

02/2012

INFO

rural youth europe

THE RURAL YOUTH EUROPE MAGAZINE



Bridging the Age Gap
in Budapest

Check pages 4-5

Reaching your potential
in Poland

Read about the Rally on pages 6-7

How can you get a trophy
for your best project?

Find out on pages 14-15



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@ruralyoutheurope.com or check our website www.ruralyoutheurope.com



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Dare to dare!

Sometimes you have to dare to do things you've never done before. Writing this editorial is one of those things.

By now, all the Rally participants have reached their homes and the real and deep reflection has started. During the week many new contacts were made, much laughter shared and leadership skills gained. That is the fun part. But being involved in an international youth organisation also often means daring. Dare to leave home for a foreign country, dare to take a leap into a foreign culture, dare to work together – and dare to dare! And when you do so, that is the rewarding part!

The Autumn Seminar in Switzerland in November 2012 is next up on the agenda. I hope as many of you as possible will have the chance to attend the seminar to discuss the topic of environmental protection, sustainable ways of living and what impact our everyday actions have on the environment.

I have a little story to end this editorial with: The first time I attended a Rural Youth Europe seminar was exactly two years ago. When the amazing week was over I was completely convinced that I'd never meet again the wonderful people I got to know during the seminar. Everybody seemed so relaxed about this that I got confused. After some time at home I realised a sensational thing; we are a family. We are a huge European family. And family members do meet again – sooner or later! That comforted me, at least a bit ...

I am very proud to write my very first editorial for this wonderful family! Enjoy!

EMMA JORPAS
Board member



Time to say goodbye!

After 3.5 years, it's time to say goodbye as the Secretary General of Rural Youth Europe. The time has gone by quickly: it seems only yesterday when I stepped into the RYEurope office in Helsinki in December 2008. With only 4 days of handover, it was a steep learning curve to get to know rural youth issues and the RYEurope way of working.

My first year was very memorable with a fantastic spring seminar in Latvia and my first Rally in Estonia with the dedicated team from Estonian 4H. Events in Hungary, Serbia, Sweden, Scotland, France, Slovenia and Spain followed in the next 3 years. One of the most enjoyable aspects was working together with wonderful volunteers from all over Europe. I was impressed not only with the time and effort they gave as local or international prep team members, but also with their fantastic ideas, energy and determination to run a good event with limited money and resources. Each and every one of these events was made with heart and soul.

I had the opportunity to visit the national offices in many countries including Germany, Norway and UK and the pleasure to work closely with Finnish 4H and Finland's svenska 4H. Developing a new website, designing new PR materials, refreshing e-news and INFO magazine, and producing two videos about rural youth were some of the projects I worked on. The three-year Youth Employment Action (YEA) project was probably the biggest and most significant project I worked on. YEA allowed us to work with a co-ordinated and focused approach to a topic affecting youth all over Europe. The project helped us promote the work of Rural Youth Europe and made rural youth issues more visible on the European level.

I'd like to thank the many volunteers, board members and staff I've worked with since 2008. Thank you for your time, ideas, motivation, friendship and many laughs. I'll never forget you!

AMANDA HAJNAL
Secretary General

Bridging the Age Gap

The Spring Seminar 2012 was held at the European Youth Centre in Budapest on the theme of intergenerational solidarity. Participants came from over 20 European countries and from every age group from 19 to 67 years old. The event aimed to promote the social inclusion of young people, specifically by promoting intergenerational dialogue and solidarity in rural youth work.



On 14 April 2012, we started our trip from Gothenburg, Sweden to Budapest, the capital of Hungary. We didn't know what to expect from the seminar or the city, but both exceeded our expectations.

Autumn and spring seminars are organised by Rural Youth Europe. The Spring Seminar is more focused on a particular theme and Autumn Seminar is more focused on learning to know the country the seminar is in. There is a new theme each year which is deeply explored by young people up to 35 years old from different European countries. This year's theme was "Bridging the Age Gap", which is all about creating projects with different generations involved: kids, parents and grandparents. Due to this special theme, the participants were from different age groups. "Intergenerational solidarity" was an expression that we often used in our sessions. The week was full of creative workshops and educational activities, another word for games!

One example of a session was theatre performances, where our task was to play dilemma theatre and find solutions for different situations. Another day we had a Living Library session where six different intergenerational projects from different countries were introduced. Our favourites were a project from Latvian 4H, "Learning By Doing", where seniors taught kids/youths in the local 4H

club for a year, and "Know your neighbour" from Irish Rural Youth, which is about learning to know your neighbours with different fun events.

In the evenings we had diverse activities such as a film night, eating out, games and our favourite, the International Buffet. It was almost like tasting Europe! We tasted pickled herring, Norwegian brown cheese, Turkish helva, British party-rings and Bulgarian mashed tomatoes.

We stayed at European Youth Centre (www.eycb.coe.int) with the best view over the city. We could see the big white Hungarian parliament and the Danube River. One afternoon, Zsoka, a participant from Hungarian Rural Youth (AGRYA), took us on a city tour. She showed us Matya church, the President's residence and Buda castle.

But everything has an end and on 22 April we left sunny and warm Budapest and went back to cold Sweden. We came home with increased knowledge about ourselves and intergenerational projects, truly inspired, and with 32 new Facebook friends all over Europe!

MALIN CARLSSON & EMMA RUDERFELT
Swedish 4H



European Rally 2012

The European Rally 2012 was hosted by the Organisation for the Development of Rural Areas in Poland (WSnRRoW) in the small village of Zerków in the western part of Poland. The Rally was titled “Reach Your Potential! Developing Youth Leadership in Rural Communities” and ran from 4-11 August 2012.



The European Rally was once again a huge success. We can honestly say we thoroughly enjoyed the workshops, the excursions, the country, and most importantly meeting lots of new friends from all over Europe.

We were blessed with hot sunny weather on arrival and we soon started meeting some of the other delegates, most of whom spoke great English. The trouble was that most of us English speakers could not be understood due to the deviance from the Queen's English in our regional accents. We all had to slow our speaking down and pronounce words properly in order to be understood. We all agree that we are speaking better English now than when we left!

The week formally began with an Opening Ceremony which included some fabulous traditional Polish dancing, local speakers and various performances. A highly energised tone was set for the week! The theme of the Rally was focused around youth leadership in rural areas and how this can be an important part of ensuring rural communities remain vibrant, progressive and resilient. We had a number of workshops looking at this theme and shared ideas and examples between each other. It was amazing

how many parallels existed between countries on opposite sides of Europe but just as fascinating to hear how the various countries are tackling problems and embracing the future.

The workshops certainly concluded that it was worthwhile including young people in decision-making but that this should be balanced with experience and knowledge when considering the future direction of our communities.

One of the highlights of the week was the international buffet evening where each country was given a table to display food from their country. There was a wide variety of foods ranging from different meats to various sweet and savoury dishes. Once all of the tables were neatly laid out, consumption began and we all got to tuck in and sample each country's traditional produce.

We also had the chance to visit a few farms in the area. The farmland we saw was used entirely for arable land and horticulture and we were very surprised to only see a handful of cattle grazing outside. Since Poland is a modest meat-producing region we soon came to realise that almost all of the animals are reared out of sight inside purpose built buildings. We had chance to



see such a farm when we visited a dairy farm where all of the cows were kept indoors all year round and their feed was shipped in to them.

As part of the Rally each country had to present a national performance so the English team performed a traditional Morris dance which was a lot of fun! Different countries performed a variety of different songs, dances and presentations that promoted their country superbly. We also learnt lots of new energisers and games from different countries which I am sure will now be used all over Europe for years to come.

The week rounded off with a final Closing Ceremony and then we all departed and made our separate ways back home.

GARETH LAKING & RUSSELL CARRINGTON
National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs

P.S. Who likes Shaky Shaky? (If you don't understand this question, speak to somebody who went on the European Rally this year and listen to their experiences, we can guarantee you won't regret it.)



General Assembly 2012



The 2012 Rural Youth Europe General Assembly was held in the town of Zerków, Poland on Friday 10 August. An introduction session and two workshops were held on Thursday 9 August to welcome the GA delegates formally.

The first workshop was held by Gwennan Davies (Group 1 board representative) and it focused on sharing experiences between the member organisations, and in particular the selection process of each member organisation in getting participants to attend Rural Youth Europe events. It was interesting to note the different ways the member organisations select participants. The best ways were of “selling” and providing feedback to the grassroots members of the organisations after the events

was then discussed, in order to raise awareness of the organisation across Europe.

The second workshop was held by Michael Schwab (Chairman) and it focused on funding issues. Delegates thought of different and new ways which RYEurope could be financed in the future along with the grants that are open to such organisations. An analysis was then held on each section of the proposed Behavioural Guidelines.

The Regional meetings were held on Thursday evening with delegates gathering together from the 4 regional groups of Rural Youth Europe (UK & Ireland, Central Europe, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe) to discuss the GA proposals and key agenda items.

The General Assembly was formally opened by the Chairman, Michael Schwab, promptly at 9.30 on Friday morning. Presentations were given on the Annual Report 2011, Board



meetings 2011 and Finances for 2011, 2012 and the budget for 2013. Future activities for 2012-2013 were presented by the hosting countries, including the Rally in Ireland, Spring Seminar in France and the Autumn Seminar in England. The delegates accepted Wales' proposal to host the Rally in 2014 along with Austria's proposal to host the Rally in 2015. An expression of interest was given by Northern Ireland to host the Rally in 2016.

An important aspect of the GA this year was the election of several new board members:

- Kadri Toomingas (Estonia) was elected as the Chair of Rural Youth Europe
- Lukas Helfenstein (Switzerland) was elected as Vice-Chair of Rural Youth Europe
- Rok Roblek (Slovenia) was elected as Group 2 Central Europe representative
- Emma Jorpes (Finland) was elected as Group 3 Scandinavia representative

- Adrian Szymczak (Poland) was elected as Group 4 Eastern Europe representative

We welcome and congratulate the new board members on their election and wish them well for a term of 2 years. RYEurope also wishes to take this opportunity to thank two key members of the Board who retired at the GA: Michael Schwab (Germany) and Ulrica Berglöf (Sweden). They have a combined experience of over 18 years in RYEurope. Their wisdom and knowledge will be greatly missed. We also thank Michal Wojtkowiak (Poland) for his 11 months as a Board member. His contributions to Rural Youth Europe during this time were much appreciated.

Other key GA decisions included:

- Adoption of the Behavioural Guidelines
- Acceptance of the Switzerland's proposal for travel reimbursements during events – partner forms must be submitted by the deadline otherwise it would be up to the discretion of the hosting organisation

whether to reimburse the participants for their travel.

- The Polish Rural Youth Union (ZMW) was accepted as full members of Rural Youth Europe – Welcome!

The GA closed with an update on the Best Practice Competition 2012: a new application form has been created and all member organisations were encouraged to submit a project into the competition, the deadline being the end of January 2013. An overview of the Youth Employment Action project was given and the 2011 RYEurope video was shown to the GA delegates, which is now available on YouTube for all to view.

The RYEurope board wish to thank WSnRROW in Poland for their wonderful hosting of the GA this year.

GWENNAN DAVES
Board member

Introduction of the Board

KADRI TOOMINGAS Chairperson



Greetings to you from Estonia!

Just a brief introduction to who I am. I'm Kadri Toomingas, past Vice-Chairman of Estonian 4H and Vice-Chairman of RYEurope for the past two years. I have been involved in Estonian 4H for many years and I'm currently a club leader of my local club Jäneda 4H. I currently work in my local school as a teacher and IT co-ordinator. In my free time I sing in a choir and dance in a local folk dance group. During the last 6 years I have been actively involved also in international work with Rural Youth Europe.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Polish team for an excellent Rally and General Assembly, the week was a huge success and they are to be applauded for their work, and also thanks to the participants who play a vital role in our activities. Also I would like to say thank you to Michal Schwab for his excellent work these past 6 years as a Board member, Vice-Chairman and Chairman.

It is an honour for me to have been elected as Chairman of Rural Youth Europe for the next two years. I look forward to this challenge and working with you all.

LUKAS HELFENSTEIN Vice-Chair



Hi everyone!

I'm Lukas Helfenstein, coming from a dairy farm in central Switzerland. I just turned 24 in August. In my professional career I'm currently studying electrical engineering at Lucerne University of

Applied Sciences.

I am an active member of Swiss Rural Youth and have been a member of the national board for three years and involved in several projects. During the past two years I was the Board representative for Central Europe in Rural Youth Europe and contributed to many rural youth projects and events with a European dimension. Just a few weeks ago, the latest big project I was involved was the European Rally in Poland. The General Assembly of Rural Youth Europe was also held at the same venue and I was elected to the position of Vice-Chair. That's the reason I'm still here and I'm looking very much forward to two more prosperous rural youth years together with you, your clubs and your organisations.

If you want to know more about me, you are very welcome to meet me at one of RYEurope's events!



GWENNAN DAVIES Representative for UK and Ireland



Hello fellow RYEurope members!

The past year has flown by and I am now in my second year of office as Group 1 (UK & Ireland) board representative. It has indeed been a very busy and memorable year, having yet again met people from across the member organisations, making friends that I will never forget and memories that I will treasure for a lifetime. It's important that we grasp every opportunity when attending RYEurope events, throwing ourselves into every workshop giving 100%, to learn and develop.

I wish to thank all members from Group 1 who have participated as trainers or prep-team members in the past year. Your work is greatly appreciated, and I'm sure that you've gained valuable skills from these experiences.

For those of you reading this magazine you have probably attended one of our events: spread the word about the good time you've had so that others can benefit from these unique learning opportunities. Wishing you all a fabulous year and I might see you around Europe somewhere, sometime! lechyd Da!



ROK ROBLEK Representative for Central Europe



Dear friends of Rural Youth Europe!

My name is Rok Roblek and I come from Slovenia. In the GA in Poland I was elected to represent Central Europe in the Rural Youth Europe board.

Working with rural youth is something that has clearly marked my way of life. I started on a regional level, first as a member and nowadays I have the role of Chairman of the Slovenian Rural Youth association.

Besides many things that have to be done once you are in such a position I am a student of agriculture and economy. In addition, I help my parents to run our family farm.

I'm a cheerful and hardworking person who likes nature, challenges and good parties. I think I find all of these in Rural Youth Europe! Do not forget that Rural Youth Europe is for you, and every single person who has ever joined RYEurope events makes this organisation so unique and amazing as it is.

It is my pleasure to work with you and I am looking forward to meeting and discussing with you!

Emma Jorpes Representative for Scandinavia



Hej på dig!

My name is Emma Jorpes and I am from Finland, which means I represent Scandinavia in the newly elected board. I have a background within the Swedish speaking 4H organisation in Finland,

Finlands svenska 4H, where I went to a dogsitter course six years ago - totally unaware of where I was going to be six years later! Never in my life would I change the last six years of laughter, courses, challenges, camps, international events, new friends and stuff learnt!

At the moment I'm Vice-Chair of my local 4H club as well as one of the key persons for our youth group YEP (Young Energetic People). I have attended as well as organised events on the local, regional, national and international level throughout the years as a member. When not doing 4H stuff I enjoy reading, being outdoors and listening to music. I have recently graduated from upper secondary school and this year I will attend a one year course called "Around the world in 8 months" which includes subjects such as communication, history, languages and other things that might be good to have in your luggage when travelling around and meeting new cultures!

ADRIAN SZYMCZAK Representative for Eastern Europe



Czesz!

My name is Adrian Szymczak and I have the honour to be the new Eastern European representative in the Rural Youth Europe board. This year I helped to prepare the Rally in Poland and have

been chosen to be a successor of Michał Wojtkowiak in his position.

I have taken part in numerous international youth exchanges and projects as an animator, translator and participant all over Europe, which gave me experiences I will use for the good of us all – the great Rural Youth Europe family.

Personally, I am a computer science student at Poznan University of Technology. I am keen on meeting open-minded people, knowing their way of thinking, habits, hobbies, and hoping to learn and share some of them. Rural Youth Europe is perfectly suitable for fulfillment of such a need. I am impatiently looking forward to new adventures and taking on interesting and challenging duties.

Hopefully see you one day!

Youth Exchange in Austria

“Gather2gether” was a youth exchange project which was organised by a motivated group of young people from Rural Youth Austria (Landjugend). Supported by the European Commission and its programme called Youth in Action and by private donations, 24 participants from Austria, Finland, Slovenia and Spain took the opportunity to enjoy an unforgettable week. The project was carried out in a small village called Yspertal, located in the centre of Lower Austria.



The overall title of the week was Sustainable Production & Conscious Consumption and therefore several workshops were dealing with the following topics:

- Alternative and sustainable energy production
- Ecological footprint
- Sustainable food production
- Mobility

Each workshop was prepared and executed by the participants. This gave every participant the chance to not only participate, but also prepare and facilitate a certain workshop. It's important to mention that within these workshops a variety of non-formal education tools were used. This leads to active participation, lively discussions, role-plays and remarkable results. Not all workshops were held indoors and so we were visiting also regional agricultural enterprises to get a practical point of view of the themes we were discussing, as for example visiting a beer company and an ecological juice production company. We also got to know how a school of renewable energy works.

In addition, we also focused on games and activities not only to break the ice, but also to establish a team spirit within the group. Furthermore, the participants got the opportunity to take an insight to local traditions, typical dances and a characteristic restaurant, and were also inspired by various cultural monuments and the impressive landscape of the region.

Even the evenings were used rather intensively to get to know each other's traditions and thus, for example an international buffet and a traditional dancing evening were organised.



The idea for the youth exchange was born at a seminar organised by Rural Youth Europe in Spring 2011 in Strasbourg. Several participants were interested in this kind of project and afterwards we stayed in contact and kept the spirit of Shaky-Shaky alive. And after a bit more than one year, the first youth exchange is already history. But that's not all. This project is the beginning of a series of further youth exchanges to visit also the other participating countries – so

we gather2gether again and we are already looking forward to seeing each other.

Thanks to everyone and a big hug to those of you who couldn't participate.

ANTON FITZTHUM (Austria) & DAVID MARTOS (Spain)
Gather2gether prep team

Youth Project of 2012

Welcome to the best practise competition of 2012!

A new year brings new activities, highlights and projects and also a new chance to win the best practice competition.



There are a lot of thrilling projects from youth clubs and their organisations every year, showing the power, engagement and creativity of today's youth and how they contribute to the community.

What kind of innovative projects is your club running this year to promote and support your club and community? Beside innovativeness and creativity, the judges will be looking for the involvement of youth, the volunteering aspect of your project and the benefit to your members, club and community.

To simplify the application process, RYEurope has prepared a new easy-to-handle form which is presented in a more visually attractive way, and includes a lot of pictures and examples of past years projects.

The prize is again the popular youth trophy and the participation of two extra members to the Rally in August 2013 in Ireland.

Deadline for applications is the **15th January 2013** and each member organisation of RYEurope is allowed to hand in up to three projects.

For any further questions and for the application form, contact the office on: office@ruralyouth europe.com

Winners of the Youth Project of 2011

During the Rally in Poland, last year's winner of the competition presented their project and impressed all attendees with their fantastic community engagement. The "How fit is your tractor" project was submitted by Kesh Young Farmers' Club from Northern Ireland – it won the competition for its innovative idea and the huge success for their club, the community and local charity.

The aim of the project was to raise money by organising a competition for tractor owners to judge the condition of their tractors. The target beneficiary of the raised money was

the Walker family who have a young child suffering from a brain tumour. In follow up events they raised a lot more money for a MRI Scanner for a children's hospital.

With their engagement in the community and all the thanks and recognition they have received from the public, they deeply impressed the judges and won the prize for the best project of 2011. Club members Gillian Henderson and Lorna Graham, who attended the Rally in Poland, were very enthusiastic and proud when they presented their project at the Closing Ceremony of the Rally. With their inspiring presentation everyone was convinced that they really deserved their trophy.

Congratulations to Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster and Kesh Young Farmers' Club for winning the Youth Project of 2011!

LUKAS HELFENSTEIN
Vice-Chairman

Study visit to Bulgaria



The Hungarian Young Farmers organisation (AGRYA) organised a study visit to Bulgaria from 17-19 May 2012. In the first days we had discussions with representatives of the Youth in Action National Agency, Ministry for Agriculture, and the Department for the support of young farmers. EU-Funding for young farmers, its terms and conditions were the main topics discussed.

On 18 May, the whole group got on a bus which took us 200 km east to the area around Gabrovo in central Bulgaria. We met young farmers and had a pleasant dinner in a traditional hotel where we also stayed for the night. On the next morning two farm visits were on the agenda. We saw how the California Red Worm was bred on fields to produce high quality soil (and to serve as bait for fishing). The second one was a modern poultry farm.

I would like to thank my three colleagues from Hungary for the very good company during the three days and Bulgarian Young Farmers for giving us very lively impressions of their country and the state of agriculture and rural affairs in Bulgaria.

MICHAEL SCHWAB
Rural Youth Europe

Once an IFYE, always an IFYE

The European IFYE conference is held every year to bring the IFYE alumnis from Europe and the rest of the world together to meet old IFYE friends and families again and make new IFYE friends. An exciting programme, interesting excursions and amazing participants make the conference a fabulous week for everyone, just like the European Rally.

This year Sweden hosted the conference and prepared an excellent programme. A medieval day, the mid-summer festival and fascinating excursions made the conference a perfect week. Beside the official programme and discussions with old and new IFYE friends, I had also the chance to learn a lot about the history of Rural Youth Europe by speaking to past Chairmen from 10 or 20 years ago.

Wales is inviting you to the European IFYE-conference in 2013 and I'm looking forward to meeting new faces.

LUKAS HELFENSTEIN
Vice-Chairman



AUTUMN SEMINAR 2012

"Protect the environment for your future!"

3-10 November 2012, Gersau, Switzerland

Swiss Rural Youth will host the Autumn Seminar in the lovely town of Gersau, on the shores of Lake Lucerne. The theme will be environmental protection and sustainable development in rural communities. The seminar will explore how rural young people can contribute to sustainable ways of living. Participants will see local examples of sustainable development in rural areas such as forestry, energy production, recycling and energy-efficient construction. Participants will be encouraged to become active citizens at the local, national and European level and to participate in the sustainable creation of their future.

SPRING SEMINAR 2013

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

**25 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, Ireland

Macra na Feirme will host the Rally 2013 in Gurteen, Ireland on the theme of community engagement. "Get Involved!" is a multilateral youth exchange for 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 and 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

October 2013, UK

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.