruzanna Manyan, the general secretary of Rural Armenian Youth NGO. The NGO plans to replicate the day's action with more visits to rural women in the future, with the involvement more volunteers of young Armenian people.

RUZANNA MANYAN
Rural youth Armenia



Where are they now?



We interviewed some more of our famous past chairpersons to find out where they are now. In this edition of INFO magazine, we'll introduce you to three of them and ask what their highlights on the board were and what are they doing today.

Linda Steele

When were you on the Rural Youth Europe board?

I joined the board in 1999 as Group 1 representative, had an unexpected move to Vice-Chairman in 2000 and then served as Chairman 2002-2004.

What are some highlights of your time on the board?

I enjoyed my whole time on the board. I visited some wonderful places, met some very interesting people and learned a lot about working in international groups which has been useful both in my personal and professional life. It's hard to pick one highlight, just as it's impossible to pick a favourite Rally. The strength of all the events is the diversity: 'All different, all equal.'

I suppose one highlight was when I chaired the prep team for the Rally in Northern Ireland in 2004 and I retired as chairperson of Rural Youth Europe in my home country. Although I felt sad about leaving the board I was also incredibly happy and proud to be part of the NI organising team who had worked so hard that week. Even if I was too tired to think about it at the time!

What do you do nowadays?

Nowadays my day job is teaching 7-9 years olds in my local primary school and I spend my free time dancing and travelling. Sometimes I even manage to combine the two! I'm also involved with some community groups which organise events to raise funds for different charities. I also enjoy attending the YFA and IFYE reunions which keeps me in contact with some of the people I met whilst on the board, as well as making new friends from around the world. It's also been a good excuse to return to some of the places I visited on Rallies and see a little more.

What impact did your role as Chairperson have on your life?

Being Chairperson was a great honour and it has helped me to become more outgoing, more adventurous and hopefully more understanding when working with people from other cultures.

Would you encourage young people to join the board?

I would encourage anyone to join if they get the chance. Reports, applications and meetings may sound off-putting but the hard work is more than made up for by the range of opportunities you get to travel and get involved in all sorts of projects. You will also make friends for life.



Delme Harries

When were you on the Rural Youth Europe board?

2000-04 as the Board Member for Group 1, 2004-06 as Vice Chairman and 2006-08 as Chairman.

What are some highlights of your time on the board?

Every minute of my involvement was a highlight but in particular were the Spice Up series of training sessions. These were great and we were able to develop young people to become trainers and leaders! Socially I am an animal so of course enjoyed all the social activities at all events and of course the international buffets always made a great impression on me. The members presenting their produce have so much pride in their produce and their country - always touches me and makes me proud of the pride young people have in their roots.

What do you do nowadays?

At the moment I am working in two jobs as an Agency Manager for the National Farmers Union and their insurance Company NFU Mutual. I also work as a Business Consultant for the NFU Mutual. I am still an active Club Leader of my local Young Farmers Club, Llysyfran YFC and am the Chairman of Wales YFC's Board of Management. I am also currently undertaking a distance learning course working towards an MA in Professional Practice.

What impact did your role as Chairperson have on your life?

It has made me a more confident person and at the same time understand that although we are all different we are all equal! From being a trainer at some of the events it has also encouraged me to learn new skills which have benefited me in my career.

Would you encourage young people to join the board?

Certainly, to be a board member is a once in a lifetime opportunity - you get to travel, take part in Rural Youth Europe activities and develop the organisation.

Where
are they
now?



Robin Swann

When were you on the Rural Youth Europe board?

2004-05 as the Board member for Group 1, 2006-08 as Vice-Chairman and 2008-10 as Chairman.

What are some highlights of your time on the board?

Every GA – believe it or not I enjoyed the input and enthusiasm of all our member organisations which was evident by their dedication to attending these meetings and representing their own organisation. Being part of RYEurope's first ever study tour of the Balkans and now seeing the benefits of both organisations we visited being accepted as full members - Kosovo Young Farmers & Serbian Young Farmers. But apart from the hard work of being a board member I also enjoyed the social side. There are a lot of highlights from that side, especially a story about "One King!"

What do you do nowadays?

Nowadays I am a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Northern Ireland (politician), where I am a member of the Culture, Arts & Leisure and Agriculture ; Rural Development Scrutiny Committees ; and the All Party Working Group on International Development, but more importantly a husband and father of a beautiful daughter (who I hope will be a future Rally participant).

What impact did your role as Chairperson have on your life?

It really helped me in my current job, as through it I gained a lot of skills and experiences that I use every day, and I made many good friends from all over Europe.

Would you encourage young people to join the board?

Most definitely, if you get the opportunity take it, I have never met anyone who has regretted their time on the board!

Where
are they
now?

Greetings from the international meeting in Finland!

Around 30 active 4H youngsters got together in Järvenpää, Finland to discuss and develop the international activities both in Finland and abroad. The meeting was visited by both an IFYE exchangee and a mother from a host family and they both told about their international experiences.



The main point of the meeting was to divide into smaller groups and deal with different international issues, like communication, PR, relationships and planning new projects.

There were also a few Africans taking part in the meeting. They taught us a little bit about their countries and djembe drumming. We had lots of fun!

MIKKO VÄLTALO
Office assistant

EMMA JORPES
Board member

"LOVEYOUTH-FUTURE"

The General Assembly of the European Youth Forum on 22-24 November 2012 took place in Maribor, the city of the "European Youth Capital 2013".

About 300 delegates from European youth organisations and national youth councils attended the busy meeting and the election of a new board: Peter Matjasic from Slovenia was re-elected as chairman and will now lead the European Youth Forum for another two years.

Other items on the agenda were several documents for discussion, amending and adoption such as a "Resolution to set up the label for quality assurance in non-formal education", a policy paper on "Youth rights" and the position paper: "LOVEYOUTH-FUTURE: a new European deal for and with youth".

To ensure the new board is kept busy within the next two years, the GA also adopted a Work Plan for the next two years, focussing on "Youth Participation", "Strong Youth Organisations" and "Autonomy and Inclusion".

Beside the official agenda, it was also a chance to get together with our partners such as ECYC, YE-N and MIJARC and discuss further cooperation. And last we would like to congratulate the city Cluj-Napoca in Romania, which will be the European Youth Capital 2015!

Best regards

LUKAS HELFENSTEIN
Vice-Chairperson

KADRI TOOMINGAS
Chairperson



SPRING SEMINAR 2013

“Coaching for inclusion: Closing the gap between urban and rural youth”

26 May – 2 June 2013,
European Youth Centre Strasbourg, France

The overall aim of the event is to explore coaching as a tool for inclusion of young people. The study session will explore how coaching can help young people overcome barriers they face in their daily lives and promote their social inclusion and active participation in society. Participants will gain knowledge, skills and experience of coaching methods and techniques and how they can be adapted to different target groups. The study session will promote multiplication of skills and knowledge by developing concrete tools and resources to use in the home organisations and local communities of participants. Participants will develop coaching tools and resources which can be adapted to different target groups in their local communities.

RALLY 2013

“Get Involved!”

3-10 August 2013,
Tipperary, Ireland

Macra na Feirme will to host the Rally 2013 in Tipperary, Ireland on the theme of community engagement. “Get Involved!” is a multilateral youth exchange for 60 young people from different rural areas in Europe. For one week in August 2013, rural young people will have the chance to discuss and find solutions to the active participation of young people in the sustainable development of rural areas across Europe. The Rally will bring participants together to share their ideas and views on issues related to the lives of rural young people. The theme of the project will be: Get Involved! Developing citizenship in rural communities.

AUTUMN SEMINAR 2013

Inspiring Change: Transforming Communities through Innovation and Entrepreneurship

12-19 October 2013,
Malvern, Worcestershire, England

The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) will host the Autumn Seminar 2013 in England. The seminar will explore the theme of youth entrepreneurship in rural communities and aims to strengthen intercultural links through citizenship. The study will answer the following key questions: Why is entrepreneurship important in rural areas? How can social media be used in a positive light to support and grow businesses? What resources do we have at a local level that can facilitate innovation? How can Citizens use innovation and entrepreneurship to make their communities better places now and in the future?