

Rural

Rural
youth
europe

01 / 2015

Voices

The Rural Youth Europe Magazine



6

Rural Youth
Project of
the year 2014

European
Youth
Forum

18



Member
greetings

14



19

Transfer to
work life

10

Junior Event

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 the 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 unites 21 member organisations across 18 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@ruralyoutheurope.com or check our website www.ruralyoutheurope.com

Rural Voices

Rural Voices 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 Erasmus+ of European Commission. The editors express their gratitude for all received articles and encourage every member organisation to contribute and to enrich this magazine.

SECRETARY GENERAL: Pia Nurmio-Perälä

RESPONSIBLE EDITORS: Mikko Väitalo, Otto Kronqvist

ADDRESS: Karjalankatu 2A, 00520 Helsinki, Finland

PHONE: + 358 45 234 5629

E-MAIL: office@ruralyoutheurope.com

WEBSITE: www.ruralyoutheurope.com

CONCEPT & LAYOUT: Júlia Hentz

PHOTO-CREDITS: Rural Youth Europe, its members and participants of events

CONTENT

3 Editor's note

4-5 Going on in Europe

6-9 Rural Youth Project of the Year 2014

10-13 SET UP YOUR FUTURE

14-17 Member greetings

18 European Youth Forum

19 Transfer to work life

20 Rural Youth Europe's Calendar

Challenge yourself

Have you ever found yourself in a situation in which you don't feel confident? I have, and it is happening as I write this. I will be a prep team member in Rural Youth Europe's new Junior Event in Sweden and I should be responsible for the learning process, session plans, and many practical issues... All that makes me nervous.

Although, I'm a bit scared, I really look forward to this new challenge. I'm quite sure that this is a learning point for me as well. You know that nothing interesting happens if you don't look for challenges. Furthermore, I know I'm not alone. We have a great team and the support from the Rural Youth Europe office. I know this will be a great event.



Rural Youth Europe members have also challenged themselves. The projects that were submitted to the Rural Youth Project of the Year competition show that young people are willing to take responsibility and act to make their community a better place. The projects are presented in this edition of Rural Voices.

Enjoy reading this magazine. And the spring, it is coming. For sure.

Mikko Väitalo
Board member



Our website is also mobile friendly - visit it now by scanning your mobile phone over this QR code!



Erasmus+



Rural Youth Europe blog launched!

Rural Youth Europe's new blog launched in March. Covering topics from non-formal education to life in the countryside, the blog offers a publishing platform for our member organisations and rural youth in general. The first post is written by our Chairperson Lukas (pictured) who reflects his story with rural youth and welcomes new bloggers to tell theirs.

Interested in writing to our blog? Contact us at:
info@ruralyoutheuropa.com

Going on in Europe

The Board met in Edinburgh

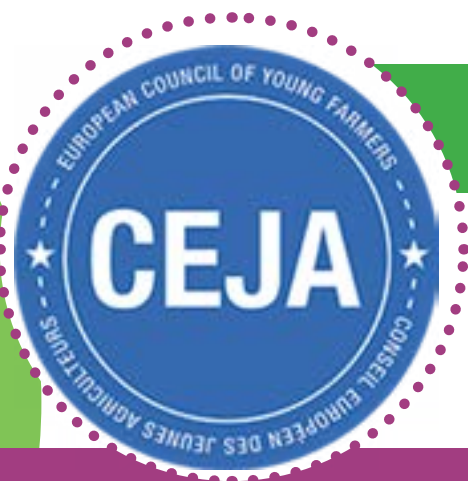
The Board of Rural Youth Europe met on 14-15 March in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Board discussed many things and heard updates from all member organisations from the regional board members. They also met with a member organisation of Rural Youth Europe, The Scottish Association of Young Farmers Club (SAYFC).

“Future funding is a concern for many organisations and we talked about ways we could help and provide support”, tells Board member Russell Carrington in our blog. He adds: “It was really refreshing to spend some time away and work with my friends on the Board as they are such energetic, passionate and creative people. We are a great team and it really feels like we are shaping our organisation for the future.”



The Rally 2015 call is published

Rally 2015 with the title “Work Hand in Hand - Create Your Land” will be held on 1-8 August in Upper Austria county. Landjugend Österreich is delighted to host the Rally and warmly welcomes young people from all Rural Youth Europe member organisations! The aim of the Rally is that young people understand all aspects of rural work life and how to keep the countryside vivid.



Multifarm_EU project by CEJA

Multifarm_EU is a project that is directed towards training and informing farmers on how to and possibly what kind of agri-multifunctionality techniques to implement on their farms in order to remain sustainable. The project wants to address the needs of young farmers to adapt to the request of society for a multifunctional agriculture. It is initiated by our partner CEJA.



European Rally 2015 preparations

Local prep team members and Rural Youth Europe representatives held the international Rally 2015 prep team meeting in Bad Schallerbach, Austria on 24-27 April 2015. The team got familiar with the Agrarian Educational Institution in Lambach, which will be an excellent venue for the Rally with comfortable accommodation and good spaces indoors and outdoors for sessions and evening activities.

The programme is about how rural youth can contribute to building a good working and living environment in the countryside in Europe. The sessions include sharing of realities, studies at local companies, farms and projects, skills development, host family experiences and much more. The team is very much looking forward to welcoming the Rally participants on the 1st of August and wishes you an enjoyable summer until then!



The winner of RYP 2014

The winner of Rural Youth Europe's Project of the Year competition is Rural + (#ruralplus) by the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, England. NFYFC identified the biggest problems facing rural areas in England and decided to launch a two-year-long project that would bring these problems into conversation.

Rural Youth Project of the Year 2014



Feeding also from personal experience, the main theme of the campaign was Mental Health targeting primarily the members of the organisation. The overall aim of the Rural+ campaign was to get NFYFC members comfortable talking about their own mental health, while encouraging discussion about tackling Rural Isolation issues and promoting the great work undertaken by NFYFC members & the organisation.

The project activities included mapping local mental health support services and organising club nights, reaching overall approximately 25 000 members and 90 000 people through a Twitter campaign. NFYFC's project has gained great acknowledgement in farming journals, magazines and at the Oxford Real Farming Conference. In October 2014 the campaign also gained national recognition when the founder of the campaign, Claire Worden was awarded the Point of Light Award from the Prime Minister David Cameron for the great message relating to young rural people and for the covered essential topics.



Good will and fascinating projects

Rural Youth Europe's annual Rural Youth Project of the Year (RYP) competition showcased once again the amazing projects and activities done by the member organisations. The entries were very diverse by their theme as well as their geographical location. Let's take a look at the projects!

Runners-up

Landjugend Bezirk Flachgau, Austria: All around the palm bushes

The "All around the palm bushes" project has focused on the local tradition and history of palm tying. During each previous year, the media and participants have repetitively asked similar questions, therefore the organisers decided to collect experts' knowledge into a 26 pages long palm book, with which they celebrated and honoured the 20th anniversary of their tradition.

By organising workshops for children and their parents, and selling several copies of the book and tied palm bushes, Landjugend Bezirk Flachgau collected 3000 € for charity donation, engaged locals in preserving the tradition and provided media visibility for their own organisation.





4H Denmark: The 4H garden Rosenhoej

Establishing a community garden project for children, the local 4H created an environment where children without access to garden areas could nurture and develop their curiosity for nature while learning about the origins, harvesting and preparation of food. The activities allowed the children to take active part in the course of nature by shaping their local, and previously mistreated environment as well as to be part of a group that is connected by a meaningful activity.

Twelve children aged 7 to 13 met with 4H volunteers for two hours per week for one year. Their high engagement resulted in motivating their parents to be active too. The Rosenhoej garden project improved the lives of the locals from several perspectives. It increased the physical, social and mental health and the overall wellbeing of the children and their families.





Landjugend Bezirk Freistadt, Austria: City-Country- Consumption

With this project, Landjugend Bezirk Freistadt aimed to target an actual challenge of mass consumption. The project aimed to raise awareness among young people about regional and seasonal food by tasting, visiting local farmers, informing people about labelling, organising cooking classes and creating a cook book of regional and seasonal recipes.

Other RYP entries

Landjugend Kremsmüster, Austria: When children laugh, the heaven smiles

In the project, the local rural youth renovated two youth rooms in the basement of a single family's house in their hometown. The family had hit by a great misfortune and the project aimed to help the family to cope with the loss while strengthening the community.



Latvian 4H: Let's cultivate Latvian fava beans

The objectives of the project were to have members of the Latvian 4-H to collect seed samples of fava beans, grow, research, and photograph them for one season. In the autumn they presented the results and submitted the seed samples and the research descriptions to scientists for further data management and for the continuation of the research.



Louth Macra na Feirme, Ireland: Louth Macra Farm Safety Event

The project aimed to raise awareness of farm safety issues as much as possible and ultimately contribute to reduce and hopefully eventually eradicate farm workplace accidents. A farm safety event was organised to raise awareness by educating the local community about the risks associated with farming.



4H Liminka, Finland: New design for youth centre

4H Liminka mobilised the project to refurbish and renovate their local youth centre with the aim of attracting more visitors. They have involved the local youth visiting the centre to create the outlook which fits their taste and serves the youth centre's purposes.



SET UP YOUR FUTURE

Minttu Varis, Finland

So, how was it? It was awesome! It is crazy how we were able to understand each other, even though we didn't always find the right words! Everybody was so friendly and funny. And if there was a silent moment, the question "What is your favourite colour?" was asked. Nobody answered, but it was funny. We ate a lot of good food, we had a great chef!

And what did I learn? I learned about my organisation, communication, about different learning styles, how to make a good CV and much more! I'm so happy that I got the chance to participate in this seminar. I now have great memories and lots of motivation, new friends and experiences! I also improved my language skills. Again, it was awesome!

Meeting new
friends and getting
to know new
cultures



A product of the creative fashion show



Thanks to the motivated participants and hardworking prep team, the event was a success!

Greetings from Rural Youth Europe's first Junior Event

Rural Youth Europe's first junior event "Set Up Your Future" took place in Sweden on 2-6 April. We asked the participants to share their experiences.

Eva Kotnik, Slovenia

I participated in the "Set Up Your Future" event, which was organised by Rural Youth Europe. It was about employment and this was the first event like this for minors, but the event was nevertheless organised well.

My journey started early on Thursday morning as me and Ana, the other participant from Slovenia, took a plane from Ljubljana at 7.45 AM. When we arrived to Copenhagen we were met by two of the leaders. Then we waited for the Finnish participants to arrive and together we took the train to arrive at Åstad 4H-gård, Sweden, late in the afternoon. As we were all very tired, we soon went to bed.

The next morning started with an introduction and 'getting to know' activities. The topic for the day was teamwork and how to learn. Friday, as far as the workshops are concerned, was very educational and productive. We learned a lot of new, useful things, such as learning styles and how to properly set a goal. The evening was interesting, since there was a special fashion show at which the models were representing their own countries in clothes of their own creation.



Each day had different topic



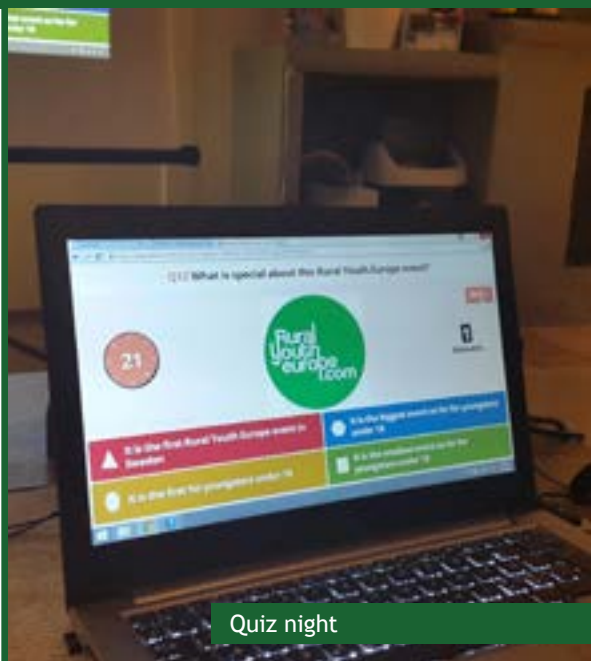
Learning new things in the Swedish countryside

We started Saturday morning with one of the many group challenges. This was my favourite activity! Saturday was all about communication and body language. The activities showed us the importance of body language and taught us presentation formats. After dinner we walked down by the lake, where some of us went to sauna and took a swim in the lake. After the sunset we enjoyed warming ourselves by the campfire.

Sunday's programme was about work life guidance. We learned how to write a CV and how to prepare for a job interview. The last session was a sum-up and evaluation, which was done in an interesting way. In the evening we had a final dinner with special tasks, which made it all funnier. For example one of the tasks was to crawl under the table. As amusing as the dinner was, it was also very emotional since we, the participants and leaders, became good friends and it all came to an end so fast.

To sum up, the event was really entertaining and educational. The leaders gave us a lot of knowledge that we can use in our everyday life in the future. We didn't only gain knowledge, but also a lot of significant experience. I really enjoyed the afternoon walks in the surrounding landscape. This was my first time in Sweden and I already fell in love with the idyllic countryside and nature. I had a lot of fun, met many new friends. Hopefully I will have a chance to participate in a similar event in the future!

(Eva Kotnik)



Quiz night



Trying to find out where the Easter bunny hid all the eggs



The brave ones jumped into the ice-cold lake



Portrait of the prep team



Emma Silén, Finland, one of the leaders

Being part of the prep team for Set Up Your Future was a very nice experience. At this first Junior Event the participants were aged between 13-17 years old and the main theme was employment. Twelve participants, three leaders and a great cook spent the Easter on the beautiful countryside in the southwest of Sweden. All in all, this Easter was spent in a foreign land without family around - though I think we created a big European family of our own. Those of you who have been to international events probably know what I'm talking about! And hey, even though you might not meet your new family members that often, remember to take care of them. Because one day, when you need them, they will be there for you, like a family.

“If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much.” -Jim Rohn

Join farming games in Slovenia!

Slovenian Rural Youth Association recently organised the annual meeting with presidents of rural clubs about the plan for the upcoming year. They discussed activities like national and international farming games and shared good practise to improve regular activities at the clubs.

“We have a farming game coming up in Slovenia 3-5 July and we would like to invite you, our rural friends around Europe. For more information, send us an email to: info@zspm.si”

Member

Betting with German politicians for a brighter rural future

Wanna bet on the active volunteers of Bund der Deutschen Landjugend (BDL) to gather up to 10 million and ten Euros in 2015 with the campaign “jugend.macht.land.”? That is the bet we did with the federal minister Manuela Schwesig. She is the patroness of the project of the biggest youth organization in rural Germany. The campaign shows that young people are able to move towards a lasting change.

The campaign “jugend.macht.land.” is all about gathering ideas to make the rural areas of Germany good living areas also for young people. It shows that rural areas can be places where young people bear responsibility and feel comfortable. “For us “jugend.macht.land.” is a creed to our home”, said Kathrin Funk, the Chairwoman of BDL. To achieve our fundraising goals, young people all over Germany are going to enter bets with politicians and companies. “The Main point is that we move something in the rural area with bets. Because one thing is clear: no matter how every bet ends - the rural area is going to win!”, Kathrin Funk says.

Read more of our project “jugend.macht.land.“ - www.macht-land.de.

E-sports with Q-LAN by Finnish 4H

The Finnish 4H organized an LAN event between 28th of February and 3rd of March in Kuusamo, Finland. LAN is an event where people, usually young, gather together to spend time playing computer games. The first event last year was a great success and this time the event was put together by a team of four young men and the local 4H association. The 4H also got many partners to participate. Partners were needed for example to build the local area network and power supplies.

The event was all about having fun, but also about promoting competitive eSports as a hobby and as a respectable sport. There were tournaments in Counter Strike, League of Legends, Hearthstone and Trackmania. With the help of the sponsors the 4H was able to reward the winners.



greetings

16 members of The Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs' (SAYFC) visited Argentina in November as part of their Agri and Rural Affairs Study Tour.

Kadri Toomingas was elected as the new Chairperson for the Estonian 4H. The organisation also has a new Secretary General, Gerda Vares.

Media education and learning by doing



The Finnish 4H Federation has published a new web service for children aged 6 to 12. TOP Task Bank (www.toptehtavat.fi) includes 900 fun tasks and also a lot of new features. Children can share photos and videos as well as interact with each other. TOP Task Bank can be used together with the club leader at 4H club or independently at home.



Macra na Feirme

On 7th of April, Sean Finan was elected as the new National President of Macra na Feirme Ireland.



New board elected for Latvian Young Farmers' Club



Swiss Rural Youth had its General Assembly

The NFYFC Youth Forum picks up top-award

The National Federation of Young Farmer's Clubs' Youth Forum, in England, has received recognition for its development of the 'Watch That Cowpat!' game, by picking up a top Award.

The Youth Forum came up with the idea of 'Watch that Cowpat!' last year and received funding of £500 for their project. The game, which is supported by the Rural Youth Trust, encourages participants to make connections between products that we see on supermarket shelves and their source on the farm, through a spinner board, which lists food products, and the player connecting this to its respective source on the floor mat. Their efforts were rewarded last week when they picked up a NCVYS (National Council for Voluntary Youth Services) Action Squad Award.

The Swiss Rural Youth General Assembly 2015 was held on 14-15 March. The weekend started with two different courses. The participants visited a company, which produces fire-fighting vehicles for local fire departments. The second course was in an ice rink where the members learned how to play Bavarian curling. In the evening there was a theatre and a dancing event organised by the local group Wil.

The president Cornelia Fässler opened the assembly on Sunday morning. Different groups presented their celebrations with many jokes, creativity and talented acting.

This year, five people in the national board had given their emission, including the president. Tobias Bucher was elected as the new president. Five new people were chosen in the national management. These are Christoph Rubin, Florin Schmidig, Markus Jäckle, Roman Betschart and Eliane Baer. We are excited to work together with them!

Roberta Simmons, YFCU President, makes her first speech as president at YFCU AGM & Conference on Saturday 18th April.



Roberta Simmons elected as the new President of YFCU

Roberta Simmons was recently elected as the new President of the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster at their Annual General Meeting and Conference on Saturday 18th April". Roberta revealed the theme for her term as President 'Beyond the Farm Gate'- this involves a big push to drive new membership and encourages those that simply have, according to Roberta, "an interest in rural life" she also added "you don't have to be a farmer to be a Young Farmer and it is not all about welly boots and tractors."



James Speers, Collone YFC and newly elected YFCU Deputy President, congratulates his new President, Roberta Simmons at YFCU AGM & Conference on Saturday 18th April.

On 18th of February Latvian Young Farmers' Club had the 30th Congress, where member organisation elected the new board. Six candidates were elected to the Board: Artūrs Katamadze, Gatis Gailītis, Endijs Blūms, Sandra Grundštoka, Liene Aveniņa and Elīna Birka. The new board is open and ready for new challenges and events. They look forward to working to better the organisation and anticipate great cooperation with partners!



Scott Wilson was elected as the new National Chairman of the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs' at their AGM on 25th April.

The European Youth Forum (YFJ), an international organisation operating on the European level, is the platform of youth representation in international institutions, such as the EU and the UN. Acting on behalf of 99 youth organisations, including both national youth councils and non-governmental youth organisations, YFJ thrives to empower millions of young people all over Europe. The Youth Forum envisions a future where “young people are equal citizens” while they are also “encouraged and supported to achieve their fullest potential as global citizens”.



The voice of European young people



Young people, as a population, are a huge interest group. More than a quarter of the world's population are young, between 10 and 24 years of age. Therefore advocating the needs and interests of youth is now more important than ever. The current socio-economic and political challenges require innovative solutions for which youth can be a powerful catalyst. Hence YFJ aims to spread youth participation, strengthen youth organizations and increase youth autonomy and inclusion.

18

Being a youth advocate body and working on youth policy on a cross-sectorial level, the European Youth Forum stands for 14 claims promoting interests of youth in various fields, such as mobility, volunteering, employment, rights and education. Launching several campaigns, monitoring youth policy settings, organising conferences, writing statements or development plans, the Youth Forum employs various activities, tools and methods in order to overcome challenges affecting the European youth population

Learning from what has already been done helps us to find our own ways to act, therefore we encourage you to visit and get lost on YFJ's website: <http://www.youthforum.org>.

Rural Youth Europe is a member of YFJ and was present at the Council of Members and Extraordinary General Assembly (COMEM/ GA), which was held in Brussels, 17-18 April 2015. This event is the place where a voice of European youth comes together. All in all around 40 organisations, and more than 100 young people from national youth councils and international organisations participated.

Rural Youth Europe was represented by Linda Medne, Vice-Chair and a selected extra delegate, Randa Medne, Chairperson of the Latvian 4H Club was the organisation's candidate for Advisory Council of European Commission.

Agenda was very tight and many topics were discussed. Most importantly: two resolutions: “Time to act: more quality employment” and “Inclusive societies at stake” were adopted by COMEM, but also there were several workshops: “Youth Work Convention” and “Remembrance and learning from World War II” in which Rural Youth Europe took part actively.

An overall theme for Rural Youth Europe's activities in 2015 is young people's transfer to work life. The reason for choosing this theme is that youth unemployment is alarmingly high in many European countries. Rural areas are hit especially hard by recent closing of industries, cutting of services and lowered payments to food producers. Each of the activities in 2015 brings up the theme from a different perspective.

Transfer to work life

The recent Junior Event gave the participants skills and practice for acting in a team, presenting yourself and communicating your message, and knowledge about work rights and responsibilities. The Rally will be about the communities' perspective of the labour market, about how we can work together to create more job opportunities. The Study Session will give youth workers and leaders tools to support the organisations' youngsters in finding employment. Finally, the Autumn Seminar is about branding yourself to improve your chances in the competition for work.

You will notice the transfer to work life theme at our blog on our webpage and here in the later editions of this year's magazine. Here follows a few short stories about how our Board members and Secretariat staff have entered work life. You are very welcome to send us also your stories about employment, entrepreneurship and education!

Russell, our group 1 Board representative:

"Sometimes I think I am still transferring into work life! There are so many things to learn along the way, and people who do progress in their careers will be constantly learning. I have had a strange career path to what I do now. First I was a Civil Engineer (designing bridges and stuff), then I worked on farms and now I manage a type of farming cooperative. Interestingly I never applied for any of these jobs. I got them because of people I knew and because I showed an enthusiasm for certain projects."

Lukas, our Chairman:

"Probably a bit different to many other countries, but in Switzerland it is very common to enter work life after finishing secondary school with an apprenticeship. And so did I, when I graduated from secondary school at the age of 16, I started an apprenticeship as an electrician and got my first diploma. After having been working in the job for a couple of years and gaining different experience, I then entered university to study electrical engineering and this is what I'm doing now."

Mikko, our group 3 Board representative:

"I graduated as a math and physics teacher last spring. Just before my graduation, my upper secondary math teacher contacted me as she was planning to stay home for six months next autumn. She asked if I am interested to do her job and of course I was."

Zane, our group 4 Board representative:

"I started working at the Latvian 4H office as a volunteer in a project in 2012. When I finished this project the next year, I realized I want to stay. The Latvian 4H was then recruiting a person who could do some communication and PR things and they asked me. Now I've been working here for almost 1,5 years!"

Pia, our Secretary General:

"I studied architecture, so not anything related to my job at Rural Youth Europe. The background of this second career is volunteering since I was a teenager at local 4H activities, then running international exchanges together with friends and in time this gave me my first project job and now full-time employment. This shows that non-formal learning gained from involvement in organisations definitely can give useful skills for work life."

RURAL YOUTH EUROPE'S FUTURE EVENTS:

The general theme of the Rural Youth Europe activities in 2015 is young people's transfer to work life. At each of the activities we will work on the theme from different perspectives.

1-8 August 2015 in Lambach, Austria

Work hand in hand -create your land

The Rally 2015 will be held at the Agrarian Educational Institution in Lambach, Upper Austria and it is about rural cooperation for a vivid countryside. The call and preliminary programme can be found at www.ruralyoutheurope.com



Calendar



4-11 October 2015 in Strasbourg, France

Unveiling Rural Realities, Unlocking Youth Potential

This study session is about rural identity and skills and how to make the most of them in the labour market and businesses.

7-14 November 2015, Ravne na Koroškem, Slovenia

Brand Me New

At this event participants will learn about personal branding and how to improve yourself in order to succeed in your work, business and personal life.



Partners' Events

NORDIC 4H CAMP will be held in July 2015 in Nurmes, Finland.