

Passo dopo Passo (Step by Step)

Name of the organisation

Associazione Interculturale NUR

Website of the organisation

assonur.org

Location of the organisation

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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Youth work in rural areas
- Participation of young people in implementing youth activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.)
- Entrepreneurship
- Non-formal education/-learning

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

PASSOdopoPasso was a one year long local youth project to foster rural youth intrapreneurship (entrepreneurial mindset and initiative-taking): the ability of young people to know, understand and act, combining resilience, sense of possibility and responsibility, beyond mere business creation. Sparked by the 'Guilcier Union of Towns' and the 'PLUS Ghilarza-Bosa', the initiative was run by public bodies and youth work organisations (Replay Network aps and Associazione Interculturale NUR), and used non-formal and experiential learning to empower both individuals and communities. It aimed at giving youth the tools to turn dreams into real projects and to implement them.

Our main goal was to prove to rural youth coming from very economically challenging areas of the isolated reality of Sardinia that they have more potential than what they are brought to believe by the context and by the rigid formal educational system that doesn't conceive failure as a constructive outcome. We also wanted to show the importance of youth work in rural context where formal education is disappearing or failing and where the local administrations have other priorities than those relevant to youth.

Good practice description

The project wanted to provide basic project writing and management competences to young people with absolutely zero previous experience and specific skills to prove them that things are possible and that instead it's wrong the normal attitude of believing that nothing is possible when you live in an isolated rural environment plagued by unemployment, emigration, depopulation and a demographic structure where youngsters are a minority.

We built an active and participatory learning path based on a first 4-day preparatory meeting, a second 4-day residential course to shape each participant's project writing skills, and two more 1-day thematic meetings with local, regional and national stakeholders. The learning path was completed by study visits to Portugal, Bulgaria and North Italy NGOs.

Participants' final personal projects were financially supported with a small grant of 2000 € each, that the youngsters had to learn how to manage under our youth workers coaching and guidance. Each project included a local component or a final "restitution" in the community, which strengthened dialogue between young people, institutions and the territory.

A final seminar involved youth, NGOs, local administrators and other key actors on non-formal education, youth work and European programmes (the EU-CoE youth partnership, The European Academy on Youth Work and Europe Goes Local).

The whole process saw a very close cooperation between the local union of towns and the 2 NGOs managing the administrative part (Replay Network) and the pedagogical and logistic content (Associazione Interculturale NUR).

Being an experimental project we profited from a great willingness from the funding administrations to accept failure as a learning opportunity, to not limit the participants ideas to specific "priority-defined" topics, but instead to allow for any dream or idea of the participants to be pursued. This made it possible to better motivate the youngsters.

Good practice result & concrete effects

Final outcomes went beyond the learning results of the trainings. The 8 youngsters involved in the project learned practical skills and competences but also self-confidence in their possibility to learn, to develop and pursue ideas and dreams, to deal with local administrations highlighting their being citizens entitled to "ask". We fought a hard-to-die belief that a local administration never listens to youth and also the negative idea (cause of a very strong depopulation dynamic in rural areas) that in a small town "there's nothing for youth".

8 personal projects were implemented: bees keeping, podcasting, theatre play, literature public readings, job counseling, lavender production, social media content creation, personal photo exhibition.

Another result has been the level of cooperation between public bodies and our NGOs, based on a horizontal partnership that fostered thrust and a better understanding of youth work on the local administrations.

Finally the availability of key actors of European-level youth policies to taking part in the closing seminar, proved 2 truths: that "Europe" and "big institutions" are in fact reachable and available to citizens also from the periphery of Europe, and that the act of asking is a powerful tool that can lead to amazing results.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Organisation and practice