

YUURA



your region your future

Final Results Brochure

SPORTS

Stories about youth in demographic change



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EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



**EUROPEAN UNION
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DEVELOPMENT FUND**



SACHSEN-ANHALT
Ministerium für
Landesentwicklung und Verkehr

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Editorial



Dear Readers,

A unified Europe is more than just the financial crisis and an increasing public debt. Europe means cooperation and the exchange of experiences. This also holds true for the broad issue of demographic change. Over recent years, as well as in the present, we have experienced a dramatic development and will be confronted with the impacts of these developments in the future. We have already been talking about this development for a long time. At the moment, we are not discussing the description and the causal research; rather, we are talking about the practical solutions that are needed to cope with shrinkage and aging in places where demographic change occurs. More concretely, this refers to cities and municipalities.

A decline in the birth rate and the out-migration of highly educated people leads to disadvantages pertaining to global competition – especially in rural regions. Enterprises are faced with trying to keep skilled employees, as well as acquiring a new, qualified workforce. In order to achieve this, close collaboration between companies, public authorities and educational institutions is needed.

In this regard, I am glad that the CENTRAL EUROPE Project YURA, in collaboration with the Ministry for Regional Development and Transport as the Lead Partner, addresses this topic. The project partners have developed innovative approaches to counteract the negative impacts of demographic change in Central European regions – for example, the shortage of skills induced by out-migrating, educated young people. Given this, it is necessary to attract youth for educational opportunities within their regions. Under the motto of “Your region – Your future”, YURA focuses on younger people in particular, as they are a main target group for future regional development.

YURA has recognised that young people need to participate in social and political decisions in order to get emotionally attached to their home region. This is in reference to only one example of the huge number of activities that the YURA project has to offer. Thus, during the YURA Youth Seminar, youngsters from six Central European countries discussed common ideas to raise awareness for the challenges in their regions and highlighted possible solutions. The seminar participants developed recommendations and presented them to political stakeholders at the State Parliament of Saxony-Anhalt.

This final brochure of the YURA project provides an overview of common challenges the regions in Europe are facing.

I hope that you enjoy reading the information we have put together here for you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Webel'.

Thomas Webel

Minister for Regional Development and Transport
of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt

The YURA mission

European youth in demographic change

“My Grandma used to say to me: 'Make sure you get a good education!' Now, almost ten years later, I have the school leaving examination in my pocket and don't know what to do. Should I apply for university or start an apprenticeship? Anyway, I will have to move if I want to pursue further education or get a job, since there is no work and nothing interesting to do here in my region.”

In Europe, many young people are in a similar situation like this youngster. Often they decide to leave home for better education opportunities in the bigger cities. Especially in rural regions, this leads to a lack of qualified young employees. While elder people stay, the young ones leave, coming home only on the weekends. As a result, rural areas are affected by demographic change twice: in addition to the decreasing birth rates, they experience an exodus of young and skilled people.

The challenge of demographic change for regional development

Currently, and even more in the upcoming decades, demographic change will be a major challenge for regional development. Areas in Central and Eastern Europe, in particular, face an out-migration of the young and qualified workforce. Depopulation, birth decline and aging have a negative influence on the economic and social development of rural regions. Young people play a key role in tackling the problem of demographic change if they feel that they will have to leave because there are no employment opportunities in their home region.

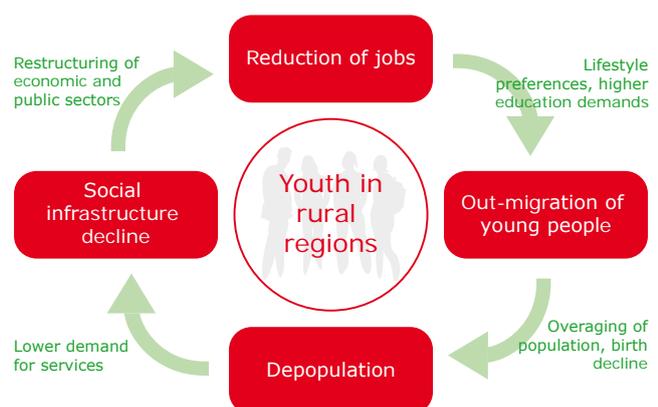
Target areas of the out-migrating youth are mostly the urban centres, which offer more work and education possibilities as well as a better infrastructure and leisure facilities. Youngsters are attracted by this urban lifestyle and move to the cities for their vocational career. In contrast, the population in rural regions shrinks and the social infrastructure declines in reaction to a lower demand for services. Furthermore, local enterprises suffer as they have problems finding qualified staff. The increasing lack of talented and motivated young people enforces the economic viability and attractiveness of a region in the long run.

Making rural regions attractive for younger people – needs and mission

European regions need innovative concepts to tackle this “brain drain”. Stronger cooperation between regional players from the political, economic, educational and scientific sectors is needed to implement successful strategies. Attractive offers for the vocational and scientific education of young people form the foundation towards achieving this goal.

However, the question of which concepts are best suited to counteract the process of out-migration and make rural regions more attractive for young people again arises. In some states, regional players have already developed successful concepts and tools, which could act as role models for other European countries. This is the starting point of the YURA project, in which six Central European regions cooperated together for one common mission: to maintain existing vocational opportunities and to develop new educational formats for youngsters in their home regions. This brochure shows how this mission was put into practice.

Out-migration of young people as threat for regional development



Developing transnational youth strategies in rural regions with migration

With the slogan "Your region – Your future" ten institutions from six Central European countries cooperated in the YURA project. The partners developed strategies for a better quality of life and more educational opportunities for young people in rural regions.

Many rural regions in Central Europe are facing similar problems. Young, motivated people move to the urban centres, reinforcing the impact of demographic change in areas where only the elderly remain. At the same time, many companies are confronted with a shortage of a skilled workforce in rural areas. To improve this situation, YURA established long-term cooperations between local schools and companies, and developed innovative educational offers for young people, from secondary school up to high school and college. In workshops and project weeks, pupils become acquainted with working possibilities in their home region. They are given practical insight into local businesses while still in school. In this way, YURA actively supports them in their vocational career planning and decision-making. In turn, enterprises can recruit talented apprentices more easily. Educational institutions and players in regional development also accompany the school-enterprise cooperations.

The alarming impact of demographic change for young people in rural regions is not perceived equally by all EU member states and the European Union itself. Thus, YURA initiates a stronger dialogue in regards to this issue at a European and regional level, and prepared a joint transnational strategy with recommendations for regional policymakers resulting from the experiences had in the project.

YURA in a nutshell

Programme priority 4: Demographic change and knowledge development – addressing the territorial effects of demographic and social change on urban and regional development

ERDF funding: 1.586.345 €

Project duration: March 2010 – February 2013

4 concepts — 1 aim

To counteract the migration of young people in the long run, the project partners carried out a total of 18 pilot actions, which addressed a variety of youth issues and needs in the regions involved. Although the pilot actions were implemented individually in each of the regions, they followed four common concepts:

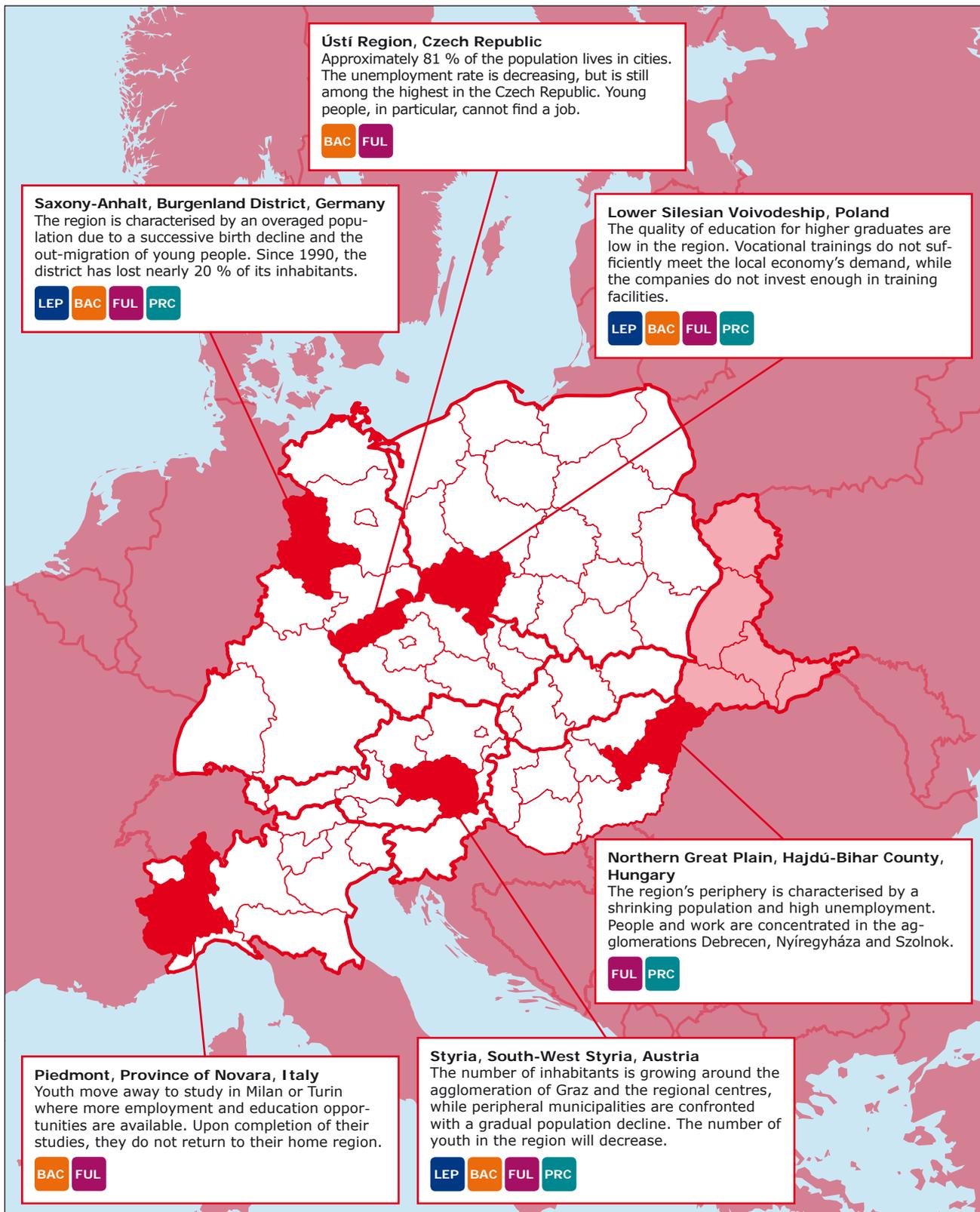
-  **LEARNING PARTNERSHIP**
Local school-enterprise cooperations
-  **BUSINESS ACADEMY**
Support of gifted pupils
-  **FUTURE LABORATORY**
Participation of youth in regional development
-  **PUPILS RESEARCH CENTRE**
Introduction of the local economy to pupils

Several baseline studies, which were carried out by the German isw Institute gGmbH within the scope of the project, provided insight into the social and economic trends, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each partner region's educational system. Based on the findings, an indicator system was developed for transnational benchmarking of the partner regions regarding the overall project goals. The knowledge gained from these scientific studies led to the design of four educational concepts within the campaigns' pilot projects, each adapted to the respective regional situation and needs. On the subsequent pages, the four pilot action concepts will be presented by drawing on selected regional activities.

The **project regions** are faced with different preconditions regarding social and demographic change. Their locations within Europe range from “inter-city” to “peripheral.” Many of them have high emigration rates towards larger cities and try to re-integrate the remaining youth into the local

labour market. Others register a slight growth but need to revise existing and develop new educational offers. What they do have in common is the decline and ageing of their population, high rates of youth emigration, unemployment and a lack of qualified employees.

Pilot action concepts carried out in the six YURA project regions



Learning Partnership

Local cooperations between schools and enterprises

The learning partnership concept has been developed to improve the skills of young people and to prepare them for vocational training after school. Local companies profit from the cooperation with schools as well, since they can establish contacts with talented pupils and attract them as future apprentices.

The Learning Partnership concept was developed in the early 1990s in reaction to the inadequate level of knowledge and skills among school graduates. The idea is to complement regular school subjects with practical units in companies, and to also include the needs of local businesses when drafting the school curricula. Thus, factory tours, practical working days or internships become an integrative part of the pupils' class schedule. Cooperations between local schools, companies and higher education facilities, such as universities and colleges, should be strengthened through formal partnership agreements. The pupils explore vocational training opportunities and obtain new career perspectives in their home region, while the companies present their businesses and have the opportunity to observe potential apprentices. Learning partnerships were carried out in three

project regions. Here the focus is on activities in the Austrian region of South-West Styria.

Qualifying young engineers

A cooperation between the polytechnic school Köflach and the local ironwork company Krenhof AG was established in Styria. The participants decided to link the field of energy-efficient mobility with the pupils' school disciplines: metalworking and electrical engineering. Six pupils designed and built an energy-optimised electric kart, a project that drew the attention of local politicians, other companies and the public to the issue of energy efficiency.

During the construction process, the company's staff supervised the students. Before beginning with



Working on the kart body

the practical work, the students developed the construction details of the vehicle on a computer using CAD-software. The prospective apprentices made a flanged shaft for the gear with the help of CNC-milling and -turning machines in the metal-working group, while the electro team discussed the electro-technical basics of the kart. This group was responsible for the cabling and optimised the control system. During associated school lessons, experts from a local car dealer and from the Austrian Automobile Association gave the pupils insight into electro-mobility.

Upon completion, the kart was used as a communication tool to raise awareness for energy-efficient mobility. For this, the kart was presented to regional stakeholders and to the public at a performance show. In addition, the results underline the importance of offering young people the opportunity to learn about regional industries and to obtain practical experiences while still at school. The success of the concept was confirmed by the fact that three participants of the Learning Partnership were employed by the company afterwards, starting their apprenticeship in September 2012.

Local informational days for pupils

Renewable energies and technologies for energy efficiency are economic sectors with potential in Styria. More job opportunities for young people are expected in these areas as well in combination with the fields of electric engineering and metalworking, for instance, within the implementation of renewable energy plants. Two informational days were organised to inform young people about these work

Theoretical part of the kart construction



Local informational days for pupils in Styria

possibilities and to raise their interest in engineering related to renewable energies. The pupils could learn more about professions typical for their region by watching films or by engaging in discussions at information desks of local enterprises and guilds.

The informational days were an opportunity for local companies to present their products and techniques regarding renewable energies and energy efficiency. At the same time, pupils from local schools had the chance to meet local companies and to gather information about job opportunities in their home region.

The Learning Partnership has proven to be a successful concept and has a future in South-West Styria, as other municipalities also showed vivid interest in this approach, which was developed by the YURA project. It can also be stated that employers' awareness for young people as potential future employees was increased by the Learning Partnerships. The pilot action was generally recognised as a huge step forward in supporting the career planning of young people.

"The successful collaboration within the pilot actions has significantly increased the motivation of the participating teachers and companies to continue the cooperation in the long run."

Claudia Krobath, Innovation Region Styria GmbH (Austria)

37 follow-up projects
10 political stakeholders
17 schools
25 companies
30 cooperations
2045 pupils

Business Academy

Supporting young talents and the local economy

Workshops, lectures, field trips – the Business Academy concept compiles a variety of didactic approaches to establish a link between high schools, local universities and companies. Young high school talents explored natural sciences, mathematics, macroeconomy and business management, topics which are later relevant for admission to regional universities or for employment at local companies.

The central objective of the Business Academy is to familiarise gifted secondary school pupils with the potentials of the local economy and tertiary education institutions. In addition to regular school lessons, the youngsters took part in research workshops and field studies. The Business Academy concept is based on two educational approaches. The "diamond workshop" model, developed by the Polish Foundation of International Education, primarily deals with natural sciences and mathematics. The "economic academy's" approach has been designed by the German Herzog August Foundation and is focussed on economic and technological knowledge as well as business administration. Business Academies were carried out in five project regions, while this article takes into account mainly the implementation of the Business Academy approaches in Germany and Poland.

Economic academies for pupils in Saxony-Anhalt

In the Burgenland district, there is a gap between the pupils' knowledge in the field of economics and the expectations of local enterprises. The economic academy teaches interested pupils the required economic skills and makes them familiar with local businesses. The overarching Business Academy concept was used as an incentive to keep the future specialised workforce in the region.

The interest in the Business Academy has been huge: 40 pupils from regional secondary schools participated in the academy. Extra-curricular lessons were taught by skilled trainers from the economic, scientific and administrative sectors. During four school semesters, the students participated in in workshop series about



Youngsters in conversation with the training manager of the economic academy in Saxony-Anhalt



Working in the chemical lab

- economic processes from a macroeconomic perspective,
- added value as a key economic target,
- manpower and skills as economic factors and business management.

The economic academy brought together a number of cooperation partners, such as schools, regional administrations, local enterprises, pupils and their parents. Many contacts between players in the economic sector and schools could be established. Presentations of the pilot action to other schools and a survey among pupils have shown that this education offer is of interest and highly in demand. The YURA project decisively contributed to refine, test and disseminate the economic academy approach within and beyond the region. After a successful start, the Business Academy will continue in the future. Around 250.000 euros have been allocated as a yearly budget for the continuation of the academies.

Diamond workshops in Lower Silesia

The diamond workshop model has been applied since 2007, and provides extra-curricular education in the natural sciences. In this regard, the diamond stands for improving the students' skills in acquiring scientific knowledge and developing ideas for their future career. The Foundation of International Education tested the workshop model by involving Lower Silesian stakeholders from the educational, economic and scientific sectors. Three didactic programmes covering natural sciences were developed. Twenty pupils with excellent school grades in natural sciences and mathematics were invited to participate. The students participated in three 5-day workshops dealing with mathematics, chemistry and



Identification of plants in the biology workshop

biology. At Wrocław University, Lower Silesia's best mathematicians taught the pupils in algebra and geometry. Another group of students tested chemical compounds and transformations in the chemical lab at the University of Technology. During a visit to an electrochemical factory, the pupils gained insight into electroplating processes. Some students worked in the field of biology and learnt more about environmental conservation. At the ecological station in Karpacz, they checked the acidity of water and air pollution and measured the current soil contamination. On a field trip, the students explored the regional flora and fauna.

The Business Academy concept has been innovative for the majority of the partner regions, since traditionally, the educational systems emphasised the support of deprived pupils than of gifted ones. This way, the Business Academy helped to improve third-level education offers, which is also a central objective of the inclusive growth target of the EU's 2020 Strategy.

"We are going to introduce the diamond workshop model of the Business Academy into other Polish regions."

Agnieszka Grędysa, *Foundation of International Education (Poland)*



Future Laboratory

How your region becomes your future again

Youths are the ones who predominantly suffer from the shrinkage of public infrastructure in rural regions: bus routes from their home village to the nearest town are discontinued, entire schools are closed or school classes are merged. To avoid major cuts to the social and educational system, young people need to be more strongly involved in regional planning processes. YURA encourages young people to join in discussions about future regional development.

The bottom-up oriented Future Laboratory concept — based on Robert Jungk's "Future Workshop" method from the 1970s — focuses on the increased involvement of young people in regional decision-making processes. Issues like education, social services and public transportation were raised in participative workshops. Together with local stakeholders, the pupils discussed their current living conditions and developed scenarios for a more attractive region by following a three-step method.

Future Laboratories were carried out in all project regions. The pupils learned to work in groups and to identify problems and the potential of developments in their region. The participation of young people in the workshops should contribute to a better quality of life and counteract migration in the long run.

The perfect future region for me would be...

Approximately 120 pupils participated in three Future Laboratories in the Ústí Region. Each laboratory consisted of five working groups dealing with education, public transport, leisure, environment and social infrastructure. Within each group, the pupils discussed the needs for better living conditions in their home region. Frequently, the participants expressed their concerns about a bad education and social system. In small groups, the students specified the major problems to tackle, for example, old-fashioned school facilities, school closures or insufficient nursery capacities. Based on these demands, they developed scenarios for an improved quality of life in their region.



Pupils discuss the future of their region



Presenting the needs for action to the mayor of Česká Kamenice

A final declaration summarises the most important needs for action raised during the workshops. The students presented this action plan to local representatives and discussed possible solution strategies. Some issues addressed by the pupils landed on fertile soil; for instance, in the town Podbořany, additional bus connections have been offered. The pupils now have more possibilities to reach their school in a shorter time.

“Online signpost” for better career planning in the Piedmont

The Province of Novara is an urban region with a relatively good educational infrastructure. However, many well-educated young people migrate to nearby Milan and Turin for work. Studies thereby indicate the need to better inform pupils about existing education offers in their home region.

Three-step method of the Future Laboratory

1) Informational research: survey

Development of a questionnaire



2) Interactive workshop

Phase I: brainstorming, identification of topics, strengths and weaknesses

Phase II: defining major problems, scenario development



3) Results and evaluation

Compiling the most significant needs for action and submitting these to the municipalities



Welcome page of the “Nova Scuola” online portal

Within the YURA project, the “Nova Scuola” online portal was established, in which young people can find information about schools, universities and other educational institutions in the Province of Novara and the surrounding Piedmont region. The portal marks a signpost for young people, providing them with an initial orientation concerning their career planning. An additional event calendar announces upcoming job fairs, assessment centres and open-house days at schools and universities. Furthermore, an up-to-date news section and a discussion forum are integrated where users can get into contact and exchange their knowledge about job and education opportunities. In order to increase the information network, the Nova Scuola online portal is linked with a number of public authorities and educational institutions in the region.

► www.novascuola.provincia.novara.it

The Future Laboratory concept was deployed to find out more about the issues and wishes of young people in the project regions. If local political stakeholders are actively involved, the concept can provide a feasible tool to participate youth in regional development.



Pupils Research Centre

Explore the job perspectives in your home region!

Learn what you really need for your career – school-enterprise cooperations are an innovative approach in this regard. Yet many European regions are still lacking adequate programmes. The Pupils Research Centre concept helped to improve the situation. Similar to the Learning Partnership approach, extra-curricular learning modules were developed to support students in their career planning and to arrange contacts with the local economic sector.

As interviews with students during the pilot action revealed, pupils often are not sufficiently informed about future employment opportunities in their home region. Communication concerning the characteristics of the local labour market and related vocational perspectives to the youth need to be improved. During the Pupils Research Centre pilot actions, young people got acquainted with the specific sectors of the local economy and the requirements for human resources. The youth were also supported systematically in their career planning.

In collaboration with companies and teachers, the project partners involved developed learning modules like vocational curricula, thematic workshops and practice days. All had the same objective of bringing pupils closer to the enterprises and their businesses.

A common methodology ensures the transnational transfer and comparability of the Pupils Research Centre concept. At first, the organisers agreed upon a common definition of the learning modules. They developed an educational concept and adapted it to the respective regional needs and themes, in particular science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Within the learning modules they tested the concept in collaboration with the pupils, teachers, companies and parents.

The topics varied from region to region in accordance with the respective local economic and scientific environment. For instance, the curricula in Styria included mechanical and electrical engineering, whereas in Lower Silesia landscape architecture, agribusiness and food technology were on



Bringing pupils closer to the enterprises and their businesses



Award of the certificate after successful completion of the learning module



Adobe bricks made in the Pupils Research Centre in Bököny

the agenda. In the German district of Burgenland, pupils between the ages of 13 and 18 participated in practice-oriented afternoon lessons dedicated to mechatronics and CNC technology. The aim of the learning module was to support pupils in understanding mechanic processes, while adopting CNC applications in practice. For the teenagers and the participating local companies, this was an excellent opportunity to establish contacts for future vocational training.

Adobe bricks for the village of Bököny

In Hungary's northern Great Plain region, a Pupils Research Centre was set up in the village of Bököny. Half of the inhabitants of Bököny are unemployed. Most of them are Roma, and are dependent on local working opportunities.

The learning module was developed in cooperation with the mayor of the village and the local employment office. Ten young Roma people were assisted

in acquiring skills needed on the local labour market. As brickworks have a long tradition in this area, the focus was on the production of adobe bricks. The cooperating local non-profit company confirmed the huge need for adobe brick makers on the local labour market. The workshop lasted around 180 hours, of which more than half of the time was dedicated to practical work. The participants were first introduced theoretically to the brick production process and were later able to apply their knowledge in practical courses.

After successful completion of the exam and the practical part of the learning module, the candidates were awarded a certificate. Some of them will receive further support in their brick making skills and may be employed by local companies.

In the Pupils Research Centre, young people learnt more about existing vocational perspectives in their home region. Within the learning modules, they gained valuable knowledge and skills regarding vocational perspectives in their home region.

"YURA was the chance to create a youth strategy – the answer to the migration problem in the Northern Great Plain Region. The regional authority will consider our recommendations in the next funding period 2014-20."

Imre Enyedi, Association for Students and Civil Society
Hajdú-Bihar (Hungary)



Results and impacts of the pilot actions

Regional and transnational effects of the YURA project

Within the YURA pilot actions, concepts to actively involve young people in educational offers were developed and tested. To obtain a clear picture of the lasting impacts in the regions and for potential future actions, the pilot actions underwent a detailed evaluation before and after implementation. The pilot actions' influence on political structures, learning cultures and cooperation processes has also been evaluated.

Altogether approximately 50 local enterprises and 3.560 pupils participated in the pilot actions. They helped to establish nearly 40 cooperations between local businesses, schools and other educational institutions in the project regions. The high motivation and engagement of the youth showed that the didactical approach of the pilot actions has potentials for future activities. Twenty-five apprenticeships or internships arose out of the activities, and around 60 small follow-up projects have been planned. Some of them are already being implemented.

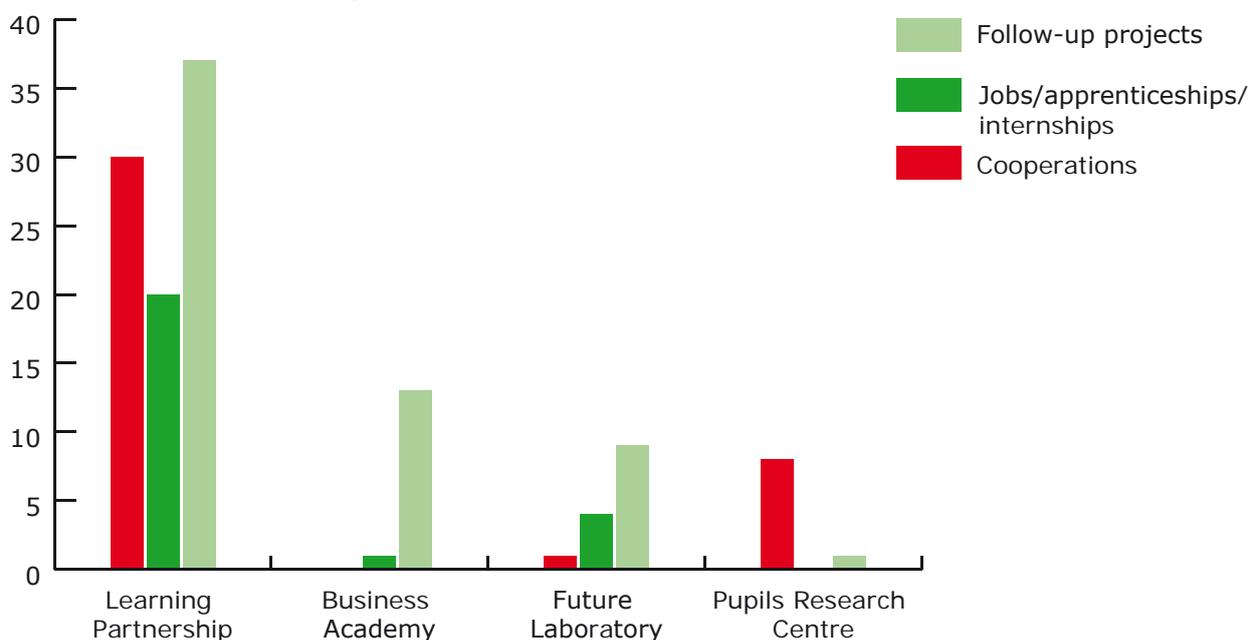
The pilot actions improved the communication between the responsible players and initiated working approaches towards a higher quality of youth education in the regions. Through the active involvement of regional political stakeholders and representatives of local businesses, the need to

counteract the demographic trend by designing attractive social infrastructures for the youth in town became evident. Mayors and entrepreneurs were made aware of the drawbacks of the social environment. They were admonished to dedicate resources for the long-term support of young people in their vocational orientation. The YURA pilot actions have been successful according to a survey among the project partners. They have

- increased trust among the players involved (73,7 %),
- raised political discussions (73,7 %),
- induced a common learning process (68,4 %) and
- initiated a regional cooperation process (58 %).

The transfer of the pilot action concepts to other regions dealing with the improvement of young people's situations within demographic change is only

Initiatives established through the YURA pilot actions





The YURA partner consortium

possible through continuous and strong communication as well as the experiences gained during their practical implementation in the project. As the YURA project was presented to a wide audience involved in regional development, the approaches and results spread and inspired other areas. For instance, four other districts in Saxony-Anhalt/Germany have adopted the Business Academy concept. The Future Laboratory model has been extended to all municipalities in the Austrian region of Styria.

Success factors

The cooperative powers between schools, companies and partner institutions, as well as specific organisational and political structures, were responsible for the successful implementation of the pilot actions. One specific success factor was the collaboration of a team with complementary competences. For instance, in the German Burgenland District an experienced project promoter organised the pilot

actions and received support from the regional chamber of trade and a foundation supporting youth education. In cases where vocational perspectives of young people within demographic change were already major topics on the political agenda in the respective region, the perception of the pilot actions and the support of regional stakeholders was higher. In turn, the activities provide important inputs for the revision of youth strategies in the Burgenland District, as well as for South-West Styria's regional development concept. Furthermore, the activities have induced collective learning processes and have led to the "refreshment" of institutional arrangements through the creation of situations that differ from daily routines.

The results of the pilot actions are summarised in the transnational YURA Strategy for Preventing Youth Migration. This ensures the interregional transfer of the educational concepts tested and allows the transnational exchange of the experiences made.



Transnational Youth Seminar

Should I stay or should I go?

How can we make our regions more attractive to young people? Of course, it is best to address this question to those for whom it matters first: During the YURA transnational youth seminar, 20 youngsters from five Central European countries discussed the status-quo of regional development and education in their home regions. By means of different media they raised awareness among politicians for youth migration from rural regions.

The 17 to 25-year old youths from the YURA partner regions were invited by the national coordinators of the pilot actions to attend the youth seminar, which took place in Magdeburg/Germany in November 2011. The participants came with different expectations and feelings, but were all concerned with one common question: Should I leave home for further education – or are there attractive job and education opportunities in my region?

Using media to raise awareness of more attractive regions

In interactive workshops, participants worked with different media formats – radio, video, web and print – to tell stories concerning young people about to start their vocational career. Experienced media

and communication experts supervised the youths during the workshops.

The radio feature produced in one workshop is about Andrew and Kira, who accidentally meet at a train station. Both are about to begin a new phase in their life. Kira is on the move to a big city, because the village neither provides adequate working opportunities for women nor child care institutions. In contrast, Andrew prefers life in the countryside. He quit his busy job as a manager in the city and strives for a less stressful lifestyle in the countryside. The dialogue makes listeners think about benefits and drawbacks young people have in the city and in rural areas.

Participants produced a video in the second workshop. It is addressed at politicians and covers a story



The participants of the YURA Youth Seminar in front of the State Parliament of Saxony-Anhalt



Discussing the contents of the print documentation

about youth in demographic change and the resulting problems regarding insufficient education and labour possibilities. The youths developed the storyboard of the video clip, constituted the actors and managed the camera.

The internet as new media was covered in another workshop. The test website "six regions for a better life" offers young job seekers information and contact details in regards to job vacancies and companies in their region. The youths learnt how to structure the information and how to link it interactively.



At the YURA film set

Finally, a printed documentation of the youth seminar was created in the fourth workshop. The publication was distributed to important political stakeholders and to the interested public.

The young Europeans presented the seminar results at the State Parliament of Saxony-Anhalt to representatives of the governmental, business and educational sectors. In a youth declaration they formulated important claims towards a better life of young people in rural regions.

12 claims of the youth towards more attractive regions:

- 1 More possibilities for practical training in local companies
- 2 More cooperation between companies and schools
- 3 Free-of-charge and regular public transportation
- 4 More information about the possibilities towards "mobility for learning reasons"
- 5 No internships without pay beyond four weeks' duration
- 6 More support of and trust in women in leading positions
- 7 More meetings between politicians, entrepreneurs and young people
- 8 Free and fast internet for all
- 9 Greater support for a diverse social life
- 10 Free and high-quality education
- 11 More interregional programmes for young people
- 12 Children and young people are an investment in the future.

"I will create a video spot like the one we made here and address it to my regional government."

Andrzej Pietryka, Lower Silesia (Poland)

"We all come from different countries and we all have different ideas. But we can put together different ideas from different countries, which will enable us to find common solutions."

Tamás Papp, Northern Great Plain (Hungary)

"The Youth Seminar is very important for me, because it helps young people to think about the future and the problems we are facing."

Marketa Štaštková, Ústí Region (Czech Republic)

YURA goes European

Strengthening European youth policies in the long run

The YURA project has stimulated a European dialogue on youth in demographic change. A number of stakeholder meetings and dissemination conferences took place in the project regions as well as in Brussels. The results of YURA were shared with important decision-makers and raised awareness for the urgent socio-spatial issue of youth in demographic change in rural regions.

Europe's 2020 Growth Strategy is aimed at an economy with high employment, and social as well as territorial cohesion. Easing young people's entry into the labour market and improving the performance of education systems is an important objective in the strategy paper. Similar targets were stressed in the European Youth Strategy 2010-18. It was pointed out that rural regions in particular are affected by the impact of demographic change and the migration of young people, whereas urban areas are less concerned.

Therefore, the YURA project decisively improved the perspectives of youth in the rural regions involved. Within the pilot actions, innovative and transnational transferable approaches have been designed and tested. They provided young people with orientation in their vocational career and simplified their access

to the local labour market. An important goal of the YURA communication strategy was to transfer the results to the political level. Beside a number of regional dissemination conferences targeted at decision makers in the partner countries, two events aimed at the European level. Youth and demographic change in Europe were the main issues broached within the transnational conferences at the State Representations of Saxony-Anhalt in the middle of 2011, and of Lower Silesia at the end of 2012.

Representatives from the Polish EU Presidency in 2011, of the Commission's General Directions Education and Culture, Regio, Agriculture and Rural Development as well as stakeholders from businesses, industries and youth organisations jointly discussed recent demographic trends and subsequent challenges for future development of



More decisions on youth in demographic change are necessary on European level



Interested audience at the YURA event in Brussels



Podium discussion with high-ranking representatives

rural areas in the European Union. The transnational **YURA Strategy for Preventing Youth Migration** was presented to the high-ranking political audience. Important claims and topics of the strategy were:

- adapted regionalised education programmes for youth counteracting the current requirements of the local labour market;
- transnational financial instruments for paid apprenticeships and scholarships;
- closer cooperation between regional authorities, educational institutions, economy and youth organisations and
- a functioning local public transportation network between urban centres and the rural surroundings.

The priorities for future European youth policies were compiled in the **Declaration on Youth in the European Union 2035**. The document was

presented to European stakeholders from regional development, demography, youth employment and social inclusion. It contains recommendations on how regional development can improve the situation of youth in demographic change. In particular, regional authorities are encouraged to enrich existing education systems through innovative, practice-oriented options such as long-term school-enterprise cooperations, e-learning courses or extra-curricular learning modules. For this, they need a close collaboration with educational institutions and partners from the social and economic sector.

Without doubt, a precondition for setting up regional educational infrastructures is an adequate European funding framework. In this regard, transnational cooperation between Europe's regions marks an indispensable pillar to improve the situation of youth in demographic change.



“Demographic change is a European concern which needs more attention. The Member States are in the duty to find a common strategy how to tackle this development in the future. Conditions have to be put in place guaranteeing young people a life in prosperity and security.”

Dr. Horst Schnellhardt, Member of the European Parliament

Lessons learnt

A better perception of the needs of young people

The previous pages showed a selection of activities, which have been carried out in the project regions. In order to find out about YURA's impact, we asked regional coordinators and political stakeholders about the experiences they have made. How could the project improve the situation of youth in their region, and what added value will remain after YURA has come to an end?



Wilfried Köhler
Ministry for Regional
Development and Trans-
port Saxony-Anhalt (DE)

"YURA made us aware of the interests and needs of young people. We have to keep these in mind, especially in regard to a progressing aging population. Thus, regions only have a future if they show a great interest in their young people."

"The youth got to know the companies of the region and their branches, activities and career perspectives. They tested their skills in technical vocational fields and established contacts within the enterprises. The interest of young people in technical businesses has increased; this applies to female students in particular."



Claudia Krobath
Innovation Region
Styria GmbH (AT)



Dr. Michael Schädlich
isw Institut gGmbH (DE)

"The establishment of perspectives for youths in regions with migration gains importance not only from social and economic views, but also behind the background of generation justice. By an early commitment of young skilled specialists and adaption of infrastructural conditions, the YURA regions want to slow down the segregation process."

“YURA has contributed to the transnational exchange of the youth strategy in the Burgenland District. In our view, the Future Laboratory was a real success. Stakeholders from the political, administrative and economical sectors listened carefully to the youngsters’ visions of a liveable region. I’m sure that some of their wishes will be realised in the near future.”



Jörg Perrmann
Burgenland District (DE)



Helena Matuščinová
Ústí Region (CZ)

“The YURA project activities helped to define issues that the young people perceived as relevant in their city or region. This increased the strength of the link between young people and their town or region. In face-to-face meetings with the municipalities’ representatives, the students presented their views as well as possible solutions, while gaining first-hand experiences in local development processes.”

“YURA enables direct exchange between youngsters, enterprises, policymakers and stakeholders. The participating regions benefit from new ideas and concepts. YURA – a good example for vivid transnational cooperation in Europe.”



Andreas Schweitzer
Ministry for Regional
Development and Transport
Saxony-Anhalt (DE)



Gerald Stöger
core-consult GmbH &
Co. KG (DE)

“Youngsters in European rural areas do need attractive living and working conditions with future prospects. It should be the main aim to counteract current trends of emigration and problems of population ageing in a sustainable way. Even more, these trends may motivate us to work even harder for the future of these youngsters.”



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