



PADIMA

Policies Against Depopulation In Mountain Areas

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1. Introduction to policies against depopulation in mountain areas: Education and Training

PADIMA is an innovative INTERREG IVC project looking at the opportunities of developing the human capital in mountain areas, with the aim of exchanging good practices in fighting depopulation in mountain areas.

8 partners from 5 European countries are engaged in a 3-year collaboration that will produce policy guidelines on successful methods to attract new inhabitants to mountain areas. **Our study regions during this project are:** Teruel province (Spain), Lombardy and Piemonte region (Italy), Hedmark and Buskerud counties in Norway, Dalarna region in Sweden and Massif Central in France.

We do believe that in order to be able to satisfy inhabitants' needs and to attract new population, mountain regions need to be able to provide people with good living conditions. The population needs to find diverse employment opportunities, to be offered public services, education and training facilities of good quality. Regions must also be able to communicate about themselves in order to be known by people who could be interested in moving there.

Building on this analysis the project partnership has decided to focus its work on three aspects:

- education and training;
- territorial marketing;
- economic diversification.

Education and training is the first of the themes tackled by the PADIMA project. In this part of the project PADIMA partners:

- **collected data on the overall situation** of the study areas regarding depopulation,
- made questionnaires with **young pupils** (secondary school and upper secondary school), **local businesses** and **municipalities**
- **conducted an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats** with regards to the education and training offer in mountain areas
- **exchanged on instruments and initiatives they have implemented** already within their territories and that lead to a better access of mountain populations to education and training facilities, from school (important for families who want to settle in mountain areas) to universities (considered essential to prevent young people from leaving mountain area), also considering specialised training centers and life-long learning.

We looked at quality, diversity and also at relevance of this offer to current and future needs of the local economy.

After completing the collection of data and good practices, partners organised a meeting with regional stakeholders from all around Europe to present intermediary results to them. This meeting took place on 24th-25th of November 2010, in Torino, with the objectives of:

1. **addressing the depopulation and repopulation issues in mountain areas from an education and training** point of view,
2. **discussing some of the partners good practices**, addressing their interest and transferability
3. **deepen the exchange of views on how to improve the attractiveness of mountain regions** via better provision of education and training facilities,
4. **enrich the final outputs of the project** with the thoughts of the participants.

In order to achieve this goal, the seminar focused on communication of facts about education and training in study areas, some good practices collected and some first policy recommendations.

2. Introductory session

Within this introductory session, Torino representatives, Marco Balagna, Assessore of the Province and responsible of the province for mountain and agricultural issues, together with Elena di Bella, responsible for mountain policies, stressed the importance of education and training policies for improving mountain areas attractiveness. Then, Alexia Rouby, Euromontana director, introduced the audience to PADIMA project and objectives.

3. Main findings about education and training in mountain areas

Chair: Elena di Bella, Responsible in chief for mountain policies in Torino Province

Through the surveys developed within PADIMA partners gathered some quantitative data that are useful for the analysis of the context of 7 study areas and to the development of efficient policies. These data were:

- territorial data;
- questionnaires: Schools, private and public employers;
- SWOT analysis.

The results from this data collection were presented by the representatives of the Buskerud county, Norway.

1. What are the field needs in terms of education and training? Results from the surveys with pupils, municipalities and businesses - Marthe Elin Hoddevik and Aage Sund, Advisers at Buskerud County Council

To build their policies against depopulation on a bottom-up approach, PADIMA partners decided to survey the population and businesses on their needs as regards education and training. This presentation aimed at illustrating the difference between the needs and aspirations of young people and the needs of businesses.

The surveys at the level of secondary schools revealed that the **most of the young people think they can or could maybe find a job in their area and consider living in the area and working there**. Family and friends living around is the biggest reason for them willing to stay together with the **community values, the easy access to outdoor activities and security**. The potential lack of job opportunities is however the biggest reason for them considering leaving. Majority of pupils are willing to attend upper secondary school. Those who don't think they can easily find a job with only secondary school as level of education and sometimes have clear plans about this.

At upper secondary school level, about half pupils consider going to college and make their specialisation choices based on work opportunities. The proximity of a college or university is very different from one country to another. In Norway, 62% of respondents consider to be out of acceptable commuting distance to a university, when majority in Italy answers the opposite. The majority of pupils are optimistic about work opportunities as they finish school but they are not necessarily identifying tourism or industry as the key sectors for opportunities. They'd rather have a wider choice. As the younger respondents and for the same reasons, **pupils, at these stage, are positive as to their intentions to live and work in the area**.

The problem is that when they leave to go and study far away, they look for a job close to where they have studied rather than returning to their homes.

The survey of businesses and municipalities, on the other side, revealed a **very varied picture as regards, the tendency to recruit employees locally, the difficulties in recruiting, and the competence needed**. The public sector has less recruitment

problems than the private sector, which needs a bigger variety of skills and specialized people. The private sector considers to have better contacts with schools, and with colleges to some extent than with universities with which they have very little contact.

In conclusion, there is a potential to retain young population in mountain areas are they are willing to stay and consider they could find a job in the regional area, but it requires reducing the mismatch between young people preferences and employers' needs by:

- **improving information flow and communication about local businesses and employment opportunities;**
- a more **active cooperation between schools and business sector**, e.g. internships;
- systematic measures for **improving status and reputation of local businesses.**

2. How can mountain municipalities meet the challenges regarding education and training? *Kay H. Bjerke, Project manager, Buskerud County Council*

PADIMA partners also collected basic data about population density, population change and level of education in the different study regions. The aim of the presentation there was to present the differences between the different study regions.

One of the most important assumptions for meeting challenges regarding education and training is to still have young people to educate. A closer look at the evolution of the demographic balance in the recent years, individualising on one side excess of birth over deaths and immigration/emigration trends showed that almost all the municipalities in the research area have negative birth/death balance, but positive immigration/emigration balance. **Thanks to positive net migration trends, a lot of the municipalities have seen a population increase in the last 5 years.**

A look at the different study areas reveals that **almost all of them have a lower share of youth than the regional average** and that **all of them have a proportion of young people below national average**. The opposite situation is encountered for people over 65 years. When we go deeper into the data we see that there is a great variation between the different municipalities. Here we find **extreme values of only 3% of people below 19 years old and more than 40% of those elder than 65**. In other words, the mountain areas have an extra challenge because of the lack of young people but the picture varies between mountain regions and inside them.

Kay Bjerke then presented the proportion of young people with every level of education in the different study areas compared with the regional and national averages. The data showed that the biggest difference is between Scandinavia and the Mediterranean countries. The Italian and Spanish regions have a majority of people with basic school/ground school as their highest education level while the Scandinavian regions are dominated by people with upper secondary school. Several reasons have been mentioned to explain that difference. First, it is possible that the reason is that in Scandinavia vocational training is part of upper secondary school. If vocational training is not included in the other partners' statistics the difference could decrease. Another reason for this might be that the immigrants to the study areas are younger in Scandinavia than those in the other countries and so are more likely to have a good education level before migrating but there is no supportive data to confirm this statement. Another explanation could also come as well from the types of jobs offered to people: no skilled jobs mean no attraction to skilled people. This will be analysed at a later stage in the project. The share of population with higher education (tertiary), is also much higher in the Scandinavian regions than in Italy and Spain.

This data illustrated the **problems faced by mountain areas regarding lack of young people, and low education levels which the best practices are trying to solve.**

3. Are there any differences on how responses to challenges are developed in different parts of Europe? Results from the interviews with key actors working on field- Aage Sund , Adviser, Buskerud County Council

PADIMA partners have interviewed “privileged witnesses” who are the key people implementing the best practices identified in the project. Buskerud analysed the responses in order to see **how regions and municipalities proceed when seeking to answer their challenges**. The presentation aimed at communicating these differences in strategies to participants.

The analysis built on several cases of best practise from each of the regions, covering different sectors within each region. Important sectors from which best practise measures were described were:

- tourism
- agriculture
- cultural heritage
- different industries
- combinations of the above

The comparison showed more similarities than differences:

- The **context** is very much the same: a need for enhancing human capital and competence, different industries; availability of studies and courses etc.
- **Institutional and organizational setting:** The general trend is collaboration and cooperation between (a) different levels of government (local, regional, sometimes national); (b) public and private sector (including businesses and organisations of varying kind); (c) the mentioned and the educational sector.
- **Funding:** Varying models are applied, although to a different degree in the various regions/countries:
 - 100 per cent national funding (e.g. several measures in Teruel)
 - Joint funding from national and regional levels (possibly also local level) (e.g. Buskerud)
 - Joint public – private funding
 - Studies/courses are often free of charge for the users.

One important aspect that should be highlighted when it comes to defining relevant educational measures that eventually are established as “best practise”, is to define and meet the need for competence and expertise in local/regional business/commercial sector. In best practise cases, the studies/courses offered are generally adapted and customized for the needs of local businesses and/or the individual rather than general. The same will often apply to public institutions, cultural institutions and so on.

4. Mountain Education and Training: a potential to exploit further

1. How does the future look like for mountain municipalities? Results of an analysis regarding Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the mountain regions - Kay H. Bjerke, Project manager, Buskerud County Council

PADIMA partners have conducted analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in their region regarding education and training in order to feed in their reflection on policy development. The questions that this analysis had to answer was:

- Strengths –what are the municipalities' strong assets today?
- Weaknesses –what are the weak points of the municipalities today?
- Opportunities –what can the municipalities do to become better/ more attractive in the future?
- Threats – what are the main problems we can foresee in the future?

Although the regions are quite different, regarding structure of population, education, distance to higher education, working places and so on, they also have something in common. In this presentation, Kay Bjerke mainly concentrated on common challenges for the mountain regions, but also touched some of the main differences.

Strengths

The main reason why people still live in mountain areas is that the **inhabitants love their home-places**. They live in beautiful nature with good relations to their surroundings. These are very important things for all people and can compensate for some of the disadvantages.

In most areas access to Upper Secondary School is quite good, although young people in some areas must travel quite far to reach their school. However this does not seem to have effect on their willingness to go to Upper Secondary School.

As mountain areas, most of the regions are winter-sport destinations. As a consequence, some of the municipalities are significantly multiplying their population during part of the winter. In these periods there are a lot of activities going on in the areas. This means that **the demand for employees trained in tourist activities are high in these periods**. Unlike the other partners' mountain regions in Norway has a very low rate of unemployment.

Weaknesses

Most of the mountain regions have low density of population. This combined with a higher rate of elderly people than national average, results in rather few young people **and absence of a critical mass justifying for varied education offer**.

Most inhabitants in mountain areas have their traditions regarding work tied up to agriculture or local industry. They could go directly from basic school and start working on the farm or in the industry. Today farming is decreasing and a lot of the local industry is gone, but the **attitude to higher education is still negative**. Even though the share of the population taking Upper Secondary School and higher education varies a lot between the different areas, all of them have lower shares of people with tertiary education than the national average and only one has a higher share than the regional average. Universities and high schools are mostly concentrated in areas with high density of population. This means that if you are going to study you must leave home and move to a city.

Despite the fact that there are few jobs demanding higher education it is difficult to recruit to these positions. The main reason is that many highly educated people are married with a person who also has higher education and so there is a need to provide several jobs at the same time.

Most of the areas are winter-sport-destinations. This results in a high seasonality and precarity of jobs, with nothing to do the rest of the year. It also results in young people from these areas adopting bad behaviour following contact of many tourists in holidays (drugs, tendency to spend unreasonably etc...).

Threats

The ageing of population is likely to continue in these areas. The high unemployment rate among young people gives concern. As a consequence, these young people might either move out of the region or become social security recipients. Both are unwanted: mountains have so few young people in that they need to be taken care of. Young people need to feel part of innovative town with lot of guts for the future and not to come to a place where only elderly people can be met.

Another threat is that industry might leave these areas, for two main reasons:

- they don't get skilled people to do the jobs so they move to more urban districts;
- they move to a low-cost land due to especially the level of wages;

Both are a great threat for the mountain regions, because if we lose the jobs we also lose the people.

If the population of an area goes below a critical number the offer of public and private service disappears. The inhabitants have to travel for longer distances to get the same services as they did in their neighbourhood before. If it is possible, due to job and housing, many people will choose to move to more urban areas, especially young people during their studies.

Opportunities

There are two main problems in the mountain areas, besides depopulation; ageing population and low education level.

The **ageing also offers opportunities for young people**. Dalarna, Sweden is an example of this. The large number of retirements gives increasing opportunities to young people and immigrants to the region for development of care and health services.

The low education level might also be looked at as an opportunity. The reason why the population does not have more education is not that they are not able to learn. **Most of them are very competent in the kind of work they are doing, but traditionally they did not need education to do the available work**. Today with decline in agriculture and more computerised industry the lack of education is more obvious. The demand for unskilled workers is very low. However people between 30 and 50 still have time to learn new skills and do a good job before they retire. This demands close relationships between places of employment, both in private and public sector, and institutions of education. Examples of this can be found among the best practises.

Development **from winter-destinations to all-year destinations** is hard work but also represents an opportunity, which some have exploited successfully. A good example is Hemsedal in Norway. The result is that their population is growing at least as fast as the national average and the average age of the population is going down.

Access to **broadband** can also remove some of the problems related to distance to big centres. Through broadband you can access distance-learning of all kinds and you can also do a good job for an employer situated in another part of the country, and even another part of the world.

2. First considerations on education and training policies in mountain area - *Federica Corrado, Researcher, Dislivelli Association, Italy*

Based on the first results presented in the previous speeches, Federica Corrado offered some first policy recommendations to the participants.

Starting from the surveys carried out in the first phase of PADIMA project, it is possible to make some reflection on education and training policies as specific elements to maintain a physical, cultural, social and economic "presidium" of the territory and to favour the arrival of new inhabitants, therefore new ideas, new cultures inside of mountain territories. In this way, we can talk about a system of education and training that could be able to contribute to socio-diversity in mountain territories.

As some experiences show us, there is an interest in all part of Europe towards the re-population of mountain area, from Spain to France, from Italy to Sweden. In relation with

this interest, **there are already movements of people who choose to live in mountain areas**. These movements are generated by **spontaneous processes** and, only sometimes, by territorial policies on the accommodation of new inhabitants.

In this context, it becomes very important to decline education and training policies in two objectives:

- first objective: **the maintenance of necessary territorial services in order to permit the habitability of the mountain territories**. Also taking into account situations of lowland density territories and the difficult accessibility, it is important not only to guarantee a "possibility of life" but also a certain quality of life to the inhabitants, an adequate welfare state.
- second objective: **the development of education and training system integrated with the local heritage and specificities of the local economy**.

According to these objectives, it will be possible, on one side, to **increase territorial cohesion** between mountain territories and other territories (especially in those areas traditionally considered as fragile and disadvantaged), on the other side, to **contribute to the ability/capacity of the mountain territories to cope with the challenges of the global economic competitiveness**: a competitiveness that requires to value the local resources, the local culture and identity through an innovative reinterpretation.

From the analysis we can underline that, in mountains, the school experiments itself through innovation. Taking into account the structural gap, there are recent good practices in partners' mountain context that:

- use **new technologies** in order to overcome physical and temporal barriers;
- **programme courses of language for new inhabitants**, trying to foster integration between endogenous and exogenous people, between old and new, encouraging a process favouring the structuring of new mountain communities.

Training activities, in most of cases, regard local heritage and connect school with local economic system (specialized in tourism, manufacture, wood industry, etc.).

It has been demonstrated that the demand for a upper-middle level qualification of working age population will increase. At all levels, specific competences are demanded. The good practices identified in PADIMA have adopted this approach, integrating education and training policies to the economic policies; carrying out specific competences in education and training policies.

So, we can conceive an educational and training system that:

- offers **possibilities that can be carried out in specific sectors in informal ways** (in the forest sector as example), while also being formally recognized (learning by doing)
- **provides opportunities for education and training at high level** also in mountain area with the possibility to produce highly qualified jobs
- **builds on the creativity of a population** that, because it has had to adapt to specific physical and geographical situation, **has a strong potential for innovation**. This encourages to move towards an education and training system linked to the new economy (with low emissions of CO₂, using renewable energy resources, reinforcing a process of modernisation of transports, etc.).

In relation to this idea, mountain can be considered as laboratory of new skills and jobs linked to the specific mountain context. This represents very interesting possibilities of development of mountain territories in order to answer Europe 2020 Strategy (smart, sustainable and inclusive growth).

To implement these reflections in education and training policies it is necessary to diversify the educational offer in mountain area, to link the offer to the local context and to integrate educational and training policies in territorial policies. In this view, good practice should not only represent one-shot occasional solutions but be seen as positive experimentation to effectively implement territorial policies for the sustainable development of mountain areas.

5. Education and training good practices

During this first part of the PADIMA work, 39 good practices on education and training were selected in the 7 study areas. In a second part of the morning, stakeholders working on field in the PADIMA regions were invited to present their initiatives and their results on regional policies to the seminar participants. The aim of this exercise was to:

- put in evidence the **opportunities and difficulties that characterized these initiatives** of education and training sector in mountain territories as well as their result;
- **discuss the relevance of these findings between partners**, with partners policy staff and with other European regions representatives
- **assess the possible solutions against depopulation to be applied in different territorial policies** starting from education and training initiatives.

The selected good practices were:

1. Education on health and social care in Dalarna (Sweden)
2. Education for adults and immigrants through ICT in small villages in Teruel (Spain)
3. Training course for eco-guides in Lombardia (Italy)
4. Trysil Akademiet: courses for local business (winter-tourism) in Hedmark (Norway)
5. Education and training in environmental issues at Pracatinat in Torino region (Italy)
6. Training to enhance recruiting to wood industry in Buskerud (Norway)
7. Vocational training for adult employees and managers in Massif Central (France)

Workshops discussions

After a general presentation of good practices from each of the regions studied, in the afternoon workshops (1h) chairmen tried to coordinate an active discussion with the workshops participants around the good practice selected.

In order to favour an interactive format of the workshop and to permit participants to discuss at least 2 good practices in the afternoon, we organised two parallel sessions of 3 workshops. Workshop 3 “Training in tourism” included 2 different good practices from the tourism sector. The chairman oriented the discussion towards the understanding of the initiative, its value as a good practice (interest from participants) and conditions for an effective transfer in other region, including some policy recommendations.

Workshop 1 - Health and social care education, Dalarna, Sweden

Chairman: Mr Conny Danielsson, Coordinator competence supply, Regional Cooperation Council, Dalarna

Reporter: Ms Ancuta Pasca, Euromontana, PADIMA project coordinator

Introduction: During this workshop, we debated the interests of the initiative from Dalarna. Several interesting points that were not presented in the morning were explained, helping participants to understand better the Swedish educational system and the good practice selected. The collaboration of schools with business actors from the sector of health and care (hospitals, retirement houses, etc) is an interesting way of working as a network. The health business need for trained people increased significantly these last years, but the number of skilled people able to take these jobs in mountain and rural areas of Dalarna did not follow. Their objective was to make the offer for employment in health sector converge with people skills.

The training is targeted to teenagers (around 150 persons/year) but also to adults (around 200 persons/year) and is attractive for them thanks to the positive perspectives of finding a job once the training is completed, with interesting income foreseen.

Outcomes: This health and care course has been used in some municipalities as a tool to attract and to integrate immigrants arriving in Dalarna, being associated in that case with language classes. It reveals a good interest from immigrants but also from local people as the training is short and people can quickly integrate the working environment after.

This course has a dual nature:

- on one side it allows people who want to work directly after to join the working environment shortly;
- on the other side, it provides graduates with a high school certificate and allows them to attend further studies (university, post-high-school training, etc).

The cooperation of different actors, schools and companies from the health sector, is interesting as it allows to coordinate and to reply to the needs on every side by working as a network. This network cooperation has been transferred in Sweden already to other sectors: tourism and entrepreneurship education.

Policy recommendations: in order to implement such network collaboration a good collaboration of educational and field businesses must be encouraged and promoted by the **public regional and national bodies**, at least at the early stages, when the interest and gains of both fields to work together still need to be explained to potential actors.

Workshop 2 - Education and new inhabitants in low populated areas - Teruel, Spain

Chair: Mr Máximo Ortín, Director, Adults center of Montalbán, Teruel

Reporter: Ms Marie Guitton, project manager, Euromontana

Introduction: the good practice consisted in life-long learning Internet tools for adults, with 3 specific websites for adapted trainings, allowing the participants to obtain a diploma/certificate. A demonstration of the online tools was given to participants.

Outcomes:

The initiative appeared to have three prominent positive points:

- **Variety of available training courses** answering various types of needs:
 - general knowledge training;
 - specific training for businesses;
 - language courses for migrants.
- Lessons established in **collaboration with institutions and universities**, which lead to the delivery of recognised diploma/certificates to the people who attend the programme;
- Initiative made possible thanks to a **strong policy**, allowing investments for improving the access to Internet in the region.

Is the initiative transferable?

In order for the initiative to be transferable, there is a need for:

- Major investments from the public sector (which is the only financier in the Teruel case):
 - to favour improvement of the Internet network infrastructures;
 - to support the courses;
 - to prepare and maintain a solid, reliable and interactive Internet platform.
- Training for teachers and pupils so that they are able to use the interactive platform. The example of “mini-course of digital alphabetisation”, to teach people how to use internet was provided. The organisation of such courses however can be costly.

It was noted that given the costs of implementation of such an initiative, and the infrastructural basis required, the transfer of the initiative is very unlikely to be possible in Eastern Europe. The example of Romania was quoted as a country where the initiative could not be transferred yet: the Internet infrastructure is not yet developed enough, and will not be sufficient soon because of the lack of funding to improve it.

Policy recommendations: Two main policy recommendations were drawn out of the workshop discussion and advocated:

- **Long-term investments**, because the private sector will not (or only partially) take-over the costs, which are needed to enhance the access to technologies. The expenses should aim at improving:
 - the availability of the network;
 - the capability of inhabitants to use technologies.
- **Cooperation with existing universities and training institutes**, to prepare the content of the training sessions and to deliver the certificates/diploma.

Policies that need to be addressed: Apart from Education policy, 2 other policy fields need to be addressed for the success of such initiative:

- ICT policies and broadband policies
- Economic policies, in order to favour the development of training sessions adapted to the specific needs of the economic sectors of the region.

Workshop 3 - Training in tourism - IREALP, Italy and Hedmark, Norway

Chair: Mr Staffan Bergqvist, leader of Trysilakademiet project, Norway

Reporter: Ms Maria Grazia Pedrana, Project manager, IREALP

Introduction:

Some elements were added to the morning presentation to detail the good practices and their effectiveness:

Trysil Akademiet: courses for local business (winter-tourism) in Hedmark

- good private-public cooperation;
- customized education: learn what you need;
- spreading the culture of welcoming.

Training course for eco-guides in Lombardia /Valtaleggio

- informal and flexible education;
- strong link with the territory and its heritage;
- involvement of the residents.

Outcomes:

Did the good practice have an interest for the participants from other regions?

Yes, also in other regions this kind of initiatives should be promoted to reinforce and boost an economic sector that nowadays represents a concrete opportunity for the local development. The mayor part of the WS participants stressed the value of skilled people in welcoming tourists and promoting the beauties of mountain areas (landscape, heritage, culture, traditions, well-being, etc.)

What were the good points of this initiative?

The “territorial approach” is the most interesting point in both the initiatives: it is clear that the education in the sector of tourism – to be effective – should be devoted to a large target audience which includes also resident people. Only people aware of the richness of their territories can communicate this knowledge to tourists.

As far as funding is concerned, the importance of co-funding has been underlined. To attract people to the course, the attending fee can't be too expensive so part of the training costs should be covered by public funds or by businesses themselves.

Is the initiative transferable?

The initiatives are transferable provided that a making aware process has been implemented at a political level making evident to the politicians and local administrators the needs of a “territorial” education and training in tourism sector.

Policy recommendations:

- to promote the knowledge of the local cultural heritage among citizens, politicians and touristic entrepreneurs;
- to foster an innovative education and training system which should be flexible and focussed on local requirements (strengthen the link among territory and tourist offers);
- to support entrepreneurs who promote together their “products” and the mountain territory itself;
- to plan the local development as a long-term process which involves several economic sectors with an integration of social and cultural matters.

Policies that need to be addressed:

- **education and training policies for tourist entrepreneurs** → new skills to: welcome tourists, offer local products, enhance mountain landscape-heritage, etc.)
- **education and training policies for adults** → awareness raising for resident people on the local resources and on the added value for tourism
- **local development policies** → planning the future development of mountain area through the valorisation of the local resources for a sustainable tourism throughout the year (each season)

Workshop 4 - Education and training in environmental issues –Province of Turin, Italy

Chair: Ms Boris Zobel, retired director of Pracatinat

Reporter: Ms. Sigrid Lindstad, International Relations responsible, Hedmark, Norway

Introduction: The project PraCatinat is located in an old sanatorium geographically isolated in the mountains about, 1.600 meters above sea level, in the Torino region. The climate is tough and the road is steep and has many sharp turns. The fresh and unpolluted air was well suited for a sanatorium. 120 people, mostly locals, were employed in the running of the sanatorium. The sanatorium was closed about 25 years ago. Local authorities granted money to start an education and training centre in the old building. They did it not only for idealistic reasons, but also as a possibility to keep the working places running.

Outcomes:

60 persons are working there today – not all of them full time.

The building consists of an educational division, a restaurant and a hotel part.

The issues on which training is provided are related to environmental sustainability, social issues, economy and consumption.

An average of between 7000 and 8000 students per year are staying there for long or shorter courses.

On the other hand, the local population is not interested in participating in the educational offers. Their interest is concentrated to the jobs. The location of the center is demanding (see above) and they have to develop new courses and offers every year to attract new students from all over Italy.

Is the best practice transferable?

Transferability is not necessarily an end in itself. The model is very complex. The economy is difficult. The running of the centre is very expensive. The complex equilibrium of relationships and partnership around the facility allows it to be successful but it would be challenging to replicate. The centre does not release profits.

Very much energy is put into finding partners and alliances. The leaders cooperate with schools, politicians and representatives of different professions in order to find new target groups for the courses and 'new' money. Flexibility is one of the key words in this work.

The centre represents jobs for the people living in a valley where the depopulation is a challenge.

But most of all, the centre is useful for inspiration. Empty hospitals, hotels, schools etc can be used for a variety of purposes provided a longsighted financing. The cultural heritage must not be forgotten. The Piedmonte region has had through this project useful experience for good and bad days.

Policy recommendations:

The discussion did not lead to specific policy recommendations.

Workshop 5 - Training for people working in different enterprises joining in the Chamber of Commerce - UCCIMAC, France

Chair: Mr André Marcon, Euromontana and UCCIMAC President

Reporter: Ms Laura Gascon Herrero, Padima Project Manager

Introduction: Chambers of commerce are public institutions financed by taxes paid by each business. In return, chambers provided services to companies and especially training. The population density in the area is 13 inhabitants /km². It is a medium mountain of average altitude

Outcomes:

Did the good practice have an interest for the participants from other regions?

The people most interested in the practice were participants from Norway and Sweden, where structures such as chambers of Commerce do not exist. Spanish participants were less interested as they already have similar chambers providing similar services.

What were the good points of the initiative?

The education is adapted to the needs of the area. Courses are provided to people within the companies and the use of new technologies provides important opportunities.

On the other hand, not many figures about the results of this interesting initiative were presented. It appears that the training offer is more popular towards young businessmen than older employers.

The sector most interested in this initiative is the tourism sector.

Is this initiative transferable?

It is transferable as it exists in other countries. For example in Spain, where transfer would not be envisaged as it is already available.

Norwegian participants considered this could be interesting but chambers in Norway exist but are completely private: the institutional setting is different. So they see difficulties in encouraging the chambers to develop initiatives like the one that was presented there. Representatives from Dalarna considered the initiative interesting but they have a different structure for the network of the business and would need to see if this could be applied or not.

Policy recommendations:

The discussion encouraged the strengthening of networking (web-based) between chambers of commerce that would facilitate the sharing of information about the training models and contents that are used in other countries. This could also allow to improve language skills in the different countries.

The group recommended to improve the level of new practices in education and training and try to foster entrepreneurship inside the rural and mountain areas.

Policies that need to be addressed:

Support to entrepreneurship: the participants debated several other initiatives that all aim at helping the entrepreneurs, especially in the phases where they are developing their project. UCCIMAC talked about an initiative called “entrepreneurs residence” that provides the entrepreneur with a place that he/she can use without paying for the first 15 days spent in the area, hosted in one building that belongs to the Chamber.

Workshop 6 - Training in the wood Industry – Buskerud, Norway

Chair: Mr Kay Bjerke, Project manager, Buskerud

Reporter: Ms Elena di Bella, Responsible in chief for mountain policies in Torino Province

Introduction

Interesting points mentioned about the initiative

The 43 manufacturers of furniture, interiors and wood products demanded at their own initiative to meet students of the secondary schools to reverse the current trends regarding job preferences: young people prefer jobs that media promote as modern like communication, new technologies, music. 30 applications for new jobs were sent to companies from students after the meeting. Companies selected the best students and employed them.

Outcomes

Good points about the initiative:

- 1) demand-driven: initiative started from the companies at grassroots level
- 2) it is working: companies received 30 applications
- 3) it is not too expensive (schools paid in kind and public authorities did not spend so much money)
- 4) the initiative try to reverse a negative trend (young people consider mountain activities as not “glamour” not interesting) by communicating the “passion for wood”
- 5) the initiative involved students, schools, companies and public Authorities

Is the initiative transferable?

Yes, the agreement stated between Public Authorities and Schools could be easily transferred to Italy and Spain to enhance the interest of young people to mountain activities/wood chain. Of course in Norway the wood sector is more dynamic as in Italy or Spain but also in Italy and Spain interested companies are exist. The principle could be replicated in other sectors.

Policy recommendations:

- setting-up and maintaining a relationship between secondary schools and companies has to become a permanent process
- there is a need to reinforce relationships between public authorities/private sector/schools
- planning traineeships during scholarship period for students in companies

Policies that need to be addressed: a policy for promoting local wood and create a wood chain.

6. Useful elements for final recommendations

In synthesis, the work carried out so far and the seminar highlighted the following points:

From the point of view of mountain people:

- Mountain areas offer a good quality of life, community values, possibilities of outdoor recreation and a safe and healthy environment to live;
- mountain areas have an extra challenge because of the lack of young people;
- there is a negative birth/death balance in the regions object of the research, but positive immigration/emigration balance in all regions and younger immigrants in Scandinavian countries;
- the situation of partner regions regarding education offer and level is very varied:
 - Scandinavian countries having a better education level than Mediterranean countries;
 - upper secondary school is within acceptable commuting distance in some countries (Italy) and not in others (eg. Norway);
 - the situation is different for the University: from most of the municipalities travelling time to the nearest university is not acceptable.
- Surveys have shown that young people:
 - would rather in the area where they come from if they could
 - think they can find preferred education locally/regionally
 - think there are employment opportunities
- However:
 - These young people, when they decide to get a tertiary education, have to travel to another region to go to the University
 - once they have graduated from University, they prefer to find job in the region where they have studied.
 - The level of education of young people is higher in Scandinavia than in Mediterranean countries

From the point of view of employers:

- Businesses and municipalities
 - need of a wide variety of skills;
 - sometimes encounter problems when trying to recruit the needed competence locally;
- there is a demand for trained people in the tourist sector but this demand includes a lot of seasonal jobs which do not have a counterpart in the off-peak season;
- few jobs demand higher education;
- A lot of tourists give negative impulses to young inhabitants about possible jobs.

This situation presents various threats for the future:

- the combination of depopulation and aging inhabitants damage the image of the areas;
- in consequence lack of skilled people might force local industry to move out of the regions.

But there are also opportunities and reasons for hope:

- cooperation between upper secondary school(uss) and local industry makes youth better aware of local opportunities;
- further development of tourism (winter destinations to become all-year destinations) and adoption of new touristic models could provide populations with more stable year-round jobs;
- access to broadband opens new possibilities for both long distance education and work;
- there are possibilities to combine seasonal work and education.

The **good practices** collected have put in evidence:

- Several cases from each region, showing regions are seeking and finding solutions: best practices have been established in different sectors within each region, with areas frequently mentioned being:
 - tourism, cultural heritage;
 - agriculture;
 - different industries;
 - combinations of these...
- these best practices are often a result of collaboration between:
 - different levels of government;
 - public and private sector;
 - various educational institutions;
- the funding models vary from one practice to another, but very often there is a joint funding of the initiative (public and private partnership);
- there is diversity regarding links to for example national programs;
- best practices aim to meet the needs for expertise and competence of the local business sector or the local public sector/institutions;
- training/courses offered as a result are often “customized” and the trend in most areas is to propose more “specialized” than “general” training;

In light of this situation, the PADIMA partnership considers that mountain areas need integrated policies:

At local level

1) to better match individual preferences and employers' needs. This requires:

- a) to improve information flow and communication about local businesses and employment opportunities in the area;
- b) a more active cooperation between schools, local authorities and business sector (like for example in the best practice about cooperation between the wood industry and upper secondary school);
- c) Systematic measures for improving status and reputation of local businesses.

2) to improve the IMAGE of mountain areas towards YOUNG people and the new inhabitants via active welcoming policies and territorial marketing;

At local and national level

3) to improve/modernize the connexions between upper secondary schools/Universities and mountain villages, via transport and access to broadband.

4) to ensure that schools, in mountain areas:

- a) experiment new technologies (broadband), courses for cultural integration (especially on the basis of language);
- b) improve the connection to territorial capital (historic traditions to promote local agro food productions and tourism);
- c) connect themselves better to local economic systems (wood industry, tourism, manufacture, etc.) to be more oriented towards new economic sectors especially (but not only) tourism;
- d) aim at providing, in the tourism sector, a high specialisation at all levels of skills and tasks (managers, waiters, chefs, skiing teachers, alpine guides..), the same being necessary as well for other economic sectors typical of mountain areas (ex. forestry sector..). There is a NEED to push our education policies to a HIGH specialisation in mountain areas and also to create high level profiles (mountain research, for example).
- e) Can focus their education and training activities on new professions linked to the mountain context in the new economic framework (renewable energy, modernization of transport, etc.);
- f) increase via education and training the value of the local human capital in order to build a society of knowledge in mountain areas.

In CONCLUSION we need a new education and training policy diversified, focused, linked to the context, integrated, in order to promote the repopulation of mountain areas.

The best practices show us that we have many good examples to improve our local policies in education and training to better match young people expectations, new economic opportunities and needs of enterprises. At local level we could try to “import” and “copy” these very good ideas but we should also try to use these examples to make the local experiences “go up” at national and European level in order to transform specific local solutions in “systematic” European models.

7. Study trip

The study trip has been made on 25th of November 2010 in two mountain territories of Turin Province: Pellice Valley, a “closed” valley that ends on the natural borderline with France and Chisone Valley, a strategic valley that links the metropolitan area of Turin with Pinerolo, Pragelato and Sestriere (territory of Olympic Winter Games), along Chisone torrent, passing through the centres of services of the medium valley Perosa Argentina, Villar Perosa, Fenestrelle.

The study trip has been composed by the visit of three specific places:

- 1) The first place visited was **Malva School**, proposed as a good practice in the analysis of WP1. Malva School has a very old origin. At the begin of 1930 when Liborio Malva e Virginia Arnaldi died, Malva School was build on their fields, as they have established in their will. In the middle of 1950 the activity of School finished and the fields were rent. In 1997 the contract of rent stopped and the School began again its mission. Actually, the Management Committee is composed by representative of Municipality of Bibiana, Municipality of Pinerolo, Chamber of Commerce of Turin, Province of Tyrin and Farmers Union.

Malva School represents a **good practice in which training sector is really linked to the economy of the valley** (agricultural sector is the most important in the valley) and its mission implement the same sector.

All the partnership had the lunch at “Laux Lack” restaurant in Usseaux (Val Chisone), in a beautiful landscape and with the presence of first snow .

- 2) The second place seen is the **Fortress of Fenestrelle**, monument symbol of the Province of Turin, characterized by a colossal series of fortifications that rise up the mountain side from 1135 meters up to a height of 1787 meters. With the climb up to Pra' Catinat, the path accompanies the tourist back through the original phases of construction, which were begun, in the upper area by Ignazio Bertola, over the years 1728 through to 1849. There are altogether three forts here (San Carlo, Tre Denti, and Delle Valli), three redoubts (Carlo Alberto, Santa Barbara and Porte) and two batteries (Ospedale dello Scoglio - hospital of the rocks). The areas are connected up by a long stairway of 4000 steps, the "Scala Coperta" (covered staircase), which has a vaulted over-structure and light slits, next to which runs a second open stairway, the "Scala Reale" (royal staircase), composed of 2500 steps.
- 3) The third place visited is **Pra Catinat** also a good practice in WP1. The origin of Pra Catinat is linked to the necessity to **re-use the important building heritage** of Pra Catinat and it is in relation with Regional Law n. 39 in 1987 in which Pra Catinat is instituted as “Didactic Laboratory on the environment”. In this experience **mountain context is used to implement education, training and research activities in context with high quality of life.**

During the visit of Pra Catinat, another good practice, **Scoprimeria Eco-Museum** recognized as good practice in WP1 has been presented by institution’s Director. The origin of this Eco-museum is linked to an idea of Val Chisone and Germanasca Mountain Community related to a possible **innovative use of the local mines abandoned.** The practice has put on evidence the strong link between training courses of Scopriminiera and a specific local resource (mine site) with an important role in the local economy and its innovative use.

After Pra Catinat visit the study trip is finished and partner returned to Turin.

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