

Youth Leader and Youth Board

Name of the organisation

Rieska-Leader ry

Website of the organisation

www.rieskaleader.fi/en

Location of the organisation

Torikatu 3., 84100 Ylivieska, Finland

E-mail address of the organisation

rita.kovacs@rieskaleader.fi

Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Participation of young people in decision making
- Active citizenship/activism
- Youth work in rural areas
- Sustainable development

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

With the Youth Leader fund and Youth Board method we want to give a one-of-a-kind opportunity to rural youngsters to be able to realize their own project ideas, be involved in decision making and development actions locally and have an active, well informed and valuable life in our countryside. With Youth Leader we make sure the next generation is well and correctly informed about (also Eu-funded) local actions and by actively using the local funding tools is involved of the development of our rural region. With international activities we also make sure that youngsters from rural areas have the opportunity also to learn and practice languages, meet and work with people from other cultures and gain valuable skills and better confidence in themselves.

Good practice description

Leader groups, Lags (Local Action Groups) are funded by the EU and national and local governments. We fund projects and investments for local small businesses and NGOs. The applications are evaluated by chosen local inhabitants. Based on this process we wanted to create our youth section as well:

The Youth Leader- fund has been established in 2010 by 2 Northern- Ostrobothnian Leader-groups, Rieska- and Keskipiste-Leader. It is a max 500€ fund for local youngsters (aged 13-25) to apply for realizing their own project ideas. The projects can be: buying sport equipments, instruments for a music band, materials for a theater show or to organize concerts, escape rooms, sport and other competitions etc, based on what the youngsters would like to do and what they need. The projects are created, written, applied and reported by the youngsters themselves. The whole process is made easy and simple. We only use municipality/local government money from our budget, so no hard bureaucracy is involved. Later we also established (at Rieska-Leader in 2017) the Youth Board that is working based on the same idea as our Leader board. We have local youngsters aged 13-25 in the board to make the decisions on the applications. We try to have a member from every municipality in our region. They study the rules of the funding and come together 4 times a year to make decisions. Their decision is valid, the workers of the Lag only check if everything went according to the rules. One of the youth board members is also the member of our Leader-board making decisions on the bigger projects. In this way we have a bridge between the youngsters and the adult board and we make sure the youngsters' voice is heard on all the levels of the decision making process in our organization. When there is a Leader- application regarding youth we ask the opinion of the youth board also. Our youth board is developing itself also in international cooperations, in Rieska-Leader ry we have had succesful Leader and other, like Erasmus+ funded projects with Scotland and Germany. In these projects we wanted to learn from other rural youngsters how they effect actively on their local life, how they can be involved in local decision making and is there something concrete we can develop together based on our same kind of environment and interests.

Since 2010 half of the Finnish Leader groups (27/54 Lags) has started the Youth Leader-fund and many of them has the youth board now as well. We also established a coordination group from Leader- youth workers to be able to represent and advertise the good parctices of the Youth Leader-method nationally and internationally. Leader youth workers are advising applicants in their application process, lead the youth board and go to schools, youth houses and NGOs to inform the youngsters about the Youth Leader fund and other opportunities they offer for local youngsters.

Good practice result & concrete effects

Local youngsters learn how to write, plan, implement and report a project. They learn how to handle a budget. They learn about the different possibilities to apply for funds. Our youth board members learn how decision making processes work, how to use funding rules, learn more about their region and it's possibilities and opportunities. They strengthen many skills, like how to organize meetings, communication and language skills, team-working and representational skills. With the Youth Leader-fund we activated many thousand youngsters in our area, with the youth board we involved hundreds of youngsters into our decision making processes and were able to tell and teach local youngsters all the opportunities the local Lag and other EU-programs offer. With this method we are able to make the Leader-principles known to the local youngsters which helps to keep our region young and active while we involve them and their ideas into our rural development work.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Organisation and practice